



SOCIETY TO SAVE ROCKS

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THE CURRENT PLIGHT OF KHAJAGUDA



Before



Current

Photos by Chamdla Rithik Reddy

Fakhruddingutta – the beautiful rock hill of Khajaguda – has generated quite some attention in Hyderabad since February this year. The reason: an area of intense natural beauty, witness to the ancient geological history of the Deccan Plateau and the adventure and recreation spot No. One in our park-starved city full of “development”, is a victim of defacement and destruction.

Members of the Great Hyderabad Adventure Club, the Hyderabad Climbers, the Hyderabad Trekkers, the Bicycling Club, Tree Saving Group, Urban Labs, Society to Save Rocks and many other concerned citizens gathered on the Hill on 6.2.2022 to raise their voice against the recent filling-in of a valley in the hill with debris and soil, in a hurried manner during the night, that smacked of illegality. Many boulders, indigenous trees and shrubs were covered completely by a 40 ft. high newly created embankment. And the lay-out of a road around the foot of the hill cut into a considerable amount of boulders.

In 2019, our Society had filed a PIL in the High Court of Telangana, after an attempt at blasting of rocks had been noticed in one of the slopes of the Hill, and had obtained a Stay Order which says that “the rocks must not be disturbed or damaged or destroyed” in the hill. This Stay Order has not been vacated till now. The new activities were a clear violation of that order and a brazen attack on the beautiful site. Innumerable visits of activists to various government offices later, there was still no clarity on the culprit of these actions.

Suddenly, the works stopped. Meanwhile, our Society had prepared a Contempt of Court case which was reported in some papers. The government took notice and after Hon.ble Minister K.T. Rama Rao sent a tweet to his administration to look into the matter, some action was taken. The Special Chief Secretary Municipal Administration promised help. Guards were posted at the hill, and a Survey to determine the exact boundaries of the protected areas under the Stay Order was initiated. The road being built around the hill was to be adjusted accordingly. Big question: Will the filled-in debris on top of the hill be removed too?

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It was gratifying to see how supportive the Hyderabad press was: Positive articles on the situation appeared in all the papers, from Hindu and Deccan Chronicle, ToI, New Indian Express to Telangana Today, Siasat and Eenadu as well as other Urdu and Telugu papers. We have collected twelve-and-a-half thousand online signatures and 700 physical signatures on an Appeal to Save Fakhruddingutta/Khajaguda. Can the passion of citizens of Hyderabad for the preservation of one beautiful piece of landscape be better expressed? The many, many visitors to the hill on every weekend, not only adventurers, but families and morning walkers too, testify to the urgent need for more nature and recreation areas in the city.

–Frauke Quader

Rock Walk and Geo-Workshop at MANUU

The Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) in Gachibowli is home to many unique rock formations which have been thoughtfully integrated and preserved by the University.

On 20th March, rock enthusiasts started to congregate at the University at 7 a.m. What was expected to be a hot summer morning, turned out to be a very pleasant day with the clouds deciding to surprise us. This was one of the rare Rock Walks where we had over a 100 people joining us, majority of whom were students from the University.

It was a first for many of the students who were making it to the rocks. Seeing our Members Vijay and Vasu climb the rocks with ease, quite a few students including few female students in their flowing burqas too felt encouraged to climb and live the moment of having achieved a milestone! The shutterbugs went into a frenzy on seeing the reactions of the students.



Photo by Sangeeta Varma

Rock pose by students



Group at Pathar Dil

Photo by Sangeeta Varma

Our first stop was at the site where stands a rock on its two feet. This rock is on top of a hill from where one can see the monstrous skyscrapers alongside the picturesque Fakhruddingutta Hill. After that we went to the very popular Pathar Dil rock formation. Much time was spent here in exploring and being in awe of the formation. The final trek was up a hill which took us close to the boundary of the campus towards the Khajaguda Lake. This was a slightly tough trek as there were many dry bushes and creepers that we had to

crouch under and the mud path was slippery. Nonetheless, a trek that had the students take umpteen selfies.

Courtesy the University, after a good 90 – 100 minutes trek, we were treated to a hearty and very tasty breakfast which was washed down sipping really hot and most welcome cuppa chai.

Post the walk and refreshments the rock walkers collected for three very interesting lectures and presentations by Geologists Prof. Praveen Raj Saxena and Prof. A.C. Narayana and Botanist Kobita Dass Kolli. Prof. Saxena outlined the connection of rocks to ground water and the role they play in recharging the earth.

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Date	Place	Time / Meeting point
Sunday, April 17, 2022	Rocks at Durgam Cheruvu	7:00 a.m. / Opp. Footwear Design and Development Institute, Off Dargah Road (Gachibowli Rd.), Raidurgam (Return approx. 11 a.m.)
Sunday, May 15, 2022	Ghaar-e-Mubarak	7:00 a.m. / Taramati Baradari, Ibrahimbagh (Return approx. 11 a.m.)
Sunday, June 19, 2022	Moula Ali	3:30 p.m. / Opp. St. Ann's School, White House, Tarnaka (Return approx. 6.30 p.m.)

Rock Walks are conducted on the third Sunday of every month.
Everybody is welcome. Walking shoes and long pants should be worn.
Registration with GRB Pradeep at 9866752114.

We welcome our new Members: Padmaja and Anil Attota, Life (Couple)
Prof. A.C. Narayana - Active (Single)

Managing Committee					
President:	Prof. Fatima Alikhan	9849 362 944	Padmini B. Patell	9912865299	
Vice President:	Aparajita Sinha	9849 655 363	Dr. Sudheer Bhan	8106072537	
Secretary:	Frauke Quader	9849 936 248	Dr. E. Sathya Prakash	9440057846	
Joint Secretary:	Sangeeta Varma	9849 044 624	Amardeep Singh	9246150207	
Treasurer:	G.R.B. Pradeep	9866 752 114	Sajid Mehmood	9810528070	
			B.P. Acharya, IAS(Retd)	--	

Active and Student Members are requested to pay
the annual Membership Fees falling
due on 1.4.2022. Please enquire at 04023552923 about your outstandings.

Membership Fee			
Class	Admission	Annual Subscription	
Active (Single)	₹ 100.00	₹ 500.00	
Active (Couple)	₹ 100.00	₹ 600.00	
Student (Under 18 Years)	₹ 100.00	₹ 200.00	
Life (Single)	₹ 3000.00		
Life (Couple)	₹ 5000.00		
Institution	₹ 10000.00		
Corporate	₹ 50000.00		

To initiate widening the reach of the Society, the
following Sub Committees have been formed.
Kindly WhatsApp your willingness to volunteer:

1. Rock Walks and Reces
2. Awareness programmes - Educational and
other Institutions
3. PR and Publicity
4. Geo Heritage and Scientific Survey
5. Government Outreach

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