

Ten years of Activism & Service

FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD

NEWS LETTER : 10

MAY - JUNE - 2010 (Private Circulation only)

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ACTIVITIES :

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URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Ward Committees / Area Sabhas:

Copy of Forum's letter dt.29.5.10 to the Minister, MA & UD, AP:

As you are aware, following the 74th Constitutional Amendment, the Govt of A.P has amended its municipalities and municipal corporations Acts in 2008 and in February 2010 it issued a GO nos.57 & 58 to regulate the process of nominations and election to the Ward Committees and Area Sabhas.

However, in conducting the process of nominations and election, the GHMC Commissioner, as well as the GHMC Council, have been unsuccessful, even after repeated efforts. We consider that this is entirely due to the fact that this exercise has not been conducted, as it ought to be, under the auspices of the State Election Commission.

We request you to use your good offices so as to see that the spirit of the Constitution is upheld and that the civil society can directly participate in the management of its local affairs without party affiliations.

HERITAGE:

1. Road Widening: Referring to the report in Deccan Chronicle dt.12.5.10 that GHMC has resumed widening of 19 arterial roads in the city, Forum have requested the Metropolitan Commissioner HMDA to advise whether GHMC have obtained permission from HMDA and whether advice of Heritage Conservation Committee has been obtained for such road widening as would affect the

heritage structures, as per law and as mandated by the A P High Court in WP 20387 of 2001.

2. Mahboobia Girls' College, Gunfoundry:

Two huge unipolar hoardings- 40'x 40' and 30'x 25'- are being erected on either sides of the college. Iron framework does not gel with the century old stone edifice and mars its beauty. Once the hoardings reach full height, clear view of the building will be blocked. The Hindu dt. 4.6.10 says "money matters rule over aesthetics." But the college will get a pittance of Rs.50 per sq.ft. per annum. Forum have urged the Commissioner GHMC to immediately stop its erection and cancel the sanction.

3. Jamali Kunta Darwaja- Golconda Fort:

Opposite to this Darwaja within protected area of the Fort, one Mohd. Naseerulla Khan started excavation for constructing a house in violation of AM & ASR Act 1958. Forum have written to the Collector, Hyderabad and Supdt ASI Sultanbazar on 13.5.10 requesting them to file police complaint/ FIR and take action to stop/ remove work already done.

4. Nursing Home near Fateh Darwaja- Golconda Fort:

Despite A P High Court's order dt. 13.4.10 in WP.MP No.10501 of 2010 and WP No. 8167 of 2010, commercial activities have been started in this illegal newly constructed building. Forum had written to the Collector on 28.4.10 and to ASI Hyderabad on 28.4.10 & 27.5.10 urging them to seal the building immediately. Since no action was taken, High Court was approached. High Court has granted a stay on

any further construction or using it for any purpose. A letter has been sent to the Collector/ ASI Hyderabad requesting them to implement the Court order.

5. Golconda Fort;- Golf Course:

Based on a petition by Golf Course, High Court has passed orders allowing the Golf Course to lay grass without affecting the Contours. Forum is sending a letter to the Collector and Supdtg. Archaeologist ASI Hyderabad to ensure that Contours are not changed.

6. Qutub Sahi Tombs:

On 20.5.10 representatives of FBH, PUCAAR, Friends of Golconda, INTACH, and some local persons visited the site to see how the restoration work was being done by the contractor engaged by the State Deptt. of Archaeology & Museums. Director of the Deptt., Dy. Forest Officer Hyderabad and the contractor were also present. It was observed that the work was being done without proper study & planning and without proper supervision by the Deptt. Examples: heavy JCB machines were used for digging; earth was dug upto a maximum width of 9 metres from the walls at places against 4 metres permitted by Experts Committee; carved stones taken out of tomb structures; trees were felled without permission in a haphazard manner; etc.

On 24.5.10 FBH have submitted a detailed report to the Director of State Archaeology & Museums/ Principal Secy. of State Tourism Deptt./ as also to Sri Jawahar Sirkar, Secy. Ministry of Culture Gol. Considering the importance of Qutub Sahi Tombs, FBH have requested that Archaeological Survey of India should oversee the restoration work of such monuments.

ENVIRONMENT- ECOSYSTEM- FORESTS- TREES

1. Proposed YSR Smruti Vanam near helicopter crash site:

Despite serious objections raised by the Forum, State Govt. is going ahead with the project, which runs counter to the efforts of the Ministry of Environment & Forests of Gol to save tiger habitats. [The Union Minister had recently visited Nagarjunsagar- Srisailem

Tiger Reserve area and over 1,000 families- predominantly tribals- are likely to be relocated from the reserve area with compensation of Rs.10 lakhs each.] National Tiger Conservation Authority, Gol has reportedly opposed the illegal construction of YSR Smruti Vanam. The Forum has therefore again written to Shri Jairam Ramesh on 27.5.10 with all the facts and reasoning requesting him to intervene and stop the project. Letter has also been sent to the committee appointed by MoEF, Gol for examining the YSRSV project, asking them not to give clearance to prevent adverse effect on wild life.

