

Deccan Chronicle 05-June-2021

DROP | BY DROP Govt agencies fail to strengthen bund, prevent dumping of waste

Musi stays dirty despite 'cleaning'

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 4

**WORLD
ENVIRONMENT DAY**

Musi River, once the city's lifeline as the drinking water source, has been reeling under multi-dimensional issues with most of them stemming from unkept promises made by successive governments. The nodal agencies that have been entrusted with the task of the river's beautification and rejuvenation have been indulging in an eye-wash while ignoring the crux of the problem.

Even as the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) have been ignoring strengthening of the bund and arresting the dumping of residual waste into the river, the revenue department has been wasting time

in the name of surveys for removing encroachments on Musi. Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL), which has dumped huge piles of debris during the construction, has not bothered to remove it. Adding to the woes, the state government has only allocated ₹200 crore from its annual budget for restoration of the river and beautification of the riverfront.

The earlier Congress government had spent ₹34 crore to construct a rubber dam and beautification works. The dam was built in 2009 using Austrian technology and was expected to hold enough water to fill the area behind it and recreate the sign of a river in full flow. Over the years, floods have completely



The Musi River near the Telangana High Court is in a poor condition due to lack of maintenance.

damaged the infrastructure and the rubber dam.

After the formation of Telangana, the government

dusted off the project report and decided to give a face-lift to Musi at an estimated cost of ₹740 crore, with 70

per cent of the funding coming from the National River Conservation Directorate (NRCD). Due to a fund crunch, the project lay ignored in the first term of the TRS government. In the meanwhile, the project cost escalated to ₹1,665 crore.

After forming the Musi Riverfront Development Corporation Limited (MRDCL), the authorities have done less to improve the water quality of the river and more for themselves. The government, which has allocated ₹377.35 crore for 2017-18 managed to spend ₹0.32 crore and another ₹2.80 crore in 2018-19 while allocating the same amount from the State budget. It has continued with similar amounts during the financial years 2019-2020 and 2021.

■ Page 5: Plans remain on paper

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A walking track being built alongside the Musi river in Nagole, Hyderabad. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Plans for Musi remain on paper

From Page 1

In July 2020, amid the Covid-19 lockdown, MRDCL authorities identified a few patches on the banks of the river where there was scope for development: 3.5 km from Nagole to Kothapet, 3 km in Uppal Bhagat, 2 km from Chaderghat to Puranapul and about 2 km near Muslim Jung Bridge. The authorities decided to construct walking and cycling tracks of about six-metre width at a few locations and of three metres at other places. Officials said that they have spent ₹9 crore for the development.

However, these plans remained on paper. Neither has the Water Board constructed sewerage treatment plants (STPs) to arrest the sewage flowing into the river and preventing the stench emanating from the river, nor has the GHMC strengthened any bund of the bunds which were washed away during the

flash floods of October last year.

Instead, the water board has been leaving over 1000 MLD (million litres a day) directly into the river. Apart from minor beautification works near Shilparamam at Nagole, the revenue department neither removed encroachments nor initiated action against HMRL for dumping debris into the river during the construction of MGBS bus station.

Asked about these issues, MRDCL chairman D. Sudheer Reddy said, "I took charge in February last year, and the lockdown followed in March. Amid multiple challenges we hardly had five months for development and the Musi project has made decent progress. However, I can assure that in three years the Musi project will see radical changes."

MRDCL managing director Vishwajit Kampati was unavailable for clarifications.

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WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



Gavisiddheshwara Swamiji of Gavimath, Koppal reviews Ginigera lake revival work along with the lake restoration committee members.

PHOTOS BY DARSHAN KUMAR VASTRAD

Koppal's lakes come to life

Volunteer-led efforts, with active support from Gavimath, have revived six lakes in the drought-hit Koppal region in recent years, writes *Jagadish Angadi*



A view of Ginigera lake.

