

Ten years of Activism & Service

NEWS LETTER : 16

MAY - JUNE - 2011

# FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD

(Private Circulation only)

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## HERITAGE- GOLCONDA FORT & Golf Course

Forum member's letter dt.28.06.11 to ASI Hyderabad re: cutting of a channel by HGA:-

As the reply of the PIO in letter F.No. RTI/2011-12/HC/1000 dated 17<sup>th</sup> June to our letter dt 16.3.11 under the Right to Information Act 2005 is insufficient and factually incorrect in parts, we appeal to you for supplying the information as follows:

Re item no 4 of the letter: the depth of the digging was much in excess of 1 foot in certain places where the surface land was elevated than elsewhere. We have photographs to this effect. Please see attachments. Please, therefore, advise us the correct position. Meanwhile, please send us a copy of the report of the person deputed by you for inspection.

The Proviso to Clause 19 of the AM & ASR Act, 1958 permits digging without prior permission of ASI up to one foot only, for cultivation only. a) The digging done by the HGA was not for cultivation. b) The Court's interim order permits only grassing without change of contour; in the instant case, assuming but not admitting that there was no change of contour, the digging was not for laying of grass. c) Further, the digging exceeded one foot at places. The action was, therefore, illegal both in terms of the Act and the Court order.

We note that the work was done not by you but by the HGA.

We note that in your above letter dated 17.6.11 you endorse the action of the HGA in regard to the above work. Please advise us afresh in the light of the foregoing.

## HERITAGE- Qutb Shahi Garden & Golf Course

Following info. have been sought for from ASI Hyd. on 16.06.11:-

Whether the map of Qutb Shahi Garden as drawn by ASI in the approved lay out plan of the Hyderabad golf course has since been cancelled or suspended;

Whether the maps of Qutb Shahi Garden ( known as Bagh-i-Naya Qila) as marked in : Deccan Studies, July – Dec 2007, page 16; Map 6. Golconda Survey Map of Yazdani ( Courtsey) ASI; Historical Map of Golconda Fort ( Based on Golconda Survey Map, n.d., of Yazdani, Hyderabad Government; Map of Nazir-ul-Islam ( 1941); Maps of Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi and Hyderabad, field study of Dr. M.A. Nayeem and the Map of Central Survey Office, A.P., Hyderabad - which were all forwarded to you – have been referred to by you in redrawing the map of Qutb Shahi Garden. [ Please see Dr. M.A. Nayeem's "The Heritage of the Qutb Shahis of Golconda & Hyderabad, 2006, pages X of the Acknowledgement, page 101, pages 46-49]. These maps indicate a size of Qutb Shahi Garden which will be at least three times bigger than the size of the Garden as shown in the map drawn by you in the aforesaid lay out plan of the golf course.

Whether you have redrawn the map of Qutb Shahi Garden in consonance with the above-mentioned maps/ drawings referred to under item 2 above; if not why not. What are your plans in this regard.

Whether you have cancelled the four holes planned by the Hyderabad golf course within the boundaries of the Qutb Shahi Garden as shown in the maps referred to under item 2 above.

Whether you have taken effective steps to prevent the intrusion of the golf course in any manner in that area. If not why not. What are your plans in this regard.

Queries made through another letter of same date:- Whether any golf holes exist and or are planned by the HGA in the lay-out of Qutb Shahi Garden. Whether such holes will be permitted, if so,

on what grounds, considering the following part of clause 5 of the MoU: "This area shall be demarcated aesthetically and not utilized for the Golf Course."

### **HERITAGE - SHATAM TALAB- Golf Course**

Copy of Forum's letter dt 29.06.11 to The Superintendent Archaeologist, ASI, Hyd. Sub: Digging with heavy machinery within prohibited/ protected area of Golconda Fort by HGA.

This is to confirm my telecon with you, today that HGA has resorted to heavy digging as stated above, with heavy machinery. I am requesting you to have the work stopped immediately and take other necessary action, as the site falls in the prohibited/ protected area of the monument. Your officials have already been informed and they are onsite.

### **HERITAGE - Moghulpura Tombs**

Deccan Chronicle in its issue dt.23.06.11 had published a report captioned "Monument is now a garage." Since it is a State-protected Monument and a Heritage Building, Forum have taken up strongly with Shri Chenna Reddy, AP State Archaeology & Museums. Extracts from letter dt 25.06.11 are given below.

We note your statement that your department "will inspect the monument as quickly as possible and will take the necessary steps to protect the monument". Please arrange for its inspection without further delay, and let us know the findings and the action taken by you to protect the monuments and to take necessary other steps under the Act.

In this connection, we feel disturbed by your alleged statement "We haven't come across the issue of encroachment so far". Does it mean that you have no machinery of your own to inspect the buildings under your protection? How could an obvious sight of encroachment as per the photograph published in the DC escape the notice of your concerned officials? Please examine the cause of this failing and take effective steps for ensuring proper vigilance. We shall be glad to hear from you in this regard.

On 25.6.11, Forum have also written to HMDA, with copy endorsed to HCC and GHMC, mentioning Quote.....You will agree that the situation is

disturbing and calls for immediate action to protect the building as per the heritage regulations. The incident could also be taken as an opportunity to find out any lacunae in the inspection system that could lead to such an oversight and / or in the machinery to enforce the regulations and / or human failure. We trust you will make the necessary investigations and take remedial action. .. Unquote.

### **HERITAGE- G Block in the Secretariat**

FBH in its letter dt. 06.05.11 has requested the Commissioner HMDA that in view of AP High Court's decision dt.25.10.2010 dismissing State Govt.'s (GAD) petition to demolish the building, HMDA should arrange to have the G-Block notified again as a Heritage Bldg. and to take steps for its proper maintenance & preservation. Chief Secretary and Principal Secy. GAD have also been requested to ensure proper repairs and upkeep of G-Block.

