

# Mysterious island revealed

**RAMA RAJU and LIPIKA HALDER**

After exploring a few of trekking places near Hyderabad, I started exploring the nearest island. I used Google Earth and was shocked to find a huge Island in Nagarjuna Sagar.

I wanted to visit the place and started asking my friends, office colleagues and finally, and got to know of a village called Kambalapally, from where we have to hike for about an hour to reach the Nagarjuna Sagar lake.

Initially I hesitated to explore the island as I heard that it was a naxal-infested area and that the police conducts regular combing operations to maintain peace in the village. But, when I visualised the place in my mind after seeing it on Google maps, I could not overcome my yearning to explore it.

We started out for Devarakonda in an APSRTC bus from MGBS at 5.30 am and reached Devarkonda by 7.45 am. We had a heavy breakfast at an Udipi hotel and packed some lunch too. We boarded the bus for Pogilla, which starts at 9 am from Devarakonda, the bus journey was enjoyable, and we saw the Nallamala hills throughout the journey. Finally, we reached Kambalapally village by 11.40 pm.

I tried to switch on the GPS in my mobile but could not find a network. So, I sought directions from the local people to reach the island and discovered that it would take about an hour to reach the island. The hour-long trek



**CAMPING:** Travellers have a fun time exploring the island and clicking pictures of the surroundings



would take us over two hillocks. We started hiking and trekking through the dry barren land and over small hillocks.

After an hour, we awestruck by the blue skies, blue water and the island in the water. It was love at first sight! We sat on the edge of the hillock for 10 minutes and enjoyed the view. We trekked down the hillock of 400 meters, trampling over loose rocks and a rocky terrain, taking almost 30 minutes to reach the river bank. We chilled out in the cool breeze near the water till

3 pm and then requested the fishermen to take us to the island in their fishing boat. They agreed for a small fee. We also bought some fresh fish from the boatmen. They were kind enough to clean and cut the fish making them ready to cook.

The boat ride to the Yelleswaragattu Island was like entering heaven. We had an awesome view of the Nallamala hills all around. By now we had finished the water we bought with us and had to fill the bottles with water from the Krishna River. The natur-

Discovering a long-forgotten island on the Nagarjuna Sagar lake, we decided to pack our bags and set out to explore it

al taste of the fresh water was priceless. As we approach the island, we realised that the island is 500 meters high and contains two old famous temples, which are visited by the villagers on Maha Shivaratri once a year. We then decided to cook our dinner after fetching our own firewood. We cooked fish barbecue and veg pulau. It was almost 7.30 pm by the time we finished cooking and had dinner.

While washing the dinner utensils at night we could see the fish dancing near the shore. We decided to sleep on the island and we climbed the steps to the temples. After climbing 800 or more steps, everyone was so tired and we slept on the tarps gazing at the stars, it was one of the best moments of all our lives. We received a wakeup call at 5.45 am and enjoyed the fabulous sunrise and the marvelous view of the Nallamala hills surrounding the island. We then started to trek back to the shore of the island by 8.30 am and finally made it by 9 am. The boat arrived on time by 9 am and took us to Anapu, which is the other end of the Nagarjuna Sagar Lake from where we hired an auto to Macherla and had lunch and boarded the bus to Hyderabad.

— Both the writers are engineers by profession and travel enthusiasts.

leisure time



## Food and restaurants

There are no restaurants at Kambalapally. We packed food at Devarakonda, which has a few small eateries. At Kambalapally, we bought fish from the local fisherman and cooked our own barbecue and rice that we had brought along with us. However, there is one small grocery shop where one can get vegetables, fruits and other stuff.

## how to reach

We took a bus to Devara Konda village and from there to Kambalapally. A bus runs up and down from Kambalapally, three times a day. One can easily expect a delay of about an hour. Devarakonda to Kambalapally is about 70 km and takes about two-and-half hours to reach. While returning, we took an eight-seater auto from Anupu to Macherla, some 30 km from Machala. Buses ply frequently to Hyderabad.

## TEMPLE VISIT



There are two Shiva temples. The temples are pretty old, and existed long before the reservoir came into existence. Pilgrims used to walk from this temple to Srisaillam, some 110 km away. The original idol of the temple, however, has been replaced, and is now placed at the other Sri Devi Bhoodevi Ranganaswamy temple.

pit  
Stop