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Fifty-eight-year-old Ramesh Meti, a farmer, turns to his right for a glimpse of the lake at Ginigera village on his way to Koppal town, and heaves a sigh of relief.

Meti, who lives in Guladalli village, about five kilometres away from Ginigera, gave up farming five years ago to take up a menial job at a local industrial unit due to water scarcity in his village.

For someone like Meti, who grew up using the water from the Ginigera lake for farming, witnessing the lake's restoration was a dream come true. And now, volunteers, community leaders, earth moving machines and trucks are engaged in reviving the lake, allowing him to resume doing what he loves most—working in the field.

Meti is not alone—there are hundreds of other farmers in the community, who turn towards Ginigera lake with renewed hope.

The work began a couple of months ago in January, when Gavisiddeshwara Swami of Gavimath, Koppal, announced that the Mutt along with the community would revive the lake in Ginigera, about 12 kilometres away from Koppal.

The lake, about 285 acres in size with a perimeter of 6 kilometres, is managed by the Minor Irrigation Department. About two decades ago, it met the water requirements of around 20 villages in the region.

Over the years, it became a victim of rapid urbanisation, erratic weather

patterns, deforestation and encroachment. The aquatic life was mostly wiped out. The lake's gradual death had its cascading effects on other minor water bodies.

First step

To begin with, a group of key functionaries was formed and each member was assigned a task. The works were launched on February 21.

Various communities, activists and organisations were roped in. The key factors for successful completion were voluntary labour, donations and various services.

Eighty percent of the restoration work was complete in just two months. A 50-feet wide bund on the lake perimeter has come up. Works for creation of walking paths, fencing of perimeter, installation of benches on the bund and poles for solar light facility are under progress. A theme park with an open theatre, plantation of trees across the bund and an island for birds have been planned.

The State government and the Zilla Panchayat have recently released Rs three crore each for the remaining works.

"Our works demonstrate how collective efforts for a cause through persistence and dedication can make a huge difference in solving water issues in a water-starved region. This has set an example for inclusive rejuvenation projects," explains Kariyappa, a lake

restoration committee member.

Revival projects

The Mutt, with community participation, cleaned up Hirehalla, a 21-kilometre tributary of Tungabhadra river in 2019. The construction of barrage-cum-bridges and planting two lakh saplings on both sides are underway. This will irrigate about 20,000 acres of dry land and end water woes in 30 villages.

The 327-acre Nidashesi lake, one of



the largest in North Karnataka, about three kilometres away from Kushtagi town, was revived in 2020. It is now set to irrigate over 2,150 acres, besides providing water in the surrounding 30 villages and fulfilling the requirement of over one lakh people in Kushtagi town and the neighbourhood.

The same model was adopted for the revival of an 80-acre lake at Kallubhavi, in Yelburga taluk in 2019 benefiting 15 surrounding villages; a 60-acre dead lake at Irakallgoda, about 16 kilo-

metres away from Koppal, benefiting 10 villages.

"The pontiff led volunteers to construct half a kilometre canal to divert water from hills and cleaned the two kilometre natural canal feeding water to 65 acre lake at Indaragi village, about 25 kilometres away from Koppal in 2019, benefiting five villages," points out local leader Bhojappa Kumbar.

The Mutt also launched a project to revive a 60-acre lake at Hosahalli near Koppal town benefiting 10 villages and irrigating 500 acres in March this year.

"These projects are all set to ensure water for drinking, irrigation and other purposes to over 4 lakh people of 90 villages and irrigate over 30,000 acres of land in the drought-hit dry region," Sanjay Kotabal, a trustee of Gavimath's trust, says.

"These efforts, which have been taken up in participation with local people, particularly farmers, have been solving the long-term water scarcity and improving the situation of farmers. These ground-water recharge mechanisms have ensured the availability of water even in summer," adds Kumbar.

"Many people have engaged in restoring indigenous water supply mechanisms by harnessing tanks. Being the natural habitat, migratory birds are now returning to the water at Kallubhavi," says Ramappa Patil from Yelburga.

