

FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD

Nine years of Activism & Service

NEWS LETTER : 9

MARCH - APRIL - 2010

(Private Circulation only)

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ACTIVITIES :

MARCH - APRIL - 2010

HERITAGE :

Golconda Fort- Fateh Darwaja- Illegal construction:

Despite District Collector's letter dt 16.02.10 to MRO for stopping/ removing the illegal nursing home construction, work continued. FBH had informed the Collector and ASI Hyderabad on 15.03.10. Since neither the builder nor the authorities took any action, FBH jointly with Friends of Golconda has filed a PIL in the High Court.

Golconda Fort- Proposed Golf Course

1. Copy of Forum's letter dt 19.4.10 to the Superintendent , ASI Hyderabad:

Sub: Nayaquilla Kandak Restoration – Hyderabad Golf Course Association – making of staircase from moat wall and pathway to Surang leading to NQ area. Other illegal works done.

Extracts: We learnt that you had removed the pucca staircase from the moat wall and leveled the surface of the slope. We have come to know, however, that the Hyderabad Golf club has again built a kuccha staircase by using the earth and stones brought by you for filling up the hollow inside of the moat wall earlier broken by the golf club. Please, therefore, take steps immediately to



Pucca Staircase constructed illegally from Moat wall and pathway to Surang

remove the staircase and take suitable penal action against the golf club. Please also file an FIR with the police for criminal action against the golf club. We had earlier sent you a telegram in this regard.

Greening : Please see the enclosed photograph with narration on reverse. It shows that the grass has been planted on the fort wall, obviously to use it for teeing. This place is outside the prescribed area for the golf course. The action is illegal and action needs to be taken.”

2. Extracts from Forum's letter dt 12.4.10 to ASI Hyderabad, with copy to DG ASI New Delhi:

- Hyderabad Golf club has made a security post to prevent entry of the public into the Nayaqila part of the Fort area, which is prohibited under the MOU. We enclose photographs showing the security guard of HGA preventing our Dr. Jairath from visiting the area. A complaint dated 10.4.10 by Dr. Jairath to the Golconda police station is enclosed. Why and how was a security check post of the Golf club allowed?
- In certain parts the moat bed has been filled up; ostensibly to green and grass the area to create golf course way. Photographs are enclosed. This is changing the contour of the area which is prohibited under the MOU. Why and how was this allowed?
- Further you (or the golf club) has also fenced the area to facilitate the above illegal activity. Is fencing made or allowed to bring the area under the golf club area? Photographs are enclosed. Why and how was this allowed?

You have completely failed in your duty to protect the Golconda Fort and its protected areas. You have failed to exercise any supervision and seem to be oblivious of your responsibility.

Your inaction in the matter constitutes the violation of the Hon'ble High Court order dated 17.3.09, apart from violating the protected areas of the Monument.

Further, your certification to the High Court that you have restored the moat wall is open to question. You

have merely closed the outer sides of the Moat wall which the Hyderabad Golf Association had cut through to make a passage and placed a slab connecting the two sides of the Moat wall. The inside of the Moat wall is kept hollow, leaving scope for reconstructing the passage by removing the two outer sides. Besides, foreign slabs have been used to construct the wall. The work done cannot be construed to be 'restoration' work as per ASI norms, which the Hon'ble High Court has directed you to do. Please rectify the position without further delay.

We call upon you to immediately take steps to remove the unauthorized constructions as narrated above, by invoking Article 19(2) of the AM & ASR Act 1958. Please make sure that you comply strictly with the procedure under the Act.

3. Copy of Forum's letter dt 24.4.10 to Dr. J. Geeta Reddy, Minister for I & PR, Tourism, Archaeology, Museums, Archives & Culture, Govt of AP:-

Extracts:

Sub: Felling of trees by the Hyderabad golf club Weekend golf tournament organized by APTDC

We would like to bring to your notice that the Hyderabad golf club has felled a few trees in the Jamalikunta side of the Golconda Fort to make way for small grass patches. On our complaint the Forest department has fined them with a paltry sum of Rs. 2250/-.

