

# SOCIETY TO SAVE ROCKS

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## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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*Editors : Frauke Quader, Padmini B Patell*

### HERITAGE TELANGANA

Where do our Heritage Rocks stand?

In December 2015, the Government of Telangana deleted the Heritage Conservation Regulation which had been created under the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority (now HMDA) in 1997. This Regulation had notified, apart from a long list of Heritage Buildings, 25 Rock Formations and Rock Areas as Heritage Precincts in the HMDA area.

In March 2017, the Telangana Assembly passed the **“Telangana Heritage (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Maintenance) Act, 2017”**, now covering the whole of Telangana State. It lists 334 buildings – Pre- and Protohistoric Sites, Forts, Temples, Mosques, Tombs, Buddhist Monuments, Inscriptions, a few Colonial Monuments - just over 30 of them in Hyderabad.

And no Rock Formations. Does this mean that the rocks which were on the Heritage List till December 2015, are no longer of any interest to our government? That the geological heritage of the city and, by implication, of Telangana need not be preserved? That builders and town planners can do away with any of the hitherto protected rocks? That deliberate permission is given to destroy our city's landscape heritage? And this concerns not only Rock Formations: most of the erstwhile Heritage Buildings would be free for destruction.

It could surely have been possible to incorporate the HMDA Heritage Conservation Regulations' list into the new law. One could then have discussed which rocks and buildings might have to be deleted, if necessary. **This Act is vastly demoralising for all NGOs as well as numerous government officials who have been working on preserving the historical and geological ambiance of Hyderabad, for the last 20 – 30 years.**

Frauke Quader

*Please note that our email id has changed to : [secretary@saverocks.org](mailto:secretary@saverocks.org)*



## THE FATE OF OUR FAMILIAR URBAN ROCKS

Recently two small but noticeable rocks are yet again bearing the brunt of change – changing governance and changing mindsets – resulting in changing environment. The two rocks stand on either side of Begumpet Road just before the Greenlands signal (coming from Punjagutta).

It's hard to miss the big fat rock that sits stubbornly at the edge of the new Telangana State IAS Officers' Institute (TSIASOI) inside the Manjeera Guest House. Fortunately, this one has held its ground and inspired the architect to use it as a natural screen beside the recently inaugurated swimming pool shielding it from the busy main road. No way is this gigantic specimen allowing any curious onlooker a peek into the pool ! Few other small rocks have been kept for the ambience and some unlucky ones have been chopped in half giving room for a road.

Just across the road, in the premises of the Greenlands Guest House, stands a small clump of rocks seemingly scared that their days are numbered. Among these is one specially note - worthy rock that stands apart for its very fine balancing act. If you are caught in a traffic jam on top of the Greenlands flyover, this is your chance to glance to the right and get an aerial view of the rocks (between the guest house and the SBI Training Centre).

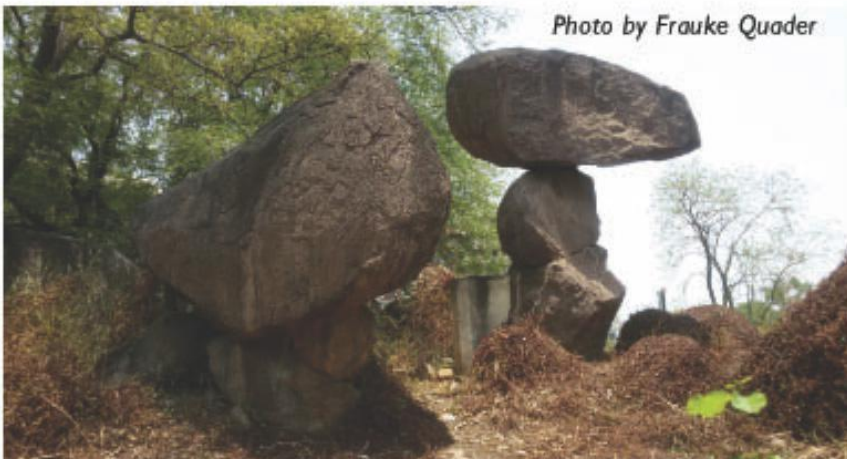


*In side the TSIASOI premises only some rocks survive!*



*Photos by Sangeeta Verma*

Perhaps, they stood tall in the days of the Nizam when this pretty building came up in 1927. Until 1982 this was used as the Chief Ministers official residence before being declared a Heritage Structure in 1988. Currently, it is the office of the Department of Protocol which looks rather bare with the old furniture dumped outside close to the rocks. There has been talk and newspaper reports that this heritage building is being pulled down to give way to something bigger, probably less elegant and more lucrative.