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Water for a parched city

MEERA IYER

Picture a city of beautiful houses and markets with every house having a well and fountains gracing every square. A city with deep lakes, innumerable parks and gardens overflowing with trees and flowers.

This vision of paradise is one of the earliest descriptions of Bengaluru written during 1670 by Kavindra Parmanand in *Shiv-abharath*, an epic poem about Shivaji.

Particularly interesting is Parmanand's characterisation of Bengaluru as a city of wells and lakes. And indeed, the maps dating back to the 19th century do show a city dotted with countless wells. Every large house had a well. There were also public wells in markets, *chhatrams*, parks and road intersections. For instance, there were public wells in the markets in Ulsoor and Shivajinagar, and at what we now call KR Circle and Hudson Circle.

As for lakes, or tanks as they were also known, some like Begur and Agara, were built over a millennium ago. Hundreds more were added through the following centuries. Historian B.L. Rice wrote in 1881 that "much ingenuity would now be required to find a suitable site for a new tank."



The picturesque water tower at Hessarghatta, Bengaluru. PHOTO BY ARAVIND C

Series of reservoirs

This was exactly what was done in the mid-1800s when the rapidly growing city began experiencing water stress. The then British administration built a series of reservoirs known as Millers' Tanks. Later, the Sankey tank built by Colonel Richard Sankey was added to the city's waterscape. But the city still thirsted.

To further augment the water supply, the government (and

philanthropes) dug new wells and deepened existing ones. Later, as water scarcity persisted, watchmen were placed to guard some of these public wells to prevent overdrawn water. Yet, the city craved for water.

By the 1880s, both the Maharaja's government and the administration of the Civil and Military Station (CMS) were desperately casting about for larger and more perennial sources of water. Sev-

eral proposals suggested tapping nearby reservoirs including at Rachenahalli, Agaram and Hebbal among others. A scheme to build a reservoir on Nandi Hills and supply water from there through gravity flow was dismissed as being impractical.

Interestingly, in 1886, one plan proposed bringing water from the Cauvery and "it might be less costly to move Bangalore," quipped an administrator.

One million wells

Can we step off this environmentally unsustainable path but still achieve water security? S Vishwanath of Biome Environmental Trust thinks so. He spearheads the 'One Million Wells' project, which partners with traditional well-diggers to dig recharge wells in the city.

In Cubbon Park, for example, when 73 recharge wells were dug, they revived seven old open wells that had dried up. Vishwanath calculates that a million such wells dug over the next few years would allow for more than 50% of rainfall to reach and replenish shallow aquifers, which could then be tapped. A veritable reservoir right under our feet.

Finally, in a memo written in 1892, Dewan Seshadri Iyer wrote exasperatedly that even after 30 years of discussions, Bengaluru still had a water problem. Since the city was at an elevation, it required modern machinery to lift water to it. When people trust their lives to engines in ships, when factories run every day on engines, "Why should not the water supply of a growing town be worked efficiently

by machinery?" he argued.

Accordingly, the Mysore government adopted the Hessarghatta scheme. Called the Chamaraja Water Works, the project involved enlarging a 16th century reservoir on the River Arkavathy, 25 km away. An aqueduct carried water from Hessarghatta to Soladevanahalli from where steam engines pumped the water up to Chimney Hills. From there, it flowed by gravity to filters at Malleswaram and thence to other parts of the city.

The city first received piped water from Hessarghatta 125 years ago, making Bengaluru one of the early Indian cities to embrace technology to supply piped water.

Water heritage

Remarkably, much of the infrastructure related to this pioneering scheme can still be seen. The bund and the water tower which were built in 1894-95 still exist.

The Ganesh Iyer Volute Siphon here is an unusual structure. Probably built around the 1920s, it is named after its designer V Ganesh Iyer, Director of the then Hydraulics Research Station at Krishnarajasagar, and was designed to prevent flooding. Now that the Hessarghatta reservoir is often dry, this cement concrete siphon stands

marooned, looking like avant-garde holiday cottages.

