

"The MOONLIGHT"

Katraj - Sinhgad night trek

18th March 2011

Isheet



THE MOONLIGHT

Just to remind you:

We did a Katraj – Sinhgad night trek today, from hills of Katraj to Pune's tall, tough, stiff and famous Sinhgad Fort. Yes, you read it right, we did it at night!! It would have not been possible to trek in a day time as the Sun must have suck our energy and as there is no water supply on the way, we must have dehydrated ourselves no sooner than 60 mins. This is the reason why our great organizers had decided us to punish during night time.

The trek as you all knew and now felt through pain in various body parts is a 20 km cake walk ☺. We walked, slipped, rested and got tired between Katraj and Sinhgad in a small jungle path, involving not less than 17 mountains, joining the two. It was the most beautiful walk we all wild people might have come across till now through wild life. Well, to correct some wrongly mentioned information above, this is one of the most physically and mentally challenging trek and is not a cake walk by any means!!

Rise of 'Energy Level' drop:

The day started with routine, the very first activity being visiting the Gym. Well, I believe this was the first mistake I made considering the end of the day was not going to be a routine!! I should have skipped the Gym and save some energy for a little night walk ☺. Anyways, mistakes happen, you pay the price for it, come out of it and laugh.

The next thing waiting to dry up my body's energy juice was – Office. Well, I don't know from where all the activities which would stress you out were lined up for TODAY, e.g. 30 kms of road trial, data analysis and of course the biggest amongst all – Appraisal meeting!! The appraisal meeting was the last office activity and it was scheduled to be a late evening session. As far as appraisal meeting was concerned, I was less worried about appraisal and more about whether I will be able to make for the bus or not. I made it ☺.

Spending of today's Remaining Energy:

We started from Katraj tunnel by 22:00 hours. The feeling under the umbrella of blue moon light and serenely moving cold breeze was ULTIMATE. There was no sign of stress, tiredness and sleepiness, just a momentary feeling!!

The rhythm was set, everyone was moving in a line and setting up the pace which they would maintain till the end.

The picture in left shows the spot few steps away from the starting point until where me along with Gaurav, Sachin P, Sudhir and Suraj were leading the troop :-P. Hereafter, we decided to give others a CHANCE to move ahead. Sachin P being full of energy continued moving up



fast, in other words he was sent ahead with a PURPOSE – To carve a path which would be toughest!!

We started climbing the first hill. It is one of the toughest out of 17 we need to conquer. This is the best time to decide whether you want to relax, sleep here and move back in the morning or climb it. Once you decide to climb it, there is no moving back. Few hills after the tough first one were fairly easy. We did them with fairly good pace.

Just when the rhythm was set, found a big tailback ahead, looked like Swapnil was distributing canes of energy drink. But I was wrong, the queue was due to deep and snaky descend. To increase the difficulty were small stones which were there to help us slide



down to the end in seconds with little injuries as bonus. Few people were forcefully helped but thankfully no one ended up with any major injuries. A great piece of team work was seen here as everyone was helping each other with torch light, screams of safe path and formation of chain links.



It was possible to see Sinhgad Fort from a far distance through AIR tower lights (shown in picture), blinking RED suggesting you are moving towards danger!! Even after climbing around 10 hills the red lights didn't seem to be coming near at all.

Our hero Sudhir - After climbing one of the stiffer hill, me, Suraj, Gaurav and few others were sitting and wondering

where Sudhir had been. Throughout the trek Sudhir kept sharing a wild idea about running towards Sinhgad without any breaks. The pace at which we climbed the last one and Sudhir's wild idea put three of us in a thought that Sudhir might have went miles ahead. Great Sudhir, you were a hero for us until we saw something unbelievable. After 25~30 mins we saw a tall guy drenched in sweat, mouth wide open to suck as much oxygen as possible (at some point we felt this place is running out of oxygen ☺) and lifting legs with his hands to move every step ahead!! He was none other than our hero Mr.Sudhir himself ☺. Well Sudhir, no hard feelings but that moment just lifted our moral and we were ready again to roar!!

The red blinking light of Sinhgad fort was now near, 3-4 hills away. Running out of energy, we four decided to take shortcuts at any cost. The shortcuts actually were long walks as it required covering the hills from side. We did two hills with so called shortcuts but again ended up with a tough hill ahead which had dense jungle punishing us to climb it. We did it, forcefully.

The last hill can be said to be a cake walk, it really was. It was just a walk towards the end through side of the hill. There we were, at the end. Now we had two options as we had reached to the base of Sinhgad Fort, either take a left turn to climb the Sinhgad or right towards bus stop. We took right without even looking on left side!!

Salutation:

The first seven people who reached base of the Sinhgad fort at 05:00 in the morning dared to climb the Sinhgad fort. How is that possible? They must be good liars ☺. Salute to “The Seven Guys”, great venture people.

Big Question:

If above mentioned seven people dared to climb up the Sinhgad fort after such a tiring trek than why did they took a jeep to get down? I would have definitely stretched my legs for few more hours and have climbed it down!! Well, jokes apart it was really a great effort by them.

The END:

Me along with Gaurav, Neha, Sudhir, Suraj and Vrunda reached Sinhgad Fort base by 07:00. We had around 45 mins for a PMT to arrive at Sinhgad Fort base and take us back to our home. Tea, coffee, light snacks and there it was – The PMT.

The DAY it was:

Started the day at 06:00 in the morning and ended by next day 09:00 in the morning – 27 hours of sleepless, tiring, exciting, one of its kind and wild journey called – The Moonlight. The next time we do this trek again, it's going to be even more difficult as we know what exactly is coming up!! But would that stop us? ☺.

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I M Patel
Isheet Madhukant Patel”

NOTE: The pictures shown here are of same trek but taken by different people on some other day. They are shown for reference as I could not take any pictures this time.