

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**