The brick and stone aqueduct to Soladevanahalli plays hide-and-seek along the road. A 250-metre stretch of it is clearly visible near the old Turbanahalli pumping station. Elsewhere, it has been incorporated into compound walls or else completely destroyed.

The pumping station at Soladevanahalli remains intact. Much of the original machinery, now non-functional, still remains inside the capacious premises.

The Hessarghatta scheme was a lifeline for a parched Bengaluru, but a short-lived one. Within 20 years, Bengaluru was once again suffering water shortages.

In 1936, the city looked to Thippagondanahalli, 35 km away, for succour. In the 1960s, water was brought to the city from the River Cauvery, 100 km away. Today, administrators are looking to the Yettinahole, 250 km away, to quench the city's thirst.

(Meera Iyer is the author of 'Discovering Bengaluru' and the Convenor of INTACH Bengaluru Chapter)

FEEDBACK

Send your ideas and comments to us at: spectrum@deccanherald.co.in

The Pioneer 05-June-2021

Brahmaputra water level rising, parts of Kaziranga inundated

Nagaon (Assam): The water levels of the Mighty Brahmaputra River and its tributaries are gradually rising, inundating parts of Kaziranga National Park in Assam, officials said on Friday. However, no damages have been reported so far.

Wild animals of Kaziranga National Park were seen moving to higher grounds by crossing National Highway 37. To minimise the risk of animals

getting hit by speeding vehicles, the Kaliabor sub-division administration under Nagaon district on Friday imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144(1) of CrPC in the area from Amguri to Bagori, including the highway stretch running through it.

As per the prohibitory orders, the speed of the vehicles must not exceed 40 kmph and assembly of five or more persons shall not take place. **PTI**

Telangana Today 05-June-2021

More rains in store for State



A woman speeds away as the rain catches her unawares in the city on Friday. —Photo: Narre Rajesh

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

Light to moderate rains or thunderstorms are expected at a few places across Telangana for the next three days.

Several parts of the State have been witnessing light to heavy rains for the last few days. The State's average cumulative rainfall from June 1 to 4 was 30.1 mm

Telangana's average cumulative rainfall from June 1 to June 4 was 30.1 mm against the normal of 5.6 mm, a deviation of 438 per cent

against the normal of 5.6 mm, a deviation of 438 per cent. In the last 24 hours, the highest rainfall of 79.8 mm was recorded at Mahabubabad.

According to weather officials, the Southwest monsoon has further advanced into the remaining parts of Lakshwadeep and Kerala, most parts of coastal and

south interior Karnataka and some parts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu on Friday. It is expected to further advance into Maharashtra and Goa, some parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana during the next three days.

The State's average rainfall on Friday was 6.1 mm against the normal rainfall of 2.4 mm.

The Hans 05-June-2021

Monsoon likely to advance further into State in 2-3 days

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BEGUMPET

THE Southwest Monsoon is very likely to advance further into some more parts of Telangana during next two-three days, the IMD said on Friday.

There was pre-monsoon rain accompanied by thunder in some parts of the City during the day, when the cloudy weather prevailed.

According to the IMD bulletin, rain or thundershowers towards evening or night is the forecast for Hyderabad from June 5 to 8. On June 9 and 10 the sky will be partly cloudy with possibility of rain or thunderstorms.

The day temperatures from June 5 to 10 in the City will be

- Pre-monsoon showers in City
- Rain or thundershowers towards evening or night forecast for Hyd'bad from June 5 to 8
- Thunderstorms in Vikarabad, Sangareddy & Medak today

37, 38, 38, 38, 38 and 38 degrees Celsius respectively. Thunderstorms with lightning are likely to lash on June 5 isolated places in Vikarabad, Sangareddy, Medak and 14 other districts, Sangareddy and Vikarabad on June 6, besides other districts in the State. Thunderstorms will continue in several districts on June 7 and 8, the bulletin stated.

