

FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD

Nine years of Activism & Service

NEWS LETTER : 6

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER - 2009

(Private Circulation only)

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ACTIVITIES :

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER - 2009

HERITAGE

Golconda Fort- Naya Qila and Golf Course :

ASI have filed an affidavit requesting the High Court to direct Hyd. Golf Assocn & others to allow ASI to carry out the Court's earlier orders to reconstruct the Moat Wall. Forum have filed counters to ASI's and other Respondents' affidavits.

ASI Hyderabad filed an additional affidavit submitting a signed MOU between ASI ND and AP State Govt. They also filed a statement to the Court stating that they have complied with the Court's order dt 2.12.08 to restore the moat wall.

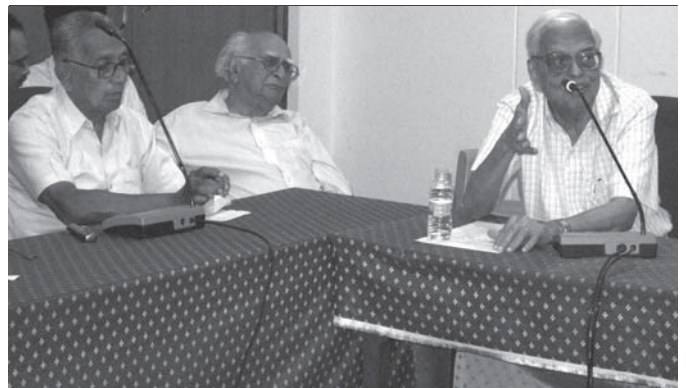
Forum had written to ASI on 5.10.09 to restore the moat wall and again on 10.11.09 to stop construction of staircase and pathway from moatwall to Surang with evidence of such construction as reported in the newspaper "Sakshi". Forum have filed an affidavit challenging the new MOU and ASI's statement that the moat wall has been restored. Forum's petition has been admitted.

Sri.M.Vedakumar and other Civil Society Members visited Nayaqila and Golconda on 8th September, 2009 along with Mr.Anil Bantia and his team of Doordarshan as a part of providing information about the success story of RTI Act utilization by the Forum in the case of the encroachment by Hyderabad Golf Academy in and around Nayaqila area in Golconda. The team had an interaction with Dr.M.Mandal, Sri.O.M.Debara and Sri.B.Ramakrishna Raju.



Mr. Anil Bantia and his team with Mr. M. Vedakumar at Nayaqila, Golconda

- "Friends of Golconda" had arranged a meeting at Urdu Hall on 27.9.09 on the topic "**Golconda under threat- Heritage & Tourism in conflict**"
- Dr.M.Mandal, Sri.M.Vedakumar, Md.Afzul and Md.Iliyas visited **Nayaqila on 5th October, 2009** and had a discussion with local populace regarding the happenings around Nayaqila area.
- Dr.M.Mandal, Sri.M.Vedakumar, Mr. O.M.Debara, Dr.Kulsum Reddy, Dr.Jasveen Jairath, Mr.Umesh Varma, etc., have attended a Panel Discussion of **Concerned Citizens on Golconda Fort and Hyderabad Golf Association at CESS, Begumpet on 12th Oct, 2009.**



Sri. B.P.R. Vittal, IAS., (Retd.) Former Chief Secretary giving clarification at the Round Table



Dr.M.Mandal, Smt.C.Kulsum Reddy, Sri.M.Vedakumar from FBH and Mohd.Afzul, from PUCAAR are seen

Moula-Ali Pahad:

