

Archaeological Survey of India - InterGlobe Foundation – Aga Khan Trust for Culture
Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan's Mausoleum, CONSERVATION 2014-2020

PRESS BRIEF

Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan

Rahim, Commander-in-Chief of the Mughal army, was also the greatest of Akbar's nobles; a Statesman, Courtier, Linguist, Humanitarian, Patron and above all, Poet. His own atelier produced beautifully illustrated translations of the Ramayan and Mahabharata into Persian and a set of Ragamala paintings. On account of his poetry—drawing from the Hindu religious narratives, Rahim is often compared with the bhakti poets – Surdas, Tulsidas, Kabir.

Building his wife's mausoleum

Rahim also patronised the construction of monumental buildings - canals, tanks, enclosed gardens in Agra, Lahore, Delhi and Burhanpur, among other Indian cities. However, it is the mausoleum he built in AD 1598 for his wife, Mah Banu, that is the grandest of his surviving buildings – inspired by the Architectural style of Humayun's Tomb and, in turn, inspiring the Taj Mahal. On his death, Rahim was also buried in this mausoleum.

Rahim's tomb conservation

Despite the immense historical, architectural and archaeological significance of the structure and its prominent location in central Delhi, Rahim's mausoleum stood in a ruinous condition with a risk of collapse. In 2014, the inter-disciplinary **Aga Khan Trust for Culture** team - with the support and partnership of InterGlobe Foundation and the Archaeological Survey of India - commenced a six-year conservation effort. This became the largest conservation effort ever undertaken at any single monument of national importance in India and also the first ever privately undertaken conservation effort under 'Corporate Social Responsibility'. 175,000 man-days of work by master craftsmen has been undertaken for conservation.

Conservation works commenced with challenging structural repairs – to fix the cracks that threatened the building with structural collapse and included restoration of the intricate ornamentation – in stone and lime plaster. Collapsed portions of the building were reconstructed using traditional materials and building crafts. Restoration of marble cladding was limited - to strengthen the base of the dome and to indicate to visitors the original finish of the dome.

Associated intangible heritage

The conservation effort on the monument has included celebrating Rahim's cultural legacy. Two major publications, 'Celebrating Rahim' and, 'Abdur Rahim Khan-i-khanan – *Kavya, Saundarya, Sarbhakta*' have been produced.

About InterGlobe Foundation:

InterGlobe Foundation (IGF) is the CSR arm of the InterGlobe Group – a leader in Aviation, Hospitality and Travel related services. IGF is committed to building a society that is just, equitable, inclusive and utilizes resources in a sustainable manner.

About Aga Khan Trust for Culture:

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), an agency of AKDN, has been working for over 20 years in the Nizamuddin precinct to conserve cultural heritage, improve quality of life of local communities and enhance visitor experience.

Commenting on the project completion, **Ms. Rohini Bhatia, Chairperson, InterGlobe Foundation**, said, “India is known for its cultural heritage, hence the preservation of our art and culture is essential for our identity. We are pleased to be a part of restoration of Rahim’s mausoleum. In addition to physical restoration, we are also establishing the relevance of sites and creating awareness among communities towards the need for preservation of culture and heritage. At InterGlobe Foundation, we strive to conserve the cultural heritage of our nation. Through restoration projects like Rahim’s tomb in Delhi and Indra Kund stepwell in Rajasthan, InterGlobe Foundation has impacted thousands of lives while successfully preserving the historical and cultural values that bind us as a nation”.

Ratish Nanda, CEO, Aga Khan Trust for Culture added, “Conservation at Rahim's tomb has been possible with a public-private partnership. Not only has a significant monument been conserved for posterity but dignity has been restored to the resting place of the cultural icon, Rahim. Conservation in the Indian context can benefit from thousands of years of building craft traditions and recourse to an inter-disciplinary scientific approach. 175,000 craft days of work has helped restore this grandeur”.

For Further Information, contact

Ms Ujwala Menon, AKTC: +91 9810423421/ujwala.menon@akdn.org

For more information, please visit: www.nizamuddinrenewal.org

and for latest updates, Like Us on: <https://www.facebook.com/NizamuddinRenewal>