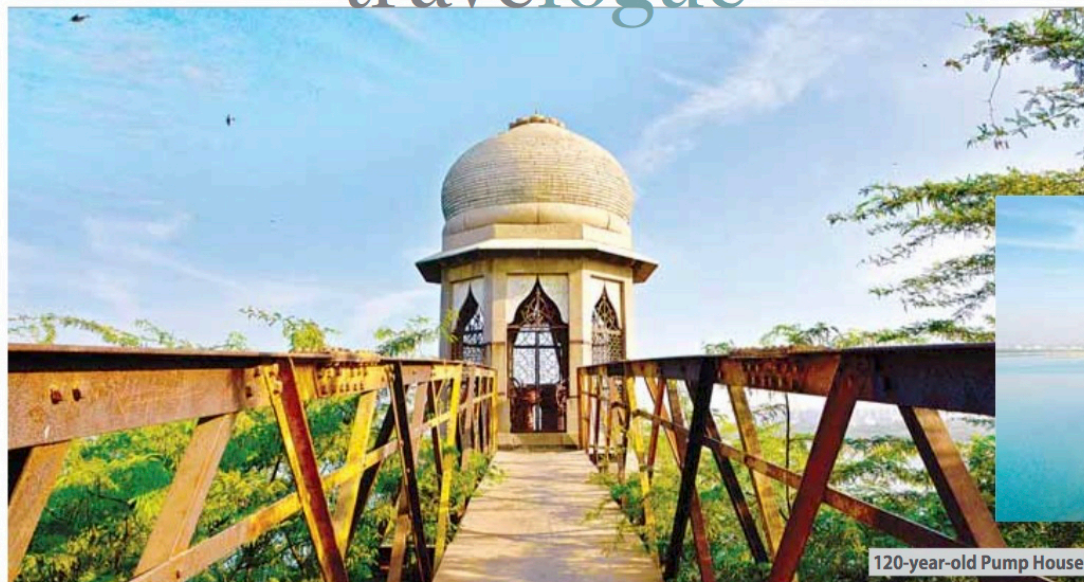


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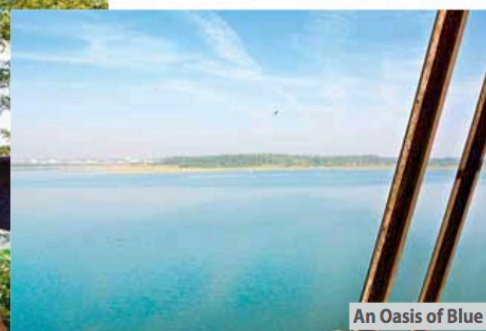
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120-year-old Pump House



An Oasis of Blue

A Breath of Fresh Air

Away from the hustle and bustle of Hyderabad, just off the Kompally main road is a beautiful lake and a 120-year-old Pump House. Discover this hidden and relatively unknown garden of Eden, which is an ideal place to unwind

NEEHARIKA SATYAVADA

I was born in Hyderabad, and I have lived here most of my life. But, it wasn't until a year ago, when a friend mentioned Fox Sagar Lake, did I even become aware of its existence. This lake is by far the most beautiful in the city. Period.

Hyderabad is known for its Hussain Sagar and The Buddha Statue there. The Hussain Sagar has an iconic status that it shares with

Charminar and now, Hitec City. But, in reality, it is an extremely polluted lake that stinks up the surroundings. In spite of this, being the only water body in an otherwise hot and crowded city, it draws in crowds by the hundreds and even thousands during the weekend. I, like everyone else, have been drawn to it too. On the other hand, is The Fox Sagar Lake. In the city, but wide, expansive and cheerful. You can still see buildings, but at a distance.

Though not so popular with the locals, it definitely is a hit with the birds and a regular spot for avid bird watchers. I wasn't really expecting to see so many birds of such varied species. It is also a

popular fishing spot and a watering hole for cattle from nearby settlements, there is even a small shack on the bank functioning as a 'chai tapri'. Truth be told, I did not even know what to expect. All we did was follow the route traced out on Google Maps!!

