

RAMANAGARAM ROCKS!

Ramanagaram isn't just Gabbar's adda. It is the rock climbers' adda too, writes **Kavita S**



Ramanagaram is not just synonymous with the super hit movie Sholay. It is also called the Rock Climber's Mecca.

Situated on the banks of the river Arkavati, this place is more than a 1,000 metres above the sea level. It spans over 4-5 kilometres in radius and encompasses seven major hills, many hillocks and large boulders. A weekend or a holiday would mean that you get to see the rock climbers of Bangalore doing what they do best, climbing those magnificent rock faces and enjoying the aura of the place. It is around 50km from Bangalore on the Bangalore-Mysore highway and is a taluk centre in Bangalore Rural district.

Boulders of all kinds and shapes en-route give enough challenges to a learner and an experienced climber, making the trek up to the hill all the more exciting. The texture of the rock can rip off your skin if you are not careful enough. But what the heck! Nothing wrong in having a few bruises here and there when you want to do some good bouldering.

As you explore the landscape you will find a few good rappelling faces where you could just fix ropes and start rappelling or could use the bolted routes to go up the rock face and then rappel down. The rock face near the pond on the hill has more than eight bolted routes. If you are confident enough, know the basics of rock climbing and have climbing gear i.e. harness, carabiners, belay device, ropes, quick draws, climbing shoes and a good partner to belay, you could do some real rock climbing all day long.

Whatever the case maybe, any activity in adventure sports has to be a calculated risk and it's important to take the calculated risk more seriously. The rocks are always there to climb only if you can return safe.

The splendid landscape surrounding the hill is picture perfect and gives enough scenery to a lensman/woman to click around. Every shot and every frame can redefine the way one feels about the rocks.

Ramanagaram has great history. The name Ramanagaram was officially given in 1949 and originates from the village Ramagiri on the foot hill of Ramadevarabetta (hill of Lord Ram).

Mention of Ramanagaram is recorded as early as 268 AD. It figures during the rule of Mauryas, Gangas, Cholas, Chalukyas, Hoysalas, Vijayanagar empire, Kempegowda, Mysore kings, Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan and the British.

The hill has a Sri Ram temple that is built in the Dravidian style. To many rulers this place was of great strategic significance. It is also believed that saint Sri Ramanujacharya visited this hill. There is a mention of Ramagiri in Ramayan, 16th century works of Renukaradhya and in Sarvajna Vachanas. The Ramanagaram of today is a well known cocoon marketing centre.

For a traveller who would like to just visit or an adventure sport enthusiast wanting to scale the rock faces, Ramanagaram simply rocks. One bit of advice though: Have a rocking time but keep the place litter free.

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