*Photo by Frauke Quader*

Will the innocent rocks be part of "inclusive construction" and used to give a feel of the Deccan landscape in a developed site or will they be wiped off the surface of our Telangana landscape for good - that remains to be seen. Meanwhile, hop over and get your rock selfie with a rock solid piece of the Deccan's Natural history !

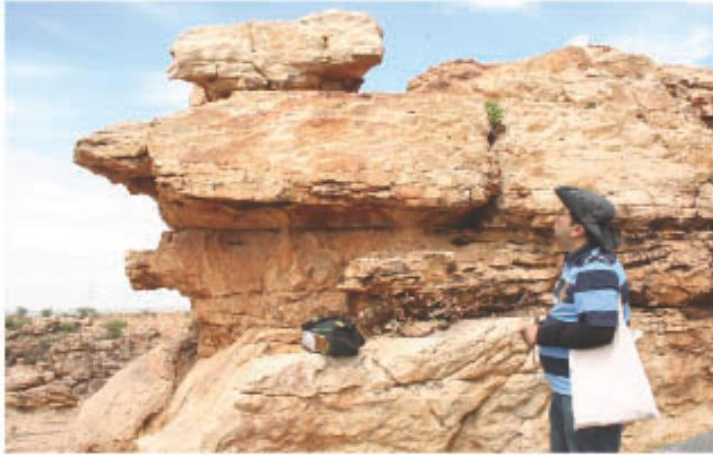
*Padmini B Patell*

*The balancing beauty at Greenlands Guest House*



## **THE SOCIETY WILL BE FEATURED IN AGORA 2017**

**Hurrah for the Society !! The short film which entered the AGORA competition has been selected. This means that the rocks of the Deccan will be getting international visibility at the AGORA Festival at Bordeaux/France.**



*Amardeep Singh admires the rockformation*

## **ORVAKAL ROCK GARDEN SHOOTS INTO PROMINENCE**

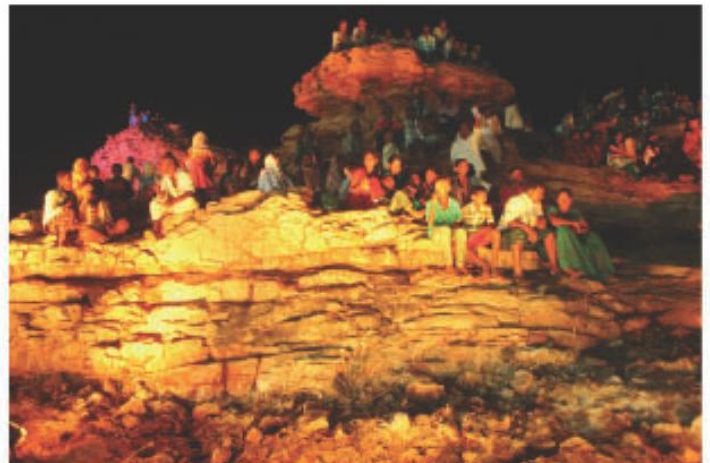
The full-moon weekend of June 9./10./11. 2017 saw much festive activity at the Rock Garden in Orvakal, 25 km east of Kurnool/Andhra Pradesh. GRB Pradeep, our Joint Secretary, and Amardeep Singh, Life Member of the Society, took a short trip to Orvakal to get a feel of how the only Rock Garden in the Telugu states has been presented and highlighted. And they say it was amazing: Thanks to the Government of Andhra Pradesh and its very active Tourism Corporation, the

usually quiet rocky retreat was transformed into an arena of adventure sports, entertainment and generous hospitality – with the full moon occasionally peeping through the monsoon clouds at night. From sporty events (ziplining, rappelling, river crossing, rock climbing etc.) to all kinds of indoor entertainment, there was no dearth of activities to choose from. It was quite rightly called “Orvakal Rock Festival”

What might have been missing is Rock Walks to give the opportunity to explore more of the rocky landscape of the interior, and the Society will be happy to provide guides at future events.