The act of the golf club is illegal and violates the WALTA and GO Rt. No. 539 dt 11.12.2008. Their non-chalance and the reasons given by them for felling the trees reflect a total indifference to environment and are not acceptable. In the circumstances, and considering that the whole matter of the golf course is under a case with the A.P. High Court, **we appeal to you to dissociate yourself from prize distribution ceremony and to instruct the APTDC to shift the golf tournament elsewhere in the interest of propriety.**

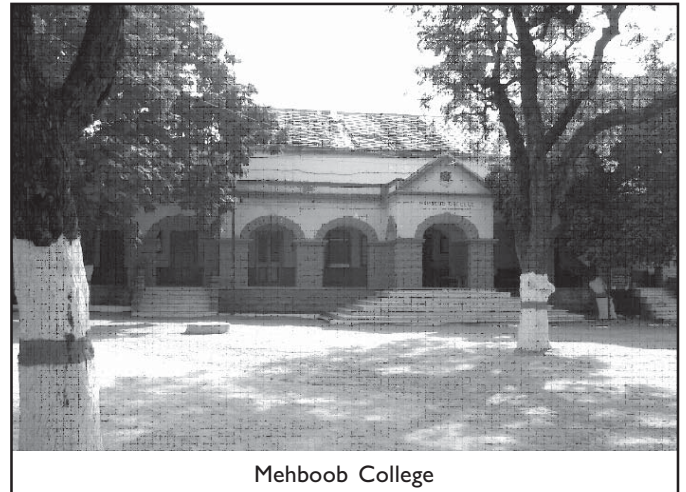
Golconda Fort - Moti Darwaja

There was an attempt to encroach on land in front of Moti Darwaja within the protected area of the Fort. Though the attempt was foiled due to efforts of some vigilant locals, it may be repeated. Forum have brought this to the notice of ASI Hyderabad with photos requesting ASI to lodge police diary.

Mehboob College

GHMC's proposal to widen roads (SPRoad/ RPRoad) surrounding Mehboob College in Secunderabad will lead to complete demolition of CV Padma Rao Memorial hall and will bring the road dangerously close to more than

century old Swami Vivekananda Hall (-where Swami Vivekananda had delivered last public speech in the country before leaving for Chicago in 1893-), both notified Heritage buildings. (Deccan Chronicle report dt 26.4.10).



Mehboob College

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Irregular constructions

On 12.3.10, Forum have applied to GHMC Circle VIII, under RTI Act, seeking following information:

- A. List of buildings constructed from 16th Dec, 2007 till 31st, Jan, 2009, deviating from the GHMC sanction plan.
- B. Action taken on each of the structure that had deviated the sanction plan.
- C. If cases have been filed in the court, the present status of each.

Master Plan

Forum has submitted detailed comments on Master Plan through our letter Dt. 19.4.2010 to the Metropolitan Commissioner, HMDA with copies to the Commissioner, GHMC and to the Principal Secretary, MA & UD,

WATER BODIES

Hussainsagar - Proposed YSR Memorial near IMAX

As per newspaper report, State Govt. have decided to build the memorial. On 27.4.10. Forum have requested the Chief Secy. Govt. of AP, Commissioner- HMDA, MD-BPPA not to go ahead with the project till the pending case regarding constructions around Hussainsagar is decided by the Supreme Court. It seems, State Govt. is going ahead with the project, on the premise that no building will be constructed.

ENVIRONMENT - ECOLOGY - FORESTS -

I. YSR Smruti Vanam

I. Copy of our letter dt.22.4.2010 to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Sri.K.Rosaiah:

Sub: Dr.Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy Smruthi Vanam in Velugodu Reserve Forest

Further to our letter dated 16th September 2009 addressed to the Hon'ble Chief Minister on the subject and with reference to G.O.Ms.No 83 of 30-09-2009, it is now reliably learnt that the State Cabinet decided to go ahead with the development of **"DR. Y.S.R.Reddy Smruthi Vanam"** in an area of **1424.14 Ha**, (Compartment Nos. 656, 657, 694 and 697), near the Helicopter-crash site, in Velugodu Reserve Forest in **Atmakuru Wildlife Management (WLM) Division** in Project Tiger Circle, Srisailem.

The helicopter crash-site is **Pavurala Gutta** in Velugodu Reserve Forest- Gundla Brahmeswara (GBM) Wildlife Sanctuary- Atmakuru WLM Division (Compart. No.731)

Creation of "Critical Tiger Habitat"

As already stated, the proposal to create a consolidated core area of **"Tiger Reserve"** by merging critical Tiger Habitats of **"Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve"** with entire **"Gundla Brahmeswara (GBM) Wildlife Sanctuary"** was discussed in the 2nd meeting of the State Board for Wildlife, chaired by none other than late Chief Minister **Dr.Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy on 9-10-2007** and it was reviewed again in 3rd meeting of State Board for Wildlife, chaired by **Hon'ble Chief Minister Sri K. Rosaiah on 11-09-2009**.

This consolidated **"Core of Tiger Reserve"** which will be notified as **"Critical Tiger Habitat"** along with the notified buffer of the Tiger Reserve, is expected to provide full landscape of more than 6,000 Sq.Kms, where the Tigers can safely survive for the next 200 years, with better chance to flourish.

No development Activity is permitted in the **"Critical Tiger Habitat"** including **"GBM Wildlife Sanctuary"** and its buffer zone as it will be **"NO Activity Zone"** after settling the cases of ROFR Act.

