

The Ride – Rider Mania 2004

The riders and their beasts that left Chennai on 8th January 2004:

- **Standard 500**
 1. Dodo [Disc Brakes] Co-Moderator – Madras Bulls
 2. Hero [Disc Brakes]
- **Standard 350**
 1. Navaneetha
 2. Solo
 3. Saru [Disc Brakes]
 4. Easher
- **A350 Machismo**
 1. Brijesh – Co-Moderator – Madras Bulls
 2. Ajith [Disc Brakes]
 3. Kaushik
 4. Indra [Disc Brakes] – Moderator – Eastern Bulls

7th January 2004

Lot of last minute work and running around to be done... before we even realized it was past 12 and we were supposed to leave for the much awaited Rider Mania 2004.

8th January 2004

Solo, Saru, Dodo, Hero and myself gathered at Jaf around midnight and the bikes had their final touch up done to hit "the road"[before I continue, Jaf is a very respected Enfield mechanic in Madras and a perfect gentleman to say the least.] From here we go ahead to a chai shop and decide as to who is doing what and when do we gather again. Finally it was decided that Saru and Solo would go together to get Solo's insurance papers.

To cut a long story short none of us 5 got ANY sleep and we had informed Brijesh at 5 in the morning to leave with the first group and wait a bit before Ranipet. Finally at 7 Dodo, Hero and I start off from Le Meridian and Solo and Saru head back to Chromepet since Solo's insurance work was not yet done.

Finally we were on the roads; Dodo was leading while Hero and I followed. Roads were quite good, nothing to complain about really. We saw Apun coming our way and was wondering what went wrong, after a short gossip we learnt his bike was not pulling hence he had to ride back, really felt bad that he had to go back home after all the mental preparation he had for the Rider Mania. The Mad Bulls and Eastern Bulls regrouped some where before Ranipet.

Dodo's parents were very kind to bring us some lovely sandwiches and hot coffee at the highway, after about 15 minutes of breakfast break we moved on. Now we were all together, the whole bunch [Dodo, Brijesh, Navaneetha, Hero, Easher, Kaushik, Ajith, and me], Solomon and Saru were behind. We had stopped at a place called Woody's in Kolar to wash our faces and for some refreshments. We were wondering what had happened to Dodo and Hero as none of them were to be seen for quite some time. Then Brijesh and I got our beasts to life and went the other direction hunting for them, finally we see Dodo towing Hero's bike which he was doing for the last 20 kms or so!!!.His wiring had got burnt and his bike just would not start. Anyhow we got a mechanic near by and got him to do a job which would at least allow him to ride the bike to Bangalore.

Just before entering Bangalore all of us re-grouped at a mechanics shop, the mechanic said he would not be able to do the wiring hence it had to be done in Bangalore. And then Dodo decided to split the group. Now the groups were - Hero , Dodo , Navaneetha [These three would go into the city - Bangalore and get the work done] and the remaining [Brijesh, Ajith, Kaushik, Easher, and myself] we were told to move on to Hassan and look for a place and crash.

From here we were riding in a pack and we were intact till we reached Hassan, we did some great night riding, and night riding is what I love :), you just have to know how to play with the lights and wala you can have a lovely time.

Just as we reached Hassan we had stopped and calls were made here and there to know where the rest of the gang was. We were updated, Navaneetha was running on a new piston, Hero had his wiring done, Dodo got his bike fixed and all of them were ready to roll, these guys halted the night at Kunigal. I called up Ashwin[Swami] and told him where we were and he told me that we would be getting ghats first thing in the morning and not to get tempted to rip as we would be getting some beautiful roads even better than the ECR next day.

Finally after getting a decent place to stay in, we unpacked and dumped our luggage after which we went to get some food. After a good light meal I went into the hotel room took out my sleeping bag and crashed on the floor.

