

# Agara lake immersion orders ignored

Government measures to ensure cleanliness of lake water are being ignored, with people still immersing Durga idols in Agara Lake.

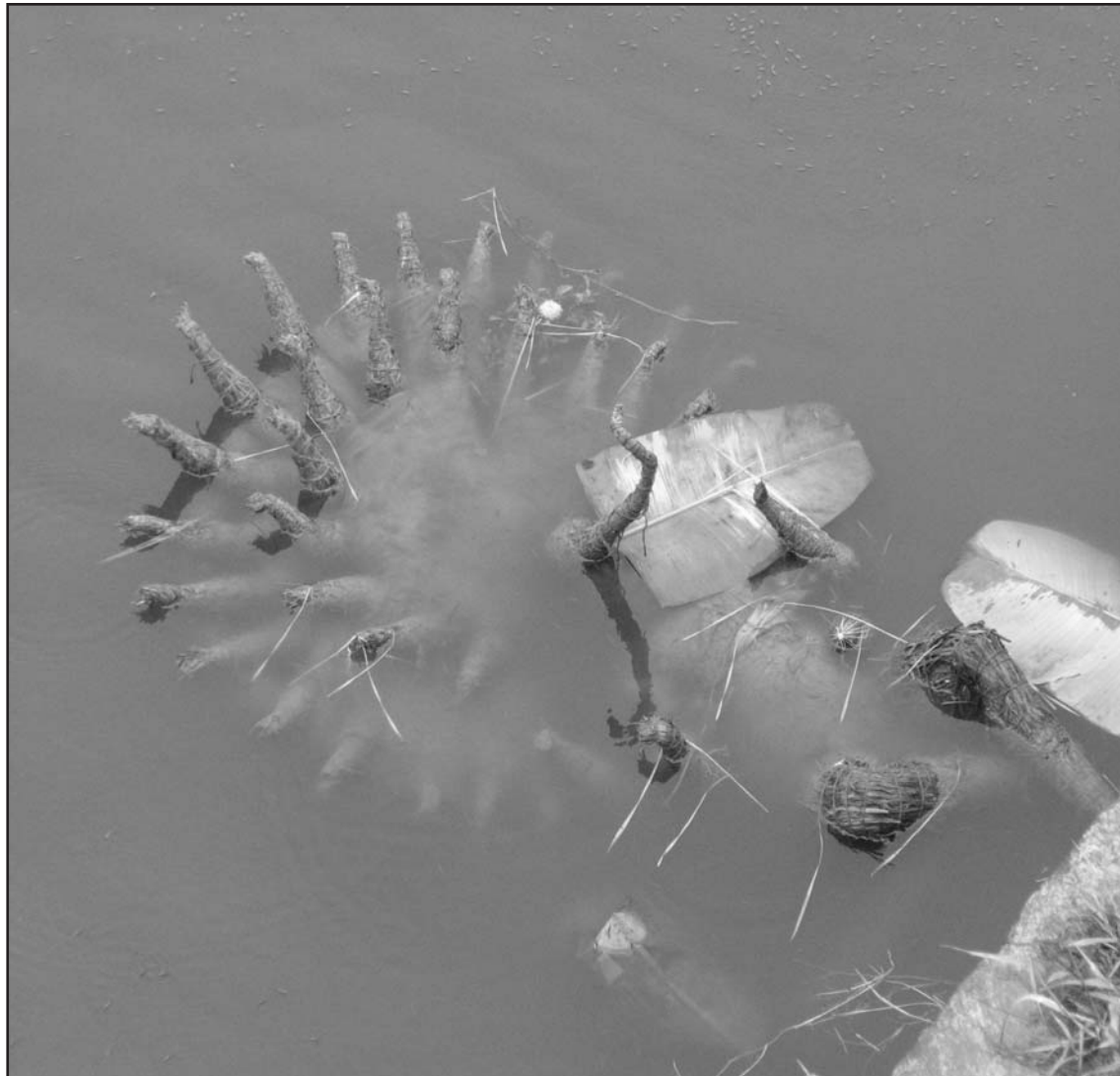
SUPRIYA KHANDEKAR

Bangalore—Durga idols were immersed in Agara Lake against the orders of the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) and the Lake Development Authority. Last month, the BDA had set up artificial lakes in Lalbagh and other immersion places to avoid people immersing idols in the lake water.

Narayan Murthy, assistant director, Horticulture Department said that the artificial lake water is disposed near Agara Lake. Immersion is not allowed even in Agara Lake said M.R. Suresh, the assistant conservator of forests, Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Pallike (BBMP). In spite of this, Durga idols were still found there.

Rashmi, a resident of Agara, said that people living in Kormangala and other nearby places come to their because it is convenient. They know that immersing in this lake is not allowed but since no one takes action against it they use this lake for such purposes often, she added. She was unaware of the separate pond where the BDA disposes the artificial tank water. Suman Ghosh, who lives in BTM Layout, is a visitor of the puja pandals in Kormangala and Agara. But he mentioned that he has only seen immersion of Durga idols in Ulsoor Lake. Although he did not know anything about the artificial lakes for immersion, he knew the restrictions.

Vishnu Kumar, executive engineer of Mega City Division, BDA said he was aware about the



The Goddess' remains: The government's order to help curb pollution in Agara Lake is ignored, as people continue to use it for immersion.

- pic by author

illegal immersions in Agara Lake. "I will set up an inspection team for this and will certainly take action. I came to know about these immersions just last week, so nothing could be done as of now,"

he said.

