

Podar Hikers' Club Annual Report 2024-2025



Teacher In-charge: Lt. Sanjay Dhage

Student Secretary: Mr. Soham Berde

Joint Secretary: Mr. Neelay Naikpadave

Student Treasurer: Mr. Anish Kudtarkar

1) Tree Plantation Drive (Yogi Hills) : 30th June 2024 (410 ft.)

Participants: 30

A Memorable Plantation Drive and Hike

Our day began early as we woke up before dawn to prepare for an exciting journey. Some of us boarded the 5:21 A.M. Panvel-Thane slow local, reaching Thane Station by 6:20 A.M., while others arrived from different locations. After a train change, we met at Mulund Station at 6:30 A.M. and waited for fellow NSS volunteers. By 7:15 A.M., we took a rickshaw but ended up at the wrong location, leading us to walk a short distance before reaching Sardar Pratap Garden, our meeting point. Since we were slightly behind schedule, we immediately started our hike. Along the way, we received plant saplings, which we carried to the plantation site. Working together, we dug pits, planted the saplings, and secured them by creating protective boundaries under the guidance of our mentor. After the plantation, we listened to inspiring speeches from senior members about environmental conservation. Their words encouraged us to take responsibility for protecting nature. Re-energized, we continued our hike and finally reached the summit, where we were greeted with a breathtaking view of Sanjay Gandhi National Park and Tulsi Lake. We took some time to capture photos before beginning our descent. On the way down, we paused at a viewpoint overlooking Powai Lake and Vihar Lake. Slowly and steadily, we made our way back to the starting point. Some of us enjoyed a cup of tea before concluding our journey with a peaceful meditation session at the garden. Afterwards, we took a rickshaw back to the station, had some snacks, and traveled home safely. It was a memorable experience, marking our first hike of the academic year. Despite its simplicity, the event was well-organized, and we are excited for more such adventures ahead.

Leader: Soham Berde & Anish Kudtarkar

2) Sondai Fort Trek: 21st July 2024 (1200 ft.)

Participants: 49

Trek Report on Sondai Fort

On 21st July 2024, Podar Hikers Club (PHC) organized a one-day trek to Sondai Fort, Karjat, Maharashtra, with 49 participants. Standing at 1,200 feet, the fort presented an adventurous challenge, especially due to the monsoon season. The journey began at 7:15 AM from Kalamboli, reaching the base village Sondewadi at 9:45 AM. After a breakfast of idli and chutney, the trek commenced, featuring waterfalls, muddy trails, and steep climbs. Local guides and ex-Podarites provided assistance, ensuring safety throughout the trek. The ascent was thrilling, with strong winds and low visibility near the summit. Upon reaching the top at 11:50 AM, participants paid homage to Sondai Devi before taking in the breathtaking views. The descent, though tricky due to rain, was filled with camaraderie. Post-trek, the group enjoyed lunch, games, and lighthearted activities before departing at 4:00 PM, reaching Kalamboli by 6:30 PM. The trek was a perfect blend of adventure,

cultural heritage, and teamwork, leaving participants with unforgettable memories and a deeper appreciation for nature.

Leader: Neelay Naikpadave & Tejas Vhatkar

3) Sarasgad Trek: 4th August 2024 (1600 ft.)

Participants: 49

Report on Sarasgad Trek

On the 4th of August 2024, the Podar Hikers Club successfully organized a trek to the historic Sarasgad Fort near Pali, Maharashtra. The event saw enthusiastic participation from 49 members, including students and alumni, making it a diverse and inclusive experience. The group assembled at the college premises early in the morning and departed by bus to Pali. Upon reaching the base village, trek leaders provided a brief introduction and safety instructions before