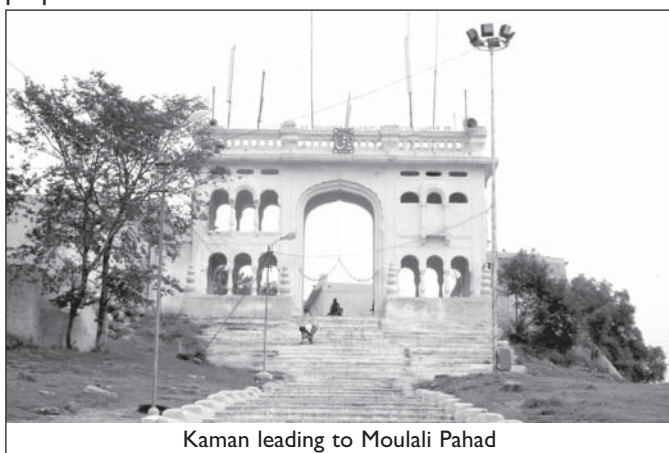
Transmission tower on the hilltop of MoulaAli rock outcrop is being constructed by Cyberabad Police for transmission of information. Forum's letter dt 17.8.09 to the Cyberabad Police Commissioner explains the position.

Letter dt. 17.8.2009 addressed to the Police Commissioner, Cyberabad by Forum For A Better Hyderabad on Moulali Heritage Precinct, Malkajgiri Mandal

It has come to our notice that a transmission tower is going to be constructed on the hilltop of the Moulali rock outcrop. The foundation for this construction has been laid right behind the Dargah, a famous place of pilgrimage which commands a spectacular view of the surrounding city. The work is under progress.

The Moulali Hill has been notified as Heritage Precinct under Regulation 13(1) of the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority Zoning Regulations 1981 by Government Order No. 68 dated 3.2.2009. This order says that "all Developments and Building and Layout permissions in the above Heritage Precincts shall be referred to Metropolitan Commissioner, Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority and Heritage Conservation Committee for clearance from the Heritage point of view..... no mining activity shall be allowed in the above sites."

Commissioner, Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority has not given any permission for the construction referred to in paragraph 1 of this letter. The work, therefore, is in violation of the aforesaid Regulation. Please, therefore, issue orders to the concerned officials / contractors to stop the work immediately and take such steps as are necessary for the purpose.



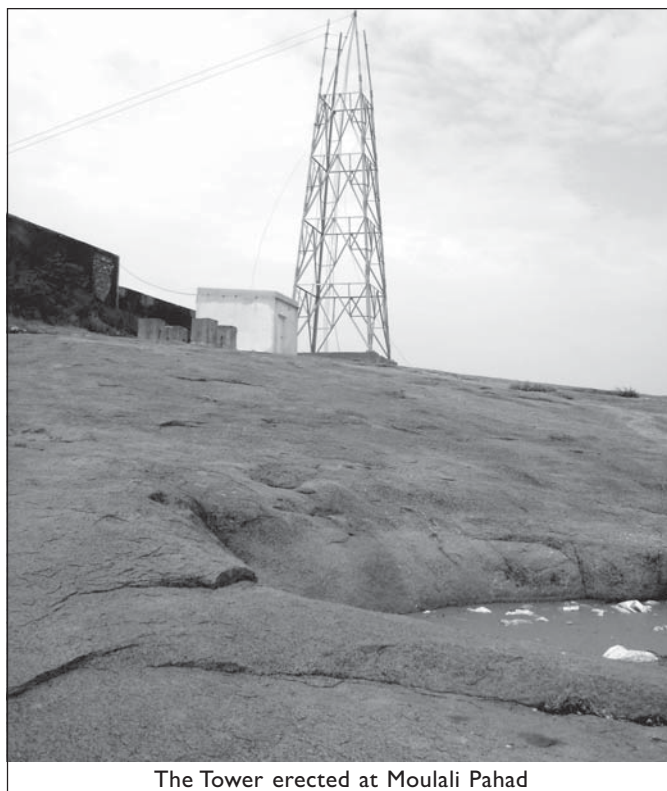
Kaman leading to Moulali Pahad

Wakf Board have also informed HMDA not to grant post facto permission, as the Board have cancelled their earlier permission to erect the tower on their property.

