

Nine years of Activism & Service

FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD

NEWS LETTER : 3

MAR - APR- 2009

(Private Circulation only)

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ACITIVITES:

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The FORUM came into existence in the year 2000 and became a registered Public Trust in 2003. It is functioning through various sub-committees and networking with concerned NGOs. Forum is bringing to light issues pertaining to Urban Planning, Heritage Conservation, Lakes & Water Bodies, Parks Forests & Open Space, Traffic & Transportation, Water & Air Pollution, Solid & Industrial Waste Management. These and other such relevant issues are brought to the notice of the Authorities (and if required pressurizing them to take action), offering positive suggestions and optimum solutions. The Forum has also filed Public Interest Litigations whenever called for.

Aims & Objects:

- To be proactive and constructive
- To mobilize public opinion
- To stand up and make it heard on major issues exposing lack of concern or neglect of environmental consideration.
- To involve in decision-making on such issues.

Green Cover: Annapurna Studios have replied that they are “only augmenting existing facilities” and going for ISO-9001 & 14001 certification, and they have “intentions of maintaining the greenery undisturbed.” FBH have written to them on 7th April, 2009 to confirm that existing trees will not be cut at all.



Google photo showing Annapurna Studios-7Acres

A team consisting of Forest Department official, Dept.of MoEF,A.P., Radial Road Division under Growth Corridor and ORR, Times of India, and Mr.M.Vedakumar have visited Produktur tree transplantation site on 25th March, 2009 to observe the growth in translocated trees, whether they are growing as expected.

Times of India's efforts has brought awareness widely about the aspect. This translocation have been encouraged by the Chief Secretary of A.P., from the word go.



A tree is being transported to translocation site



Translocated trees showing growth

Hussainsagar Lake : On 7th April, 2009 FBH have sought from HMDA a copy of the report of the Supreme Court appointed 3 Member Monitoring Committee (Under RTI Act).



Google photoshowing Hussain sagar lake

Filling up of Banjara Lake :

HMDA have not replied to our letter of 18th March. But Taj Banjara Hotel have replied that the project on Rehabilitation and Rejuvenation of Banjara Lake adjoining the Hotel was approved by Ministry of Environment & Forests with APTDCL as nodal agency and “minimum filling of water body” has taken place. Dr. Jasveen Jairath and Sri. Omim Maneckshaw Debara, accompanied by GM and Chief Engineer of the Hotel went around the site and found minimum filling up of the lake . They

were told that a Sewage Treatment Plant will be set up in the nearby grave yard and a dam will be constructed nearby to store treated water before being released to the lake.



The lake adjoining the Hotel Taj Banjara

Forum along with other Civil Society Groups had forwarded “Hyderabad Green Manifesto” to all political parties with request to include in their respective election manifesto an agenda for protection of environment and sustainable development. Some of the recommended points in Green Manifesto are:

** The use of non-biodegradable plastic materials (Polyethylene), such as buntings, banners, flags etc for Election Campaigns be avoided by Political Parties

*** Strict enforcement of the provisions of Water, Land, Trees Act (WALTA), with particular reference to cutting of Trees, be ensured in the area covered by HMDA.

*** Oppose any changes to the provisions of G.O.Ms.No 111dated 8-3-1996, prohibiting various development activities within 10 Km of FTL in the catchment area of Himayat and Osman Sagar, etc., As a responsible civil society group, some of the Forum’s members have actively participated in the Campaign of Ennikala Nigha Vedika, A.P., which is a network of likeminded 250 N.G.O/CSO’S and social activists across the state of Andhra Pradesh, which had come together to facilitate effective implementation of model code of conduct evolved with consensus of political parties, in coordination with the chief Election Commissioner of AP and District Election Officer (D.E.O) of the respective districts of A.P state.

Pollution:

The Hindu had published on 17th Feb. 2009, the gist of a recently published book stating that Patancheru industrial area's common effluent treatment plant's discharge is creating another



The State Convenors of Ennikala Nigha Vedika, A.P., at one of the meeting with the CEO, A.P.,

“Bhopal-in-the making” in Hyderabad. FBH have taken up with AP Pollution Control Board to ascertain what steps have been taken to prevent possible ecological disaster.



A heavy machine working in side the Nayaquilla

Golf Course in Golconda Fort area :

In principle approval of ASI, New Delhi, dt. 29.11.2001 had important stipulations like:

- (i) MOU to be vetted by ASI and Law Ministry.
- (ii) Complete layout of the Golf Course both within and outside the fort walls to be approved by ASI.
- (iii) Golf Course along existing contours of the land.
- (iv) No structure will come up within 100 metres of rampart walls both within and outside.....