9th January 2004

Woke up, washed my face and was ready to roll. Rode out of the town and stopped at a place for chai and some tit-bits. Here Easher did not balance his bike properly on main stand and his bike had a fall, the clutch lever and the head light glass broke. Easher went pillion from here with Kaushik's brother while Kaushik rode Eashers bike. The ghats were simply awesome we were scraping pegs, main stands, side stands and everything that came on the way. I simply love riding and night riding. Picked up ghat riding tips from Solo in the "All India Ride for Peace and Unity".

We stopped at the ghats at a joint for breakfast and moved on, after some time Easher had enough of sitting pillion and wanted to get used to the feel of riding without a clutch, and he was soon quite comfortable rolling on the ghats.

After the ghats came to an end and we were nearing Mangalore we came across a mechanic and he got the clutch lever fixed along with a head light glass. Over here we enquired about the Mangalore Bypass which Ashwin had told me about and once we got to it, it was great. It heads straight into Udupi and it's a completely ghat section, very narrow roads and beautiful turns. Brijesh found it a bit bumpy also the nut which holds the silencer to the bend pipe on his bike gave way, but nothing really to worry about. Finally we hit the road which Ashwin was talking about, the road was very beautiful and a straight stretch, everyone was maintaining a steady 80kmph in a close formation. A stop for tanking up, here we were 280 kms away from Panaji. When we hit the coast, the sight was amazing and we had to stop for a couple of snaps. Got the bikes on side stand and parallel to each other and pictures were taken from all different angles.

The road along the coast was unfortunately only 2kms and I enjoyed every bit of it. After about 10 minutes I stopped Brijesh since the jacket he was wearing was not chained and to add to that a string was hanging out which could have proved to be quite a menace. After having him take of his jacket and tying it into the bungees we moved on.

A couple of kilometers ahead the remaining three were waiting and waved us to go ahead and so we did. From now on we were doing a steady 80 and we were doing it for longer durations, we were covering great distances in good time. After about 80 kms

of continuous riding we decided to stop and give the beasts some rest. This was one great stretch and we decided to ride on without stopping for a longer duration. Brijesh was wondering how fast the remaining three were that we could not yet catch up with them in spite of doing such great speeds, and then I realized that Brijesh had probably missed those three waiving at us. Anyhow it was no use waiting for them now since they would be at least half an hour behind, hence we decided to continue, and since they were three of them they should not face any problems as such. We were about 100 odd kms away from the Goa border so we decided to hit the border in day light. We did exactly that, we crossed the Goa border by 6.45pm and the sun was still up and shining.

Once in Goa we were doing some really lazy riding, stopping every 10kms for some Chai, soup etc etc. Once it so happened we saw a Pepsi board and decided to stop for some tea, we then realized we had stopped at a bar and we were turning our bikes to head back on to the road when the people there asked why we were doing so, on telling him that we wanted chai he readily agreed and made some tea for us. Here Brijesh made some calls to Dodo, Ajith, Karna and all. Ajith and company were way behind due to some problems they faced with the locals but thanks to their sources they did not face much hassles, but were delayed by a quite a good number of hours.

By around 10.30 we found our resort which was near the Vagator Beach where all the arrangements had been made for the Rolling Thunder Motorcycle Club [Bangalore], Eastern Bulls [Kolkata], Madras Bulls [obviously Madras].

After contacting the rest of the team, and being assured that everyone is safe we dumped our luggage in the room and went to see the neighborhood. After about half an hour we got back to our room and went of to sleep.

10th January 2004

In the morning at around 5 we heard our names being shouted out and I was wondering was it a wild dream or something, but no, it was the three bikes which had delayed finally arrived.

We contacted Ranga , who is another Madras Bull member but had come a couple of days earlier into Goa to arrange for accommodation and requested him to come to the resort. Once he arrived we got the accommodation fixed and while the others wanted to take a batch and sleep for some time I decided to head on to the Rider Mania venue with Ranga.