What adds to the charm of this Lake and makes it so special is the antiquated Pump House built on it. Nearly 120 years old, the lake and pump house were apparently built by the Nizam of Hyderabad as part of his program for bringing in water to the city. There is not much information on this even online, and I got the date 1897 from the inscription on the dome.

You reach the pump house by a stretch of

narrow elevated road, which is more of a dirt trail sloping off on either side with thorny shrubs as barricades. So, the only way to reach it is by foot or by a bike. When we had gone there do a recce of the place, we were driving as suggested by google maps and we were already on this road with no where else to go but ahead! Some careful manoeuvring did get us there, but I wouldn't suggest this. Also, walking is more fun anyway in this peaceful and crowd-free stretch, that is an oasis of green and blue right in the grey concrete of the city.

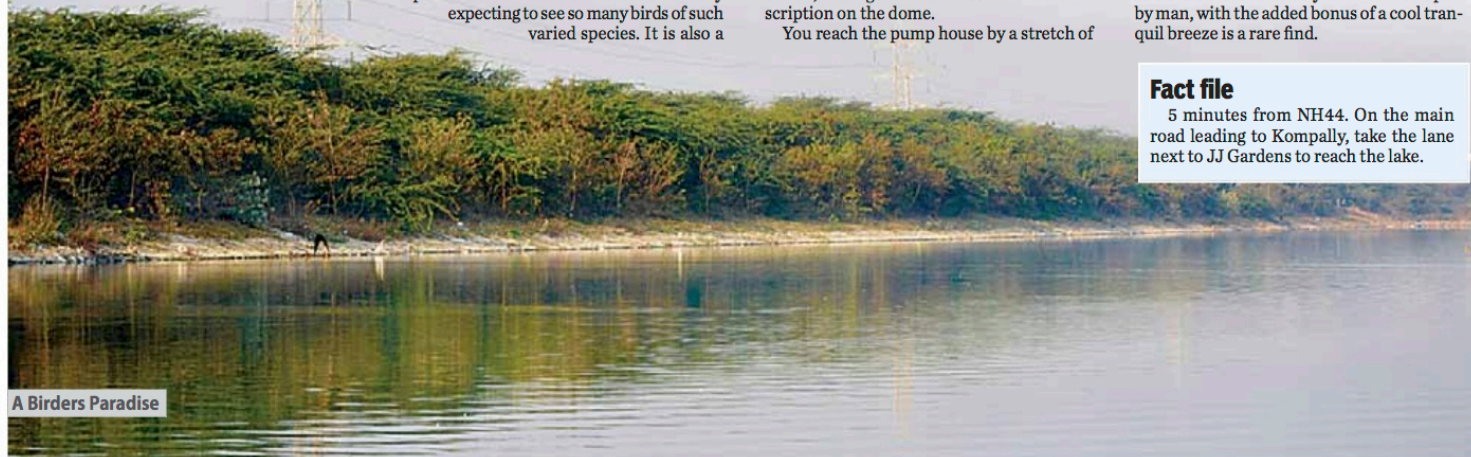
The Pump House itself is a beautiful structure which creates gorgeous, intricate shadow patterns with the sun's rays. You would not be able to resist clicking pictures of it, if you are there to catch either the sunrise or the sunset!

Also, waiting literally, just around the corner is a view just as picturesque if not more. You can go around the ledge for a beautiful view of the lake and the breathtaking quality of it is enhanced not only by the absolute vertical drop from there, but the cool breeze blowing in your face.

So, in a city like Hyderabad, when even the everyday commute is tiring in the heat of this summer, to find not just a water body but one that is relatively un-intruded upon by man, with the added bonus of a cool tranquil breeze is a rare find.

Fact file

5 minutes from NH44. On the main road leading to Kompally, take the lane next to JJ Gardens to reach the lake.



A Birders Paradise