

Open Air Pavilion construction in Ashtamudi Lake

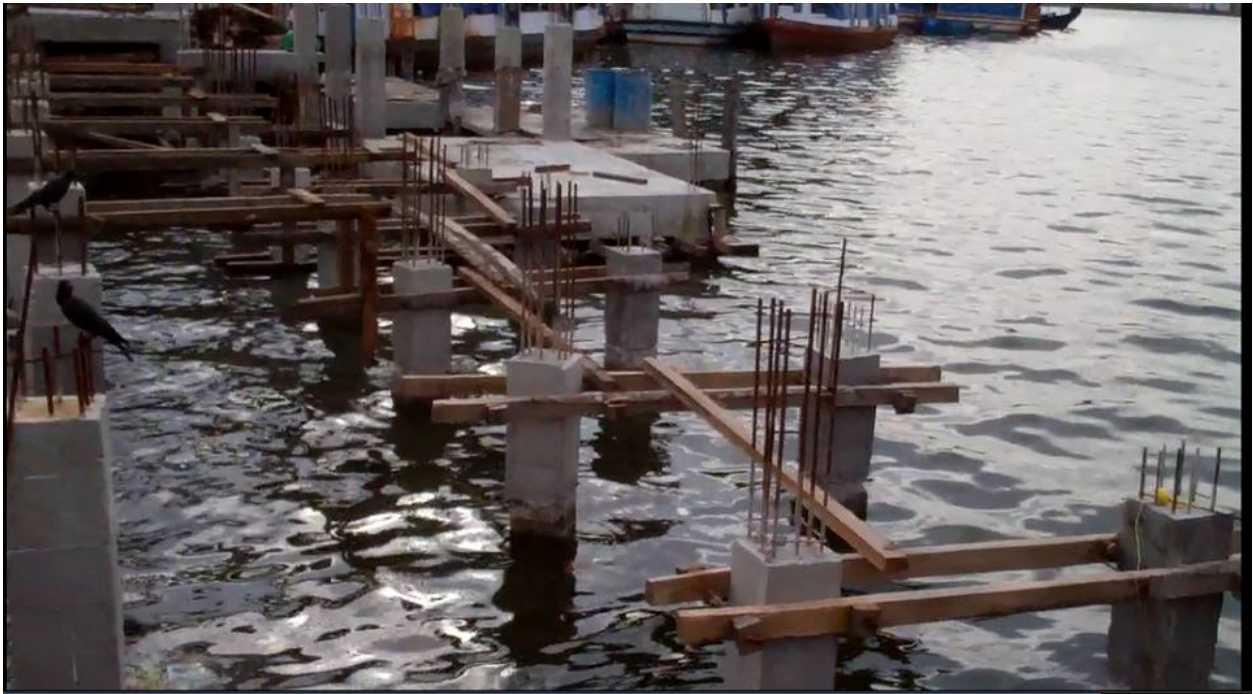
When will we wake up to the idea that lakes and their banks are not meant to be abused willy-nilly? Now there is some construction activity going on in Ashtamudi Lake near the KSRTC depot and as usual the culprit is the DTPC (Tourism Department). On enquiring at the DTPC office, they said they are joining hands with the Inland Navigation Department to construct a pavilion.



What permissions did they obtain for encroaching upon the wetland? No surprises that the answer was 'nil' permissions. A budget was sanctioned by the Tourism Department. Further inquiries revealed the bulk of the fund is provided by the Inland Navigation. It is a construction done for the sake of construction. With a wetland, the need to purchase land doesn't arise, so funds can be spent without much effort. The UN designated Ramsar title is a dispensable to authorities.

Over the years this, part of the lake which houses the Ashramam mangroves has been systematically encroached upon by the Tourism Department. This kind of activity at the mouth of Kappil estuary was stopped by HELP Foundation (a project worth Rs 4 crore at the mouth of the estuary).

1. How can government departments function by flouting all norms?
2. Mangroves are being destroyed as part of construction and they have no concern for this wanton destruction?
3. What is the role of the district administration in all of this?
4. Why is the concerned government official who spearheaded the decision not sacked?
5. Where is the accountability in the administration?



HELP Foundation is determined to take this up with the district administration for action as soon as possible.