### **HERITAGE- Asman Mahal (Lakdi ka Pul)**

Copy of Forum's letter No.200 dt. May 5, 2011 to HMDA is given below. Since no reply was received, reminders have been sent on 16.06.11. It has been emphasized that construction of new complex should be prevented now, instead of dealing with it simply as a "violation" afterwards. Copies have been endorsed to GHMC, State Wakf Board. Quote... It has been brought to our notice that a portion of Asman Mahal, a grade III heritage building (the rear portion) has been demolished, and its remaining part is under threat, as in the area adjoining the heritage building, which is within the buffer zone of 30 metres of the heritage building, there is a plan for construction of a multi-storied complex by the developers of the adjoining plot. Further demolition was stalled due to the intervention of local M.L.A., Md. Virasat Rasool Khan and Rajya Sabha member, Shri Aziz Pasha, and objections by local residents, as reported in the press. Photographs numbering 1 to 8 of the building from different angles are enclosed.

Asman Mahal at present houses Mukarram Jah Hostel, which is functional. Reportedly, management of the Mukarram Jah Hostel raised no objection to the damage/ threat to their building. There is a mosque

on the north-west of Asman Mahal, which belongs to the Qutb Shahi era. This mosque too is endangered, and its boundary wall has been damaged.

We would like to know:

Whether any permission for demolition of any part of the Asman Mahal, and/ or construction of a multi-storied complex within its buffer zone was given by HMDA / HCC or GHMC; If not, what action, if any, has been taken/ proposed to be taken by HMDA/ GHMC. What action, if any, is being taken to protect this mosque of the Qutb Shahi area, when it is Wakf property.

### ENVIRONMENT- Sustainable Lifestyles

CMS and Forum for a Better Hyderabad jointly conducted a workshop on 23.06.11 at Press Club, Somajiguda on the topic “Sustainable environment, media, and youth.” Report on “UNEP’s Global Survey



for Sustainable Lifestyles” was presented in the workshop. Shri M.Vedakumar from FBH had participated. Mrs C S Rama Lakshmi IFS, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Director General of AP Forest Academy was the Chief Guest and released the report.

### TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION - Metro Rail Project

After receipt of HMR Ltd. reply dt. 9.6.11, Forum through letter dt. 16.6.11 have sought clarifications on a few vital points concerning Metro Rail’s impact on heritage buildings & precincts. As per HMRL, no

heritage bldg. is “directly falling on Metro Rail lines.” But whether railway line will be laid and/or any construction be made within 30 metres of any heritage building? What comments/ opinions were made by Heritage Conservation Committee during HMRL’s detailed presentation to HCC on 29.07.2008? (As per rules, no construction can take place within 30 metres of a heritage bldg. and within prohibited area of 100 metres and restricted area of 300 metres of a monument.) On HMRL’s comment that some of category I heritage bldgs. have been demolished/ encroached upon, FBH have stressed that such phenomenon cannot be a plea for its repetition; on the contrary, it highlights the need for abundant caution by HMRL at the planning stage.

### FORUM’S 11<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY- 5<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2011

Forum for a Better Hyderabad has celebrated WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY coinciding its 11<sup>th</sup> FORMATION DAY on 5th June, 2011 at Administrative Staff College of India, Somajiguda. Sri. M. Jagadeeswar, IAS, Managing Director, HMWS&SB was the Guest of Honour and has released the Annual Number of FBH, which depicts 11 years of activism of FBH. Smt. Karuna Gopal, President, Foundation for Futuristic Cities, Hyderabad area was the Guest Speaker.

The Programme began with welcome song by Oxford Grammar School students on Environment to make the participants realize the responsibilities of every human being to safe environment.

In his Welcome address, Sri M. Vedakumar, President, FBH explained the activities of FBH often jointly with likeminded Civil Society Groups to focus attention of Government Departments such as HMDA, GHMC, HMWS&SB, PCB, etc. The problems related to heritage, pollution, greenery, water bodies and so on are being pursued with the departments. He wanted the departments to be transparent, to take FBH into confidence, and to extend co-operation to find solution to various problems, instead of adopting other methods such as approaching courts. Sri. O.M. Debara, General Secretary presented the report of FBH for the year 2010-11 by elaborating

on specific programs taken up by FBH on various issues.

Sri. M. Jagadeeswar interacted with the participants including different NGOs working on various issues and gave extensive clarifications related to problems of drainage and water supply. He emphasized that to tackle such problems, involvement of NGOs and local people were essential. Example: illegal pumping of drinking water which leads to low pressure in other areas. He disclosed majors steps which are being taken to solve drainage problems.

Smt. Karuna Gopal praised FBH for its multiple roles since its inception. She suggested that the Forum

initiate and enhance partnerships between private sector and Govt. agencies, which will help to find solutions to many problems related to better environment and better livelihood. She emphasized that utmost importance should be given to the health of city which has three ingredients viz., i) Vision ii) Stake holders engagement to execute Govt. programmes iii) Government must adopt innovations for rapid development.

The programme came to an end with the distribution of curry leaf plants to the dignitaries and senior members of associated NGOs.



Release of Annual number: L to R ;  
Smt. Kulsum Reddy, Sri. M.Jagadeeswar, IAS,  
Sri.M.Veda kumar, Smt. Karuna Gopal, Sri. O.M.Debara



Smt.Karuna Gopal addressing the audience



Sri.M.Jagadeeswar,IAS., addressing the audience



A section of audience