

# Zafar Mahal of Delhi

April 27, 2023

**In news**– The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is set to initiate conservation works at Zafar Mahal in south Delhi's Mehrauli.

## **History of Zafar Mahal-**

- **Once the summer palace of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor, the monument is located only a few kilometres southwest of the Qutub Complex in Delhi.**
- It was **originally built by Akbar Shah II in 1820. It was expanded during Bahadur Shah Zafar's reign, with new structures including a gateway built under him.**
- **Bahadur Shah Zafar constructed the new gateway to facilitate the entrance of elephants.**
- It has a forlorn history because Bahadur Shah Zafar, who wished to be buried in the precincts of the Zafar Mahal (palace) and **the famous Dargah of Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki in Mehrauli, Delhi,** was deported by the British to Rangoon, after the First War of Indian Independence in 1857, where he died of old age.
- It is to be noted that the annual festival known as Phulon ki Sair starts from Zafar Mahal and was started by Khawja Bhaktiyar Kaki as a protest against the British.
- The palace, located at about 300 feet (91 m) to the west of Ajmeri Gate of the dargah of Khwaja Kaki has an imposing gate.
- Built as a three-storied structure in red sandstone embellished with marble, it is around 50 feet (15 m) wide with a gate opening called the Hathi gate (built to allow full decorated elephants with the howdah to pass through) is of 11.75 feet (4 m) opening at the entrance.
- **An inscription on the main arch credits building of the gate (as an entry gate to the existing Mahal) by Bahadur**

**Shah II** in the eleventh year of his accession as Emperor in 1847-48 AD.

- **A broad Chhajja** (cantilevered projection) built in the Mughal style is a **striking feature of the arch**