2. Tree Cutting:

In view of frequent instances of tree cutting without permission, senior members of the Forum had called on Shri PV Ramana Reddy, Conservator of Forests on 21.5.10. It was agreed that meetings of District Tree Protection Committee will be held once in a month on second Friday afternoon- addl. Meetings if necessary- and stakeholders will be informed in time. In view of inadequate number of forest guards, CCF suggested a system of having Tree Wardens in different localities, who can serve as watchdogs (on the lines of Karnataka model). He was requested to prepare a proposal for examination by appropriate bodies.

Forum suggested to CCF that no one responsible for unauthorized tree felling- even if Govt. official or influential person- should go unpunished. Forest Deptt. should invariably take punitive action and information should be circulated by Press Notes.

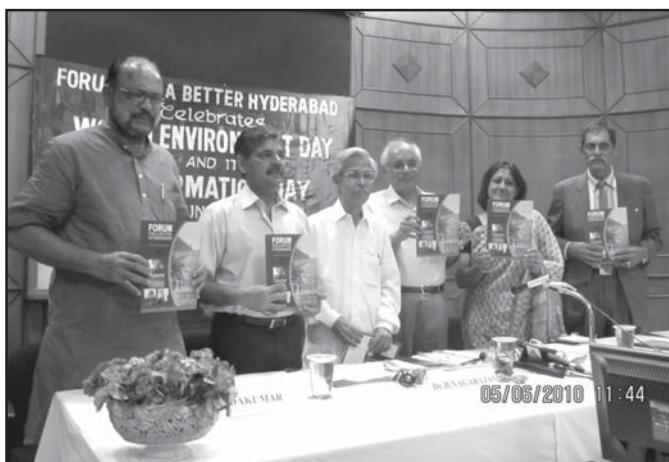
WATER BODIES-

1. Hussainsagar:

Proposed YSR Memorial Park: State Govt. is going ahead with the proposal. Chief Engineer HMDA in reply to Forum's application under RTI Act has replied on 24.5.10 that necessary action (for the Memorial) will be taken duly adhering to the guidelines of the Supreme Court.

2. Musi Bachao Yatra:

Musi Bachao Yatra was conducted by HMTV during 10th – 21st June from Anantagiri Hills, the origin of Musi to Vadapalli, Nalgonda Dist. The Yatra highlighted the various problems of the people of about 80



Release of Annual Number by Dr. S.K. Rao, Director General ASCI, From L to R: Sri.M.Vedakumar, Major Gen.Dr. B.Nagarajan, Sri.R.K.Sinha, Ms. Amitha Desai and Sri.O.M.Debara

Comments and suggestions made by the participants are also given hereunder.

Prof. M. S. Kodarkar

-Rainwater harvesting should be made compulsory in all Govt. buildings and universities/ colleges/ institutions.

-Small size lakes less than 10 hectares should be surveyed and steps taken to stop encroachment.

-Forum can think of organizing Hyderabad Environmental Festival on $\frac{3}{4}$ critical areas in collaboration with other organizations.

Dr.Vasanth Rao, Retd. Professor of Botany, OU

Cactus should be planted by Forest Dept. in rocky areas of the city.

Mr. M. Kamal Naidu/ Mr. Mohd.Turab

-Forest deptt./ GHMC should plant enough neem, peepal, tamarind, banyan trees, which are maximum environment friendly, and supply these saplings for plantation by residential colonies. Saplings now being planted by GHMC are unable to withstand storms/ winds.

Mr. Menon

Lakhs of saplings planted by GHMC die within one year and most of the tree guards are stolen. Each one



Interactive Session

of us should take care of five trees planted by GHMC near our houses.

R. Gopalakrishna

Office bearers of big colonies should try to have an STP plant with a composting field in their colonies with support from Govt.

Dr. Jasveen Jairath

For protection of waterbodies, we need to take some programme of action to create awareness among politicians, bureaucrats, corporate, who are the prime movers.

Mr. R. Rajamani, IAS.(Retd.)

Ours is the only constitution which has a provision that it is a fundamental duty of every citizen to take care of the environment. Emphasis should be on cycling/ recycling/ biodiversity. But the question is whether myself is taking care of the environment? How to change ourselves?

Dr. M. Mandal

A programme of action to achieve greater responsiveness from Govt. departments, and greater coordination between civil society and administration – initiative may be taken by ASCI. Dr S. K. Rao responded positively. He mentioned that 13th Finance Commission have recommended that ASCI should establish a centre for promoting good practice and innovation in Govt. This centre, Dr. Rao thought, should link up with State Govts. At the same time.