Ecological Impact of Memorial

The development activity of the proposed **"Smruthi Vanam"** at the site, associated approach roads /paths, infrastructure facilities, vehicular traffic, large number of visiting pilgrims to "Smruthi Vanam" and Helicopter Crash-Site Site etc, **right in the protected "Critical Tiger Habitat"**, is bound to disturb the ecological balance and endanger the home for thousands of endangered animals, birds, rare medicinal and endemic plants, in the ecologically fragile area, the Flora and Fauna

of which is pristine and beautiful apart from violating the provision of **"No Activity"**.

We express our serious concern at the proposal of the State Government to develop **"Dr. Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy Smruthi Vanam"** right in the **"Critical Tiger Habitat"**, a No Activity Zone, where any activity including construction of roads is banned as per Wildlife Act `1972.

Appeal

The beloved late Chief Minister "YSR", whose loss is irreparable, demonstrated his love for Nature and Wild life by launching the bold **"Operation Restoration of Kolleru"** for dismantling fishponds encroaching into the Government lands in the notified Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary. A fitting memorial to **"YSR"** will be to preserve nature and wild life and not to destroy them. The proposed Smruthi Vanam will, on the contrary, hurt YSR's values.

We earnestly appeal to Hon'ble Chief Minister and the State Government to review their decision and consider renaming **"GBM Wild Life Sanctuary"** as **"Dr.Y.S.R.Reddy Wildlife Sanctuary"** which may be more fitting memorial to late Dr.Y.S.R.Reddy

[PM has recently written to the CMs of a few States- though not to AP- to take special steps to prevent encroachments in tiger habitats.]

2. Copy of Forum's letter dt 26.3.10 to Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of Environments & Forests, Gol, New Delhi:

Sub: A separate directorate at Hyderabad to implement 'YSR Smruti Vanam'

We refer to a report in the Hindu dated 24.3.10, stating that the State Cabinet has taken a decision to create a separate Directorate at Hyderabad to implement the 'YSR Smruti Vanam' at the site of the helicopter crash in Kurnool district. The project will come up in the Velugodu reserve forest in Kurnool district and will be completed in three years. The directorate will have 33 officers and supporting staff to oversee the execution of the project, the cost of which has been estimated at Rs. 13 crores. A copy of the Hindu report is enclosed. From the report, it appears that the A.P. State Government has finalized the YSRM project.

So far as we know, no Environmental Impact Assessment of the project been made and no environmental clearance has been obtained for the project; or even applied for.

We consider an EIA and environmental clearance are absolutely necessary for the project, before any headway is made with the project. We request you not to

sanction the project till such studies are done, and to advise the State Government accordingly. In this connexion, we refer to the letter dated 1.10.09 which the Forum and several other organisations had earlier written to the State Government. A copy of the letter is enclosed for ready reference.”

3. On 23.4.10, FBH have written to Shri N Chandramohan Reddy, Project Director- YSRV project, advising inter alia that- ... “your statement that EIA and Environment Clearance are not necessary is not acceptable to us. We reiterate our opposition to the project..... We request the authorities to shift the YSR Smrutivanam from tiger habitats area to another place.”

2. Tree cutting:

1. Press Release on 20.4.10 by FBH : ANOTHER GREEN MASSACRE

(Tree cutting in the compound of Victoria Maternity Hospital)

Eleven trees including Tamarind tree and Dirshana have been cut in the compound of Victoria Maternity Hospital, a recently delisted heritage building without approval of the Forest Department. This follows the recent cutting of 24 trees near helipad at the Secretariat, again without

approval of Forest Department. Repeated violations of the WALTA Act and the GO Rt. No. 539 are taking place. This is disturbing. The Forum For A Better Hyderabad & many other NGO's severely condemn such action and demand an investigation to determine responsibility and to take deterrent penal action against the guilty. Adequate preventive measures against recurrence must be taken. Meanwhile these stubs must not be uprooted, instead grown. Compensatory plantation must be made where necessary as per guidelines.



Felling of trees in the premises of Victoria Maternity Hospital

(Earlier on 15.4.10, FBH had written to GHMC regarding unauthorized tree cutting in front of the Secretariat and also had a meeting with the Commissioner on 19.4.10. He had agreed for the compensatory planting of trees and to retain the stubs in existing positions and nourished to grow.)



Protest against felling of trees in front of A.P. Secretariat

Readers interested in helping the FORUM by participating in its activities and/or becoming its member, will please contact the Forum by E-mail/Phone/Letter.

10th Anniversary of the FORUM coinciding with World Environment Day-2010 will be celebrated at Conference Hall I (CR I) in Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Somajiguda on 5th June, 2010 at 11 a.m.

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