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Richmond Town gets a Persian feel

A group of youths is sprucing up the streets around a shrine to lend it an Iraqi ambience

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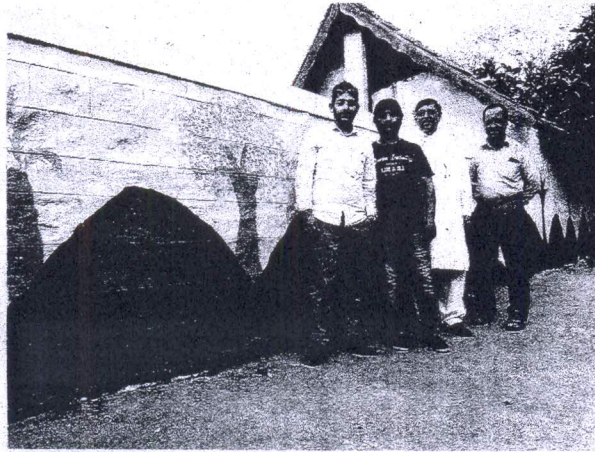
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A group of 15 men are sprucing up the locality around the Babul Hawaii Shrine in Richmond Town to give it a Persian ambience. Their work aims to replicate the atmosphere of the Hazrat Abbas Shrine in Karbala, Iraq, around the Babul Hawaii Shrine, which is a replica of the former. Built over 1,000 sq ft, the shrine was renovated a few years ago.

Part of the effort by this group, which goes up by name 'The Shia Youth of Richmond Town', includes planting trees in the neighbourhood, painting the walls, and putting up Persian lamp posts to bring an antique touch to the streets.

Of the group's 15 members, several of whom are working abroad, five are actively handling the project: Taher Shirazi, Mirza Noorain, Javeed Ali, Ali Asgar Kamdaar and Aga Ali Hussain Shirazi (all in the age group of 25-35 years).

"The Hazrat Abbas Street (300 feet long) and the Aga Abdullah Street (200 feet long) are being beautified for now. We, the residents and the shop owners, cleaned up the street



Some members of the group that is recreating Persia in the city

and had flower plants planted on each side on the stretch of the Aga Abdullah Street. We have planted eight Indian almond trees along the border of Johnson's Market on the Aga Abdullah Street stretch, four temple trees on Aga Abdullah street outside our homes and two trees opposite Masjid-e-Askari on Hosur Road," said Taher Shirazi, who had been working in Qatar and returned only eight months ago and now works in real estate. They've also planted 14 crape myrtle flowering trees along the street.

"This is the first phase of

the several things we plan to do and it is inspired by Mirza Ismail of the Citizens for Welfare Association (CWA). He has played an inspiring role in our work," said Shirazi, who is also a member of the CWA. His family has lived in Aga Abdullah Street for the last six generations.

"The message behind this is to make Richmond Town green again. With more high-rise buildings coming up, the greenery is vanishing. We plan to extend this initiative to other streets of Richmond Town through the CWA," he said.

The tree-planting cost the group Rs 4,000. They spent Rs 30,000 to beautify the walls with colourful paintings last week.

The huge lamp posts are being imported from Tehran and large flower-bearing trees are to be planted flanking the street of the shrine. "In respect for the shrine, we have beautified the road and plan to give it the traditional Persian look with the lamp posts. With the locality's councillor Shiva Kumar's help, the road has got excellent tarring and it is the best place to start our beautification. For the lamp posts, we are waiting for a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from Bescom, and other approvals. Once that is done, we plan to renovate the entire stretch," said Shirazi.

The entire project will cost the group Rs 5 lakh. The shrine, which is an Ashurkhaana, is visited by nearly 150 every day, and the number goes up on weekends. With no restrictions on who can visit, the shrine is believed to be a place where wishes are granted. "People from all faiths and beliefs visit the shrine. The name itself can be loosely translated as 'The door to fulfilling people's needs'," said Shirazi.

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ReNew Power sells 10% stake to Japanese firm

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: ReNew Power Ventures, an Indian renewable energy specialist company, has sold a 10% stake to Japan's JERA for \$200 million in a deal that values the company at \$2 billion, marking Japan's first entry into India's renewable energy sector.

The stake sale gains significance against the background of ReNew Power Ventures' impending initial public offering (IPO).

Goldman Sachs, ADB

ReNew Power now counts Goldman Sachs, Asian Development Bank, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), and JERA among its major investors, CEO and chairman Sumant Sinha told reporters at a press confer-

ence on Tuesday.

"JERA will have one board member and one observer. They have experience managing grids, and with renewable energy becoming more significant in India, grid management becomes even more important," he said.

ReNew Power has 3.2 GW of capacity, either already installed or announced, of solar and wind energy. It operates across 11 states in India, with none accounting for more than 20% of the installed capacity.

The company has also secured several lines of debt funding, including \$390 million from ADB and \$250 million from Overseas Private Investment Corporation. "We will be... closing a masala bond issue of \$425 million soon," Mr. Sinha added.

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JERA picks 10% stake in ReNew

Japan's leading power company JERA has picked up a 10% stake in ReNew Power Ventures, India's leading renewable energy producer. "JERA has acquired 10% stake in ReNew Power for \$200 million," said Sumant Sinha, chairman and CEO of ReNew Power.