The Tribune 05-June-2021

Two back-to-back cyclones delayed monsoon: Experts

VIBHA SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JUNE 4

On the eve of World Environment Day, experts have said the impact of climate change has started showing on southwest monsoon. Two successive cyclones — Tauktae and Yaas — not only delayed the monsoon in Kerala, but also impacted its current.

The southwest monsoon made an onset over Kerala on June 3 against its usual arrival on June 1. The IMD had earlier



PM to launch pilot project of e-100 dispensing stations

predicted its arrival on May 31, which it changed later.

GP Sharma, chief of meteorology and climate change

at Skymet Weather, says Tauktae and Yaas took away “much of the kinetic energy from water bodies, which almost ceased the weather activity in Kerala. The required wind pattern and speed were also absent”.

Sushant Puranik from the department of atmospheric and space science at the University of Pune also says Yaas intensified rapidly due to conducive atmospheric conditions, taking away moisture and energy.

Rashtriya Sahara 05-June-2021

विश्व पर्यावरण दिवस से होगी गंगा क्वेस्ट 2021 के दूसरे चरण की शुरुआत

■ नई दिल्ली। एसएनबी

गंगा व अन्य नदियों की स्वच्छता के प्रति जागरूकता अभियान के तहत शुरू की गई गंगा क्वेस्ट 2021 ऑनलाइन क्विज प्रतियोगिता के दूसरे चरण की शुरुआत विश्व पर्यावरण दिवस 5 जून से होगी।

गंगा समेत अन्य नदियों और पर्यावरण पर आधारित गंगा क्वेस्ट एक क्विज प्रतियोगिता है, जोकि शैक्षणिक कार्यक्रम के जरिए विशेष रूप से युवाओं, बच्चों और छात्रों को गंगा एवं अन्य नदियों के संरक्षण और संवर्धन के प्रति संवेदनशील बनाने के उद्देश्य से पहली बार 2019 में शुरू की गई थी।

इस क्विज का आयोजन राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ गंगा मिशन, जल शक्ति मंत्रालय और टी क्रेज फाउंडेशन के सहयोग से किया जाता है। इस वर्ष अप्रैल और मई माह में कोविड 19 महामारी की चुनौतीपूर्ण स्थिति के बावजूद भी इस क्विज के लिए 1.1 मिलियन से अधिक लोग रजिस्ट्रेशन करवा चुके हैं। क्विज में न सिर्फ देश भर से बल्कि यूएई, ओमान, यूके, अल्जीरिया, बहरीन और कुवैत से भी

■ गंगा क्वेस्ट 2021 के लिए अब तक 1.1 मिलियन से ज्यादा लोग कर चुके हैं रजिस्ट्रेशन

अंतरराष्ट्रीय प्रतिभागी हिस्सा ले रहे हैं। चूंकि क्विज में देश भर के हर हिस्से से प्रतिभागी हिस्सा ले रहे हैं इसलिए इसे हिंदी और अंग्रेजी दोनों ही भाषाओं में आयोजित किया जा रहा है, ताकि ज्यादा से ज्यादा लोगों को क्विज से जोड़ा जा सके।

इस बार गंगा क्वेस्ट 2021 के लिए सबसे ज्यादा हिस्सेदारी झारखंड, उत्तर प्रदेश और दिल्ली से हुई है। गंगा क्वेस्ट 2021 के पहले दौर के 216 विजेता 5 जून 2021 से प्रतियोगिता के दूसरे चरण में प्रवेश करेंगे। इन विजेताओं में प्राथमिक विद्यालय के छात्रों से लेकर वरिष्ठ नागरिकों तक सभी आयु समूहों के लोग हैं। इन विजेताओं में 110 पुरुष जबकि 106 महिलाएं शामिल हैं। इन सभी विजेताओं में 215 भारतीय प्रतिभागी थे, जबकि 1 विजेता यूएई से है।