Ms Frauke Quader, Secretary, Society to Save Rocks, has addressed a similar letter to the Police Commissioner, as also to the Commissioner & Spl Officer GHMC. Representatives of some civil society groups had earlier met the Police Commsr.

twice, but he expressed inability to stop the work. The Society in a letter dt 20.9.09 has also requested Dr. K Jawahar Reddy Metropolitan Commissioner- HMDA to take action to protect the precinct, as custodian of notified heritage buildings. An earlier letter dt 12.8.09 to HMDA was not replied, but he verbally mentioned not having given any permission. Forum have also written to HMDA, GHMC, and Cyberabad Police Commissioner on 29.9.09 requesting cancellation of the construction at the site.

There was a Press Meet on the subject at NSS Hyderguda on 1.10.09. Representatives from Society to Save Rocks and the Forum had participated.



The Tower erected at Moulali Pahad

Vilayat Manzil:

Government officials have not responded to Forum's applications for information under RTI Act. Forum have written to Chief City Planner of GHMC, with copy to Commissioner and Chief City Planner of HMDA, on 19.10.09 requesting information on following points:-

- permission was not taken for demolition of residential portion, yet it was demolished; what action has been taken or proposed to be taken.
- since Vilyat Manzil is a heritage building, how a part thereof i.e. residential portion could be excluded from recognition as Heritage.

In this context, as per Ford Foundation study of HUDA- Conservation of historic buildings and areas in Hyderabad City 1984, use purpose in ZDP is Residential. Forum have therefore written to HMDA/ GHMC under RTI Act on 22.9.09 seeking clarifications.

ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Proposed YSR Memorial in Nallamalla Forests

Letter addressed to Sri.K.Rosaiah, the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of A.P., by Forum For A Better Hyderabad and the following concerned organizations.

● SAVE LAKES SOCIETY ● APNA VATAN ● COALITION FOR PEACE & HARMONY ● FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ● BHUMI ● FRIENDS OF GOLCONDA ● COVA ● CHATRI ● PUCAAR ● CONCERNED CITIZENS ● CITIZENS FOR A BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT (CFBPTH) IN HYDERABAD ● CHELIMI FOUNDATION ● NAPM ● TURAGA FOUNDATION ● CHETANA SOCIETY ● SOCIETY TO SAVE ROCKS ● HERITAGE WATCH ● HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM ● RIGHT TO WALK FOUNDATION ● SPEQL ● UNITED FEDERATION OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT ● AMAN VEDIKA

From the Press Reports it is learnt that the State Cabinet decided to erect a memorial in honour of late Chief Minister Dr.Y.S.Rajasekhar Reddy at the Helicopter crash site in the Nallamalla forests. The place where helicopter crashed at Pavurala Gutta(Tippa) is understood to be located in the core Tiger Area known as "Gundla Brahmeswara (GBM) Wildlife Sanctuary".

Creation of "Critical Tiger Habitat"

The proposal to create a consolidated core of "Tiger Reserve" by merging critical Tiger Habitats of "Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam 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.Rajasekhar 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 Activity will be permitted in the "Critical Tiger Habitat" including "GBM Wildlife Sanctuary". It will be "NO Activity Zone" after settling the cases of ROFR Act.

Ecological Impact of Memorial

The construction of proposed memorial at the site, associated approach roads /paths, infrastructure facilities, vehicular traffic, large number of visiting pilgrims to the memorial 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 in the frightening and majestic Nallamalla Forests, the Flora and Fauna of which is pristine and beautiful.

We express our serious concern at the proposal of the State Government to erect a memorial for the late Chief Minister, Dr.Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy at the helicopter crash site in the "Critical Tiger Habitat", 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 memorial will, on the contrary, hurt YSR's values. We earnestly appeal to the State Government to change their decision.