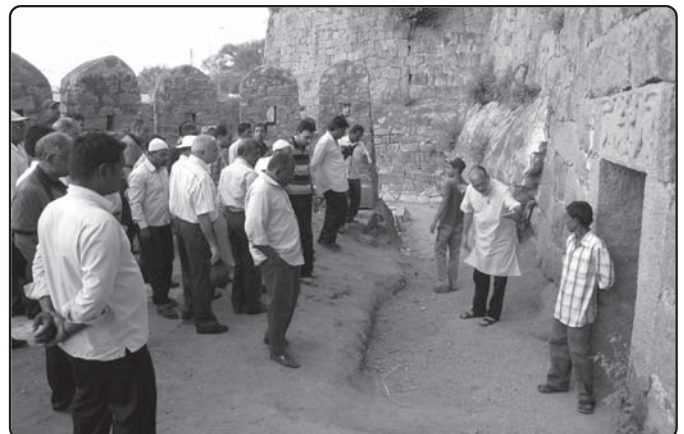
- (iv) Portion of land to the right of present entry point will be developed as per original layout of the Qutub Shahi garden.

None of these has yet been complied with. Still as early as 6th Feb. 2002, APTDCL executed a Registered Deed of License with HGA after handing over 212 acres of protected land including 50 acres in Nayaquilla area inside the Fort (at a rent of Rs.1 per acre) with covenants like:

- (a) HGA **has already commenced work** of laying the Golf Course and shall commence construction of buildings **with immediate effect**.
- (b) HGA will make available 9 holes by June, 2003 and remaining 9 holes within 9 months thereafter.
- (c) HGA's bye-laws shall provide for membership of Service Officers present/past of GOI, A.P.Govt. and APTDCL, as will be communicated by APTDCL.

Civil Society Organizations are wondering how such a document could have been executed by APTDCL in 2002.

Forum have submitted representations with detailed memorandum, press reports and photographs to the Director General, ASI, New Delhi on 10th, 20th, 24th and 26th March, suggesting cancellation of their in-principle approval. INTACH New Delhi had also taken up with ASI, New Delhi. Addl. Director General of ASI, New Delhi with other officials inspected the Nayaquilla and Jamalikutna areas and the work done so far by HGA on 28th April, 2009.



The members of the Forum and Civil Society Group observing the earth cutting next to the fort wall

During the aforesaid inspection, followed up by a detailed memorandum to the Director General, ASI, New Delhi, Forum have reiterated that:-

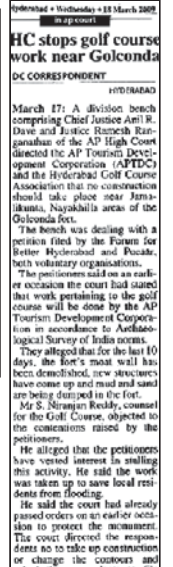


Sri.B.R.Mani, Jt.Dir. Gen.ASI, ND., is being enlightened about the happenings in Nayaquilla by members of the Forum and PUCCAR

- No golf course in the Naya qila area of the Golconda Fort and the protected areas of the Golconda fort Monument should be allowed.
- Damages to structures, changes in contours, breakage of moat or Fort wall, and all other damages must be restored. All further changes made by the HGA or APTDCL must be reversed.
- Demolition of all illegal structures in the protected areas of the Fort., viz., Club House Building, a small permanent building for security personnel, wall along the road separating the Jamalikunta area of the Golf Course, Fence around the Golf Course within the Nayaquilla area. These are all within 100 metres of the Fort and in violation of a Central Act of 1958. Article 19 (2) of the Act should be invoked, which provides for removal of such building under an order of the Central Government.
- Immediate cancellation of the in- principle, conditional consent given in ASI letter Dt. 29.11.2001.

Since the A.P. High Court's interim stay order in response to a Writ Petition filed in 2008 appears to have been violated, the feasibility of filing contempt case(s) is being examined.

The media, specially the print media, have been focusing the issue of how the Golf Course would be detrimental to the historical heritage (and protected) property, the pride of A.P., and the country. Some write ups: "Stay order on Golf Course" (Andhra Jyothi & Sakshi-18.3.2009), "Whose Fort is it anyway"(The Hindu-24 & 31st March, 2009), "It's a Monumental Shame" (TOI-28.4.2009), "Rock blasting on at Fort" (The New Indian Express-28.4.2009), "Deconstructing the Fort with a nine-iron" (The New Indian Express-29.4.2009), "A paradise lost to Golf" (The Hindu-29.4.2009) , "Golf Club members insensitive to heritage destruction" (TOI-29.4.2009),



"Apathy over Golconda shocks citizens" (TOI-1.5.2009), "Stop Golf Course" (Andhra Jyothi & Surya-1.5.2009).

Annual Day of FBH:

9th Annual Day of the Forum will be held on 5th June, 2009 at Administrative Staff College of India premises, Khairatabad coinciding with World Environment Day. Ms.Sunita Narain, noted environmentalist and Director, Centre for Science & Environment, New Delhi will release the Forum's Annual Number on that day and other environmental concerned citizens are invited to attend the programme.