He further added, "I, with my team, will have a meeting soon for this issue and in a week's time, action will be taken." He also said that it was difficult to make people

aware of their civic responsibilities. But he agreed, "As there is no punishment people do not really care whether they are polluting the lake or not. We intend to create public awareness."

## Potholes galore at Kathriguppe main road

DIELLE D'SOUZA

Bangalore—Despite completion in August 2007, Kathriguppe Main Road has developed potholes again.

It was due for completion on October 26, 2006. Even after a delay of three-quarters of a year in August 2007, potholes have developed close to Vidyapeetha Circle. The 1.7 km stretch linking Kathriguppe Main Road and Vidyapeetha Circle, constructed as Project Road S 8, cost Rs. 2.72 crore. "In the rainy season, we face problems because of the potholes," said Pulkit Wadhwa, a salesman at Haryana Handlooms, near Vidyapeetha Circle. Also, the road floods when it rains. "Just 2-3 days back there was a lot of water. It still gets flooded," he continued.

Siddegowda, Executive Engineer of Karnataka Municipal Road Project (KMRP), said it was under completion. "Work is pending. We are waiting for fair weather. It will require another fifteen days." He also mentioned that the work was delayed due to unpredicted rain, before passing the buck to the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewage Board (BWSSB). The Project Director, KMRP, said that water supply leakages were the problem and the BWSSB had "excavated". "I saw one pothole," he insisted. But on hearing there were 5, he continued, "We will attend (to it) immediately." However the authorities have not taken any action so far.

## Commercial street turns hawkers' haven

Hawkers do brisk business in Commercial street in spite of the fact that they are not allowed to do business in that area.

AYESHA ALEEM

Bangalore—Street hawkers do brisk business on Commercial Street by selling loose merchandise to passersby, in spite of the fact that they are not allowed to conduct business in this area.

Shoppers on Commercial Street are frequently approached by street hawkers selling their wares which ranges from socks and baby clothes to dolls and curios.

The police are trying to crack down on them and keep their activity under check.

Mallesha K, Sub Inspector of Police, Commercial Street, said, "Hawkers come here because this is a commercial area and they think they can sell their goods easily. But this is a restricted zone. No autos are allowed, no beggars and no hawkers. This is out to public convenience. We do not want shoppers to be bothered by them. So we are trying to handle this problem. But we have the problem of 'gullies'. If we chase the hawkers from one part of the street, they go

into one of the by lanes and come back on to the main street from another lane."

However, this reporter noticed that a street hawker who could clearly be seen by a police officer standing nearby was not being shooed away.

Talking of punishments, he said "Sometimes we bring them to the police station and book them under petty cases. We may also fine them Rs.150. We are supposed to produce them in court. But usually we take this fine money and pay it to the court."

Speaking of the weekends, he said, "Over the weekends, more officers are deployed. In addition to the two already posted, three of us (sub inspectors) are also on the ground - on Ibrahim Sahib Street and Commercial Street.

An ASI (Assistant Sub Inspector) is also present at the entrance of main Commercial Street."

A woman hawker on Commercial Street selling insect electrocuting bats said (translated from Hindi)

there are around 10-15 hawkers on this street and that they aren't allowed to conduct business on the street.

She said that the police is always after them and the only way we can do business is if shoppers just grab their wares from us, pay and keep moving quickly.

She said that that if the police come from one side, they run into one of the lanes and come out through another. She continued that sometimes they are taken to the police station and booked or fined. But sometimes they are released without any punishment. Sometimes the police throw stones at the merchandise or break it. She said that it continues this way. This is a way of living for them. Considering that it is their only source of income, they have no option but to continue this way and hope that one day they will be given place to trade as well.

Till then we will have to continue trading in this way to make both ends meet, said the hawker.

## Police overlook illegal hawkers

Police take no action against the illegal hawkers in the compound of Vani Vilas hospital.

RITIKA KUMAR

Bangalore—Illegal hawkers in the compound of Vani Vilas hospital are creating problems for the public. However the police do not take action against and pardon them instead.

The hawkers, generally women, block the path by spreading their products like clothes and food items, on the ground, which prevents free movement of patients, doctors, hospital staff and general public. This also results in quarrels between the public and the hawkers. Nagraj, a patient, who had an argument with a hawker selling caps said, "These women (hawkers) spread all their products on the ground as if this is their own land. I don't have any space to walk." Dr. O.S. Sidappa, Medical Superintendent, Vani Vilas hospital, said that the hawkers are not allowed in the compound, and the hospital authorities do regular checks to prevent them from coming in. However, it is the responsibility of the police to move them somewhere else.

The Assistant Sub Inspector,

Victoria Hospital police station, Mr. Bopaiha said, "We do check these hawkers and fine them after which they cannot come again." However the Sub Inspector (crime), (SI), said that we do not throw them out on humanitarian grounds. "These women are poor and have to feed a big family. So we allow them to do their business. After all they are humans. Moreover they do not disturb anybody".

However when quizzed about these hawkers blocking the path and creating problems for the public, the SI said, "We Karnataka people are good people, we don't complain about poor people's business." He added that hawkers sell clothes for pregnant women and babies, so in a way they are helping the pregnant ladies who come to the hospital for their deliveries. "If these women had good families and husbands, would they be working like this on the road side? It's their helplessness, which makes them work, and we should not trouble them," he concluded.