Through Forum's letters dt 16.9.09, the above letter to the Chief Minister was also forwarded to-

Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Dr. Manmohan Singh, Sri. Jairam Ramesh, Hon' ble Minister, MoEF, GOI, New Delhi. Shri P.Ramakanth Reddy- Chief Secy. Govt of AP, Shri C. Shiva Sankar Reddy- Principal Chief Conservator of Forests AP, and to Sri Hitesh Malhotra, Principal Chief Conservator of forests (WL) and Chief Wildlife Warden, Hyderabad (30.9.09).

Readers will please appreciate the Forum's viewpoint as mentioned in the above letter dt 16.9.09 to Shri K Rosaiah, CMAP.

Forum have sought on 30.9.09 following information under **RTI Act** from P.C.C.F (Wild Life) cum Chief Wildlife Warden, Ministry of Forests & Environment, Govt of AP :

- whether the proposed memorial site has been finalized by the State Cabinet;
- if so; details;
- whether proposal submitted to Gol- MoE&F.

No reply has been received.

WATER BODIES:

Efforts are being made to collect the orders reportedly issued by the Supreme Court stopping further construction around Hussainsagar, so that encroachments can be located.

OHRIs hotel next to JalVihar on Necklace Road is on a permanent structure, in violation of the High Court order. Forum is taking up with Buddha Purnima Project.

Delhi Door Darshan team which visited Hyderabad have been provided video coverage of Shahtam Talab, Jamalikunta, Naya Qila and tree transplantations that took place in recent past around twin cities.

Memorial Meet at the Historical Tamarind Tree:

A Memorial Meet was organized by Forum For A Better Hyderabad with the like minded NGOs under the historical and heritage Tamarind Tree next to the Osmania General Hospital, adjacent to River front of Musi which saved 150 peoples lives during the devastating floods to Musi on 28th September, 1908. The Memorial Meet in observance planted a Tamarind tree in its vicinity.



Mohd.Afzul, Member, PUCAAR, Sri.M.Vedakumar, President, FBH, Mohd. Turab, Ex-Secretary, COVA, Ilyas, Ikram and the local populace

MISCELLANEOUS

- CMS Vatavaran 2009 Film Festival** – The festival was organized by CMS Vatavaran, New Delhi from 27th – 31st Oct, 2009 at Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Sri.M.Vedakumar was the Chairperson of the Nomination Jury, consisting 31 members as Jurors from all over the country. This team has scrutinized 360 entries and selected 106 films for viewing. Sri.M.Vedakumar has presented a paper on **“Challenges faced in Conservation of Natural Heritage in the Country”** – **“Defining Role and Actions for Nodal Agency and for Stake Holders”** in the Symposium held during



Symposium:- Sri.Mahendra Vyas, Legal expert, Supreme court, (in the middle), is addressing; left to right Smt.P.N.Vasanti, Director, CMS Vatavaran, Sri.M.Vedakumar, Dr.Shobita Punja, Chief Programme Director, Smt.Nidhi Sarin, Environmentalist are seen

the festival. , The session was chaired by Sri.S.K.Misra , Chairman, INTACH New Delhi at Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

- Centre for Good Governance” and US Consulate Hyderabad had arranged a workshop on “Promoting citizen participation in the democratic process- The US experience”** on 18.9.09 in CGG’s seminar hall. Dr.M.Mandal, Sri.M.Vedakumar and Sri.B.Ramakrishna Raju had attended.
- A Heritage Walk was organized COVA in association with INTACH Hyderabad Chapter and Forum For A Better Hyderabad on 12.10.2009.**
- Sri.M.Vedakumar has participated in a Heritage walk in the surrounding areas of Charminar, viz., Chowmahalla Palace, Mahboob Chowk which was conducted by Dept. of Tourism on 25.10.2009.



Sri.Mazhar Hussain, Director, COVA, Sri.M.Vedakumar, President, FBH along with the American Consulate and their guests at Purani Haveli.



Flood Disaster Relief Committee Meeting comprising various Civil Society Groups - Dr. M. Mandal, Sri.O.M. Debara, Mohd.Turab, Sri.M.Vedakumar, Major Qadri and others