The venue was very well chosen, with lots of parking space for the beasters [There were about a total of 130 bikes which turned out from across the country, New Delhi, Chandigarh, Mumbai, Chennai, Pune, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Kolkata]

Ranga then introduced me to a number of guys; it was great to know like minded people. Day time everyone was basically chilling out, some was still coming in hence it was more or less a very informal day. The ones from the Madras Bulls who were in Goa already came in quite late since they had got no sleep. And the remaining who was riding from Kunigal had arrived by lunch time. Finally all of us were together.



Everyone was simply lazing around, some informal introduction here and there and it was sunset before we even realized. Great music was being played, all those good old Rock, the kind of music which the old guys enjoyed in their college days and which our generation is also enjoying.

The dance floor was packed with guys from all the clubs shaking a leg banging onto each other thereby introducing them selves to. This was the Royal Enfield night where Royal Enfield had organized the dinner. After Dinner we packed of for our hotels as the next day was supposed to be a big day for us.

11th January 2004

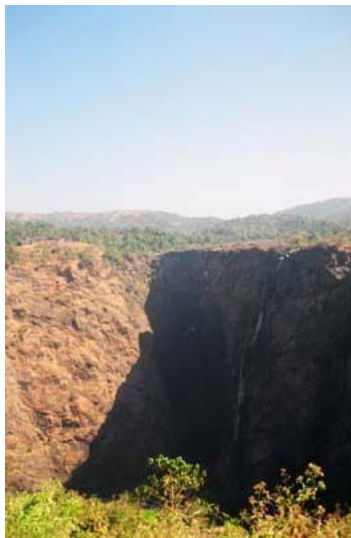
By 10.00am we all were ready to leave the resort and head towards the Rider Mania venue. On arriving at the venue Sachin announced the schedule for the day. Firstly all the founder club members/club representatives were awarded with a memento by Siddhartha. And then Siddhartha Lal the CEO of Royal Enfield who was with us through out at the Rider Mania and was interacting with many of us.

We were now of for a city ride and Sid was also one of us on his A500 which is to come into production in a couple of month's time. Try imagining 130 bullets thumping a 40kmph together. Actually it is not possible to imagine such a scene; you have to see it to understand what it actually is. This ride got over in an hour or so. Siddhartha headed of to the airport to take a flight to Delhi for some work while the rest of us headed back to the venue.

Some of us, namely Dodo, Brijesh, Navaneetha and my self wanted to leave today itself so that we can stay the night at Honnavar and head to Jog Falls the next morning. We halted at a hotel 61 kms before Jog Falls. We had lots of company here, Sid, Rocky & Pallavi, KJ, PP from RTMC and the four of us.

12th January 2004

Rocky & Pallavi leave 15 minutes before us. They are steady and safe riders. The four of us left the hotel at about 8.30 in the morning, tanked up and head towards the falls. I am running out of words to describe the ghats. They were simply out of this world. The roads were good, the turns were neatly banked. There were some loose gravel in the centre of the road which could prove to be dangerous if not noticed. Dodo and I were ahead most of the time I preferred staying behind Dodo, though there were times he told me to go ahead and enjoy the curves. Unfortunately his bike was not pulling well and he felt there was something wrong with it hence was a slower than his usual speed. We stopped for a couple of snaps and continued. About 20 odd kms before the falls there was this undisciplined Indica driver who had probably taken his car out of his back yard for the first time and had taken it for a spin to the jog falls, almost put me off the road. As we were about to enter Jog falls Sid overtook us and gave us a nice smile. From here I left Dodo behind and was tailing Sid, we were doing good speeds but since the roads had started to break up in this section suddenly I preferred staying behind him. The turns were beautiful, before we could even straighten our bikes out of a turn the next turn came up☺. And we had a lovely time leaning left and right scraping whatever our bike's got on the tarmac. Finally we arrive at the so famous jog falls where Rocky and Pallavi were waiting for us , they had arrived about 5 minutes ago. The first thing I did was took my camera and head for the falls , and what I got to see was a thin stream of water was making its way out of the hills into the falls. Here I said to my self "The journey is the destination", how true.



