

OPERATION BRAHMAGIRI

We left Bangalore at around 10.30 pm, to reach Srimgangala forest office at 6.30 am via Gomikoppal. The forest officials offered us the IB to freshen up, while they prepared the approval formalities for the trek. It took a long time, and once forest office cleared us, we rushed to Irupu falls. After breakfast at Lakshmanateertha Hotel, we started the trek. It was already around 10 am. In a way, it was good that we were late, as heavy rains the previous day had activated the leeches.

We applied snuff, coconut oil and salt and some of us very smartly had got leech-proof getters (kind of socks). It was a long trek, and we took it easy, crossing the little streams, water spots and thick forest. The leeches were trying their best to attack us, and it was Vishnu's first trek. He was cursing himself for registering for the trek in the beginning. The view around was breathtaking, and we made it to the Narimalai guest house by 1.30 pm. Munikal caves was not far off, so we decided to finish the trip to the caves and return for lunch. The rocks at the caves were wet, but going around in



Irupu Falls

the caves was a lot of fun. We came back to the guest house and made some hot coffee and tea as we chilled out, rested and

played dumb charades. With a lot of hot soup and chapattis with dal for dinner, we hit the bed in no time. With still leeches on mind, Karthik dreamt of the rain and the leeches attacking him all night long.

Day 2: Waking up at 6.30 am in the cold morning we lit some fire to make coffee, tea and breakfast. With fog all around, we collected small twigs and dry leaves to start the fire, and by 7.30 am we slipped some hot coffee and tea. We left a vessel with water to boil for instant noodles, which was our breakfast.

Rolling back the sleeping mats, packing bags and freshening up followed. Getting ready to face the leeches was prime priority. Finally by now our own Shilpa Shetty (Prabath's nick name) was ready. We smeared our legs with snuff mixed in coconut oil and lots of salt to ensure that the leeches do not attack us.

READY FOR ACTION

Breakfast never tasted better, we were all ready for Operation Brahmagiri. Our guide Mohan was quite reluctant given the fact that it was very foggy, visibility was too low and wondered if it was worth the effort to go up the peak. We were not even remotely thinking about not going up to the peak, so with all the josh, we started the trek from Narimalai guest house at 9 am.

We were climbing up the second highest peak in Karnataka, it was not visible at all, other than the path ahead it was a whiteout, and due to the wetness, the leeches were trying their best to cling to us. After an hourlong uphill trek, we reached the top of the hill only to see everything completely white.

A 70 MM MOVIE

Wind was gushing at top speed, there was some glimpse of the green car-

pet around the hill, but still it was unclear. We decided we would hang around till 10.30 am and trek down, hoping the fog would clear, the weather god I guess heard our wishes and at 10.20 am the air lifted the fog slowly all across the valley, it looked like a 70 mm movie. I had never seen anything like this at all, and there was no end of the pic-

tures we were clicking all around. Finally Operation Brahmagiri was a great success.

With big smiles on our faces, we walked down to the same track down to Irupu falls, thinking about all that we had done the last two days.

FUN IN WATER

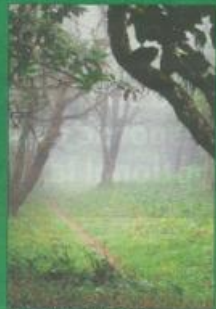
We reached Irupu falls. Initially, some of us decided to skip the falls, but water was too good to leave. At 2 pm, we reached the hotel for lunch, and left Irupu early so that we could try for a safari in the Nagarhole forest. To our bad luck, due to rains, the safari was cancelled.

We drove down slowly, and reached a place where there were four captive tuskers, and it was the best we could get after spotting deer all through the way. We took pictures with the elephants and got out of the forest as late as we could. En route to Bangalore a good heavy dinner at Kamath Janipada Loka and we reached the city by 11 pm.

Ajit, Arma and others are professionals who enjoy trekking in the wilderness. To be a BASECAMP'er, mail basecampindia@gmail.com



Walking into the clouds



Trek route to the peak



Fun on a rock



ASSAULT TEAM: Ajit, Arma, Jaipal, Joe, Karthik, Kavitha, Madhu, Prabath, Siddhi, Vikas and Vishnu

ROUTE
Irupu falls, Narimalai hills, Munikal caves, Narimalai guest house (overnight camp), Brahmagiri peak and Irupu falls

Adventure has a new name these days. The number of new and old places covered by Bangalore's resident techies almost seem endless. Have you have been anywhere lately? Write to our techventure column. But if you have made the trip during a sick leave and would like your anonymity, then give yourself a nom de plume. We won't snitch your real identity, we promise. Write to bmttechventure@gmail.com