

Kolkata to Shantiniketan
July 30, 2003
Indrajeet Sen



Indra - 706 km , Odo Reading at Present : 5545
Budhaditya - 641 km , Odo Reading at Present : 3240

2nd July 2003

Budha wakes me up at 2.30 in the morning and we leave home within another hour. Before we even covered 5kms it started drizzling, fortunately enough the same wasn't for long. We maintained a steady speed of 60kmph till we were stopped by a cop at the toll plaza on the second Hoogly bridge viz Vidyasagar Setu. The Cop was questioning me and I am dead sure he was looking for some quick money, but poor chap, landed up helping me with the direction towards the Bombay Road. Once we hit the "T" junction we were utterly confused which way to go, as per Sudipto Da's direction we were suppose to go right, BUT it was just 4 in the morning, there were no street lamps, no sunshine. But I have always believed truckers are the best help, on asking one I was showed the way and headed towards the same.

Once we entered the Durgapur Expressway we saw lots of the KIA MPV's lined up, we stopped there for a couple of snaps, and then headed on towards destination. The roads were messed up due to bad weather though certain patches allowed me to rise to unimaginable speeds (for me). After travelling for quite some time we stopped at Shaktigarh the all time famous place for "Langchas", since Budha was not hungry I thought we'll have some on our way back and hence saddled our selves and thumped ahead. The road on which we were travelling on was nothing else but mud and water which is very slippery and the ground is very soft hence one has to be very careful while riding on such terrain. On one of such stretches Budha had a fall, his bike fell into a small ditch sort of thing, which was covered with grass. Luckily nothing happened to him or his bike. Once we picked up the bike for him, the bike again fell of, he says he was completely drained and had no energy left.

The roads remained similar till we crossed Burdwan and headed towards Panagarh, things got better here, and once we turned right on to the Darjeeling More towards Illambazar the road was amazing, I would say seeing is believing! The curves were great; the road had proper lined dividers. Bolpur from here was just another hour and then we started searching for hotels. We checked out a hotel but did not like it much hence went ahead to the Santiniketan Post Office and called up Rik Chakroborty (A friend, who I met at Austin and had invited me to stay at his place if I go there). Since we were two of us I did not want to be a problem to anyone and asked him to guide us to a reasonable hotel. He refused to do so and took us to his friends house Sudev Basu (Professor of English) at Biswa Bharati University, and rides a Black Electra with Disc Brakes). Once he saw the condition of us and our steeds he immediately handed over his house keys to Rik and advised us to take a wash before we decide on anything else. After having a nice cold shower we headed towards the mechanic who pressure washes the bike and also polishes it. The guy at the garage did a great work on my bike it was as good as new till I left Santiniketan for Kolkata :).

While my bike was being worked upon Sudev, Budha and my self had gone for Breakfast (Rik had to go of to school, he teaches Bengali at a high school and rides a Ocean Black Thunderbird with Disc Brakes). Once we got back to the washing guy I took my bike to the mechanic for getting the chain tightened. We were introduced to another bulleteer namely Srimalya who also rides a Black Electra with Disc Brakes, he had a Machismo earlier and use to stay at Bangalore , once he shifted to Santiniketan he rode it all the way to Santiniketan and once he decided to go for an Electra he rode the Machismo down to Bangalore to sell it and to ride back on his present Electra!

We now visited Joy Da's fathers (Professor Ranabir Dutt, Acting Vice Chancellor of the University), we sat with him for over an hour and a half and had a lovely chat he also treat us to lots of mangoes and sliced cakes, yummy:). We also saw an album, which consisted of the Munnar snaps, great pictures I must say. We also saw some lovely clay models (or are they plaster of Paris)made by Joy Da. We did not feel like leaving, it was amazing the way he entertained us, I learnt so many new things!!!

By the time we finished all the work it was already Lunch time and we headed to a Dhaba which is called the "German" Dhaba. Rik had finished his classes and also decided to meet up with us at the Dhaba. One should have been here to

see what Budha was upto, followed by his crazy riding. Most of the time I was riding behind with Sudev while Rik had a tough time getting edged of the road by Budha. We all were taking turns in keeping him on the road. The four of us went to the Illambazar Forest, then the Aman Setu which is built over the Ajoy River. Budha was bent upon riding Rik's bike and there was no way in such a condition would he wants to risk his new bike:). After a couple of more places worth taking a look at we headed towards Sudev's place where we packed our stuff and rode down to a Hotel for dinner after which we bid good-bye to Sudev since he was leaving for Calcutta the following day for some family function. We then went to Rik's house to sleep which he insisted. I simply crashed on the bed since I was quite tired while Budha decided to catch up with what was on the TV.

3rd July 2003

The sun got into my eyes waking me up at 8.30 am and as expected Budha was sleeping so Rik and my self walked down to a local store to get some stuff for his mother for the Puja. We came back home and I requested Rik to help me in the cyber cafe hunt, during my stay in Shantiniketan I had visited over 10 cyber cafes, but none of them function!!! Called up home and told them all is great and there is no need to worry. I saw a Royal Enfield with a comfortable RD handle and Rik told me it would be available in town so we went hunting for that to, but again in vain. We then headed back home as Rik had to go to school for teaching. We departed for "Mama Bhagne Pahar" an attractive place 45kms from Santiniketan, you have to go right from Illambazar and 2-3 km inside Dubrajpur. On the way we stopped for a lot of snaps, the road was fantastic and there was not even a single pothole. We decided to stop for some break fast, had some samosas and carried on. Our next stop was for cold drinks but the shopkeeper only had Mirinda, so we decided to only stop once we reach Dubrajpur. After having seen the Mama Bhagne Pahar on the way back we stopped to pick up a mineral water bottle and then carried on back to Santiniketan.

Came into Santiniketan and again our cyber cafe hunt started but, naah, no luck! After finishing lunch we decided to go to Uttarayan the Museum where one can see all the belongings of Rabindranath Tagore. After checking this out we decided to head back home and wait for Rik to return. Took a shower and caught up with the TV.

After Rik came back, he decided to take us out; we saw the Kopai Nodi, Sona Juror Jungle, Moyur Akhi Canal, Amar Kutir. All were worth the visit, I have no clue why, but Rik did not allow me to bring my camera, so I insisted that he bring me back to the same place next morning, which he agreed upon:). After having a look at these places we headed back into town saw the glass house, its very beautiful at night, did some shopping here n there, had some food, went to the mechanic for a general check up. After completing all the work we headed for the Asram Maath which is surrounded by the girls hostel ;), sat there for about an hour and then headed to have dinner.

After the tiring day we decided to retire for the night. Once back home Budha was glued to the TV till 2 am, while Rik and myself were making plans for the day, some future riding plans (in Pujas riding to Kalimpong is being planned), so if anyone is interested you are most welcome. After a lot of discussion and Budha's laziness I suggested we hit town the next day without any delay. Wherever I wanted to go, Budha wanted me to go alone and come back!!!

4th July 2003

Woke up at 5, but it was raining, so by the time we hit the roads with Rik for taking pictures at Amar Kutir, etc it was 7, once we came back it was 10. We had breakfast, and left for Kolkata. Riding the first two hours was nothing but a nightmare. The third hour was great , clocked 90 km in the third hour. Once on Park Street we bid each other good bye and headed our way, I went to Dad's office and in the garage I realized my air was leaking of the rear tyre, luckily this was just in front of a tyre shop, so i opened the rear tyre and got it fixed, put it back on and headed home.

That was the end of our short trip :)