After a couple of rounds of coffee, magi, bread n' eggs we head towards Bangalore. We came across certain bad patches of tarmac, thank god we did, and it worked as hot water being poured on us in the morning to wake us up. The Bangalore guys went ahead while we stuck to each other since Navaneetha was running in and was

not exceeding 60-70kmph. We had Lunch at a decent place , over here again we had the whole group together which included Dodo , Navaneetha , Brijesh from Chennai , Rocky , Pallavi , Keerthi , PP , Sid , David , from Bangalore and yours truly from Kolkata.

After Lunch again the Bangalore guys were way ahead with us going steady at 60-65kmph. We stopped quite a few times for pictures, chai and snacks .Quite obvious since we were out to enjoy and not set any time – distance, non stop Destination A-B record. At our last snack stop we decided we would halt at Tumkur for the night and head on to Chennai via Bangalore in the morning, Bangalore being just 70 odd kms from Tumkur. As we reached Tumkur my speedometer cable snapped ☹. We searched for good accommodation and by 10 we had dumped our luggage and freshened up. By 11 we set out to get something to eat. Returned by mid night and crashed.

13th January 2004

Woke up lazily at 7 in the morning. Tanked up and headed towards Bangalore. It was so chilly and foggy we hardly went over 60. We checked tire pressures and cruised steadily in close formation. On hitting Bangalore we asked our way out of the city. Once we were out of the city I told Dodo I am going ahead and would meet you at Woody's for brunch. I covered good distance in decent time. No unnecessary stops or speeding. Was cruising at a steady 70-80. Reached Woody's freshened up ordered for some food and waited for everyone to arrive. Dodo arrives and then we see Brijesh , Navaneetha come in , Ranga had also caught up with them.

Dodo had some of his father's friends here who had gone to Bangalore for attending a medical conference and was on their way back.

The ride from here onwards was quite good. Had some more ghats greeting us with broader roads and good stopping places. At one such stop Sarangan and Narren had caught up with us. After exchanging experiences/thoughts et all. Sarangan and Narren ripped ahead while we four steadily thumped ahead.

We stopped at a phone booth and informed Dodo's father not to take the trouble and come to the highway to meet us. We went ahead and Dodo showed us a road and told us go ahead and clip since this is a very isolated road and nothing could possible go wrong, so I readily went ahead after riding for a good time I saw Narren's bike parked under a tree since I saw no one in my rear view mirror I told my self why not wait for the rest and then ride together. I parked my bike inside out of everyone's sight. Dodo, Navaneetha and Brijesh passed by and did not notice me. Dodo later got worried whether I had got lost or whether I was way ahead and went clipping ahead to look for me. In the mean while I waited for Narren to finish his meal and then we both started riding together. We were doing good speeds and we crossed Navaneetha and Brijesh on asking them about Dodo they said he was further ahead. Narren and I stopped at a diversion which the rest could easily miss out. After about half an hour Ajith comes by and tells us he has been riding non – stop from Bangalore leaving Easher and Kaushik behind since they were very slow. Narren then told him since you have been riding non – stop its better you don't wait here and waste your time. He revved up and went ahead into Chennai. We waited for the remaining two. Navaneetha had missed the diversion and went ahead, so I shouted my lungs out till he heard me and rode back into the correct road along with Brijesh. We then asked around for Dodo, no one knew where he was. He had to be ahead. So again we rolled ahead, Narren and my self clipped ahead while Brijesh and Navaneetha followed. We stopped at the place where the Rajiv Gandhi's memorial is and waited for the rest. Finally Dodo arrives and narrates his story. He went clipping ahead looking for me and then was having tea at a stall when he saw all of us go by.

All of us re-grouped here. Narren , Dodo and I went ahead over taking at proper intervals – the traffic was bad. We stopped before entering Chennai for the final photo session. Over here I told Narren to go ahead since I would be riding with the group into the city.

We arrive at Chennai and split. Dodo and Navaneetha showed me the way to my house and went ahead.

This was my story of Rider Mania 2004.

I am back in Calcutta, this event and the friends I have made during this event would be well remembered through out my life.

Thanks to Bullets, It gets like minded people together.