Arrangements were made for overnight stay of guests from as far away as Bangalore and Hyderabad, whereas many local visitors dropped by for the day to enjoy the offer of a good and entertaining outing in the amazing rocks. Ministers and officials from the cities and Kurnool lent the event the emphasis on development of the whole of the Kurnool area and surroundings.

The 1000 acre Orvakal Rock Garden is the first official Rock Park set up by the Government of AP a few years back. The layered sedimentary rock formations – so different from the solid rounded balancing granites of Hyderabad and surroundings – offer spectacular views and landscapes.



*People from all walks of life enjoy the light displays*

*Photos by G.R.B. Pradeep*

We are wondering whether equally impressive rock areas in Hyderabad itself do not also deserve protection in parks and public areas. So far, the Society's many suggestions in this respect have not borne fruit. But we still hope that a Rock Park planned near the Durgam Cheruvu by the Telangana Government and the transformation of the Fakhruddingutta (Khajaguda) into an Adventure Park, will become a reality for Hyderabad's citizens to enjoy and love.

*Frauke Quader*



The Rock Walk in July 2017 will be a 2-day bus excursion to the beautiful rocky ridge of Pandavulagutta near Warangal. Bus fare and over-night accommodation will cost Rs.2000/- excluding food. Please enrol with Pradeep at 98667 52114 before 12-07-2017, and pay at the office or transfer the amount to the account of the Society to Save Rocks No. 18090100003047 at Bank of Baroda, Jubilee Hills Branch, IFSC Code BARB0JUBILE (0=zero). More details below in Rock Walk schedule.

### Rock Walks in July, August and September 2017

Date :	Place :	Time /Meeting Point :
Saturday/Sunday July 15./ 16., 2017	Pandavulagutta and rocks around Warangal (details above)	8.00 a.m. opp. St. Ann's High School, S.P. Road, Secunderabad return Sunday 8 p.m. Carry lunch for the first day.
Sunday August 20., 2017	Venkateshwaragutta near Shamirpet	2.30 pm., opp. St. Ann's High School, S.P. Road, Secunderabad
Sunday, September 17., 2017	Kondamadugu near Ghatkesar, Bhongir Road	<div>Note: Changed Meeting Point</div> <div>10.30 am., Gun Park, to 10.30 am., opp. St. Ann's High School, S.P. Road, Secunderabad</div>

Rock walks are conducted on the third Sunday of every month. They are widely announced in the press and social media, and on our website. Everybody is welcome. Walking shoes, a cap, long pants and a water bottle are a must. Please enroll with G.R.B. Pradeep at 98667 52114.

#### Managing Committee

			Members	
President:	Narendra Luther	- 040-23399778	Padmini B. Patell	- 9912865299
Vice President:	Aparajita Sinha	- 9849655363	Dr. Sudheer Bhan	- 8106072537
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Joint Secretary:	G.R.B. Pradeep	- 98667 52114	Dr. E.Sathya Prakash	- 9440057846
Treasurer:	Sangeeta Varma	- 9849044624	Ravi Setlem	- 9866241768

#### Membership Fees

Class	Admission	Annual Subscription
Active (Single)	Rs. 100	Rs.200
(Couple)	Rs. 100	Rs.300
Student	Rs. 100	Rs.100
Life (Single)	Rs. 2,000 for Life	—
(Couple)	Rs. 3,000 for Life	—
Institution	Rs. 10,000	—
Corporate	Rs. 50,000	—

**Annual Subscriptions are still awaited from Annual and Student Members**