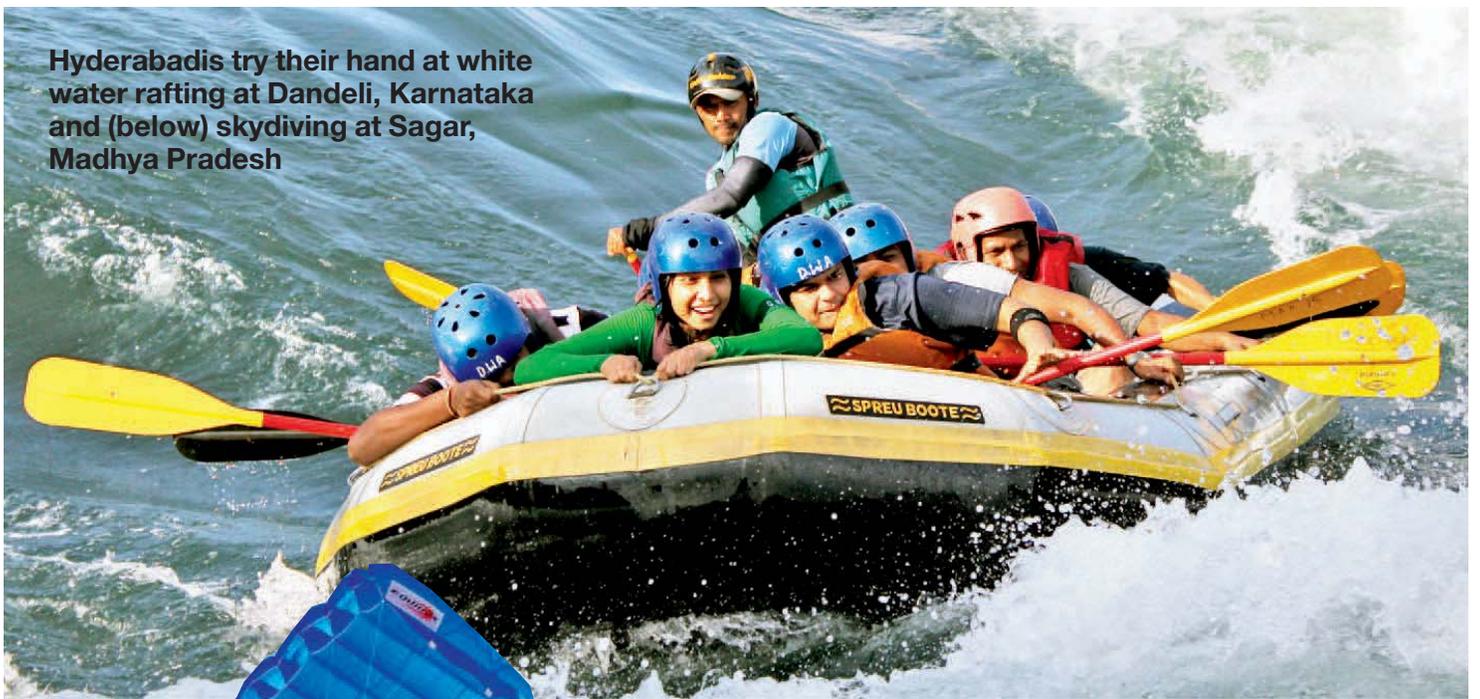


Hyderabadis try their hand at white water rafting at Dandeli, Karnataka and (below) skydiving at Sagar, Madhya Pradesh



## HOT AMONG HYDERABADIS

- Scuba diving in Netrani island near Murudeshwara, Karnataka and Goa
- White water rafting and rappelling in Dandeli and Coorg
- Rappelling at Devarakonda Fort
- Trekking to Everest Base Camp
- Kayaking in Dandeli
- Paragliding in Kamshet near Pune
- Trekking in Sadhan Valley, Bhimashankar Hills, Matheran, Rajgad Fort, Torna Fort
- Trekking in AP in Nagala, Araku, Kadali Vanam, Datta Padukalu in Nallamala and Tirumala wildlife reserve
- Trekking in AP in Nagala, Araku, Kadali Vana
- Rock climbing in Hampi and Badami
- Skydiving at Sagar
- Wildlife safari and treks at Panna, Kanha, Pench, Tadoba, Ranthambore, Bandhavgarh, Sunderbans, etc.

# Get your adventure on!

A growing number of thrills-seeking Hyderabadis are heading off to offbeat destinations to try everything from paragliding to white water rafting

Abhishek Rajee

**G**one are the days when an outdoor trip meant a predictable trek to the nearby Moula Ali hillocks or a drive to Nagarjunasagar Dam. Adventure-seeking Hyderabadis are getting more audacious than ever. From going on exhilarating treks up historic forts nestled in the hills of Maharashtra to scuba diving in Murudeshwar, from taking to the skies by paragliding in Kamshet to braving wild currents at a white water rafting session in Dandeli, outbound adventure trips have gotten Hyderabadis' adrenaline pumping and how! Thanks to the city's mushrooming adventure clubs, the city folks are heading outside of Hyderabad to get their

dose of thrills every weekend. Interesting destinations across the country have caught Hyderabadis' fancy for their wide variety of weekend activities — jungle safaris, bird-watching trips, kayaking, rappelling, rock climbing, camping, hiking, bouldering, scuba diving and paragliding.

Speaking about this growing trend, Diyanat Ali, Founder and Chief Organizer of Great Hyderabad Adventure Club (GHAC), says, "We are seeing a huge change in expectations of our members when it comes to outdoor treks. People no longer want plain vanilla treks, they are looking for a challenging ones."



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5

# It's all about the thrills on weekends



Hyderabadis at Sadhan Valley, Maharashtra

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

These trips are particularly popular among the working professionals, especially techies, who make the most of the five-day week and head off on thrilling, weekend getaways. And the numbers speak for themselves. Suresh K of GHAC, says, "We did 65 weekend outbound programmes in 2010. Within just a year, the number leapfrogged to 102 in 2011. This, apart from the regular day treks that we conduct all through the week. Today our club has 80 trained outdoor leaders who are adept in all disciplines of outbound adventure." Padmaja, a senior member of the club, adds, "When we started GHAC in 2008, there were hardly any outstation treks, but today it is the flavor of the season."

With these club taking care of all logistics — from planning to safety — even the most paranoid kind of Hyderabadis are leaving their inhibitions behind. Interior designer Jamila Kapasi, who was initially sceptical about going on an adventure club's rappelling trip to Dandeli, says, "I was worried about the safety and also the kind of crowd that might be part of the trip. But once I read about the trip online and decided to go one, I had a great experience. The club looked into the smallest details when it came to safety and also ensured that the group consisted of a healthy mix of students, IT honchos, couples etc. I'm hooked to adventure sports now. Also, I can choose from a lot of activities, be it bird-watching, kayaking or paragliding."

These clubs are a great fix for lazy

Hyderabadis as it gives them a chance to explore their wild side. Shyamala R, who took the adventurous plunge when she went paragliding in Kamshet, says, "After my first trip, I'm a regular now. I can now fly paragliders by myself. I even trekked in the Sahyadri Hills and will now be soon leaving for a 15-day long trip to Mount Everest Base Camp."

The spurt in the number of adventure clubs in Hyderabad only reflects the growing demand. NCC cadet Hari Chetan Singh, who formed his adventure club in January this year, says, "Earlier, hardly anyone opted for adventure trips apart from a few software companies. But now, it's individuals who long for such trips. The Internet and social media has been in-

strumental in making adventure sports popular among people. The Hyderabad Meet Up portal is very popular among people who want to do something different."

Andhra Pradesh too has a lot of lesser-known retreats for those who love their thrills. Venkata Reddy who founded the Hyderabad Trekking Club recently, says, "I was a member of another adventure club earlier. But I decided to start my own adventure club to promote trekking and adventure activities in and around Hyderabad and AP alone. In the last six months, we have explored places like Rachakonda Fort in Warangal, the lesser known Bodakonda Hills, Panagallu Fort and 13 more destinations in the state. I think the demand is only going to increase from now on."

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— JAMILA KAPASI

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— HARI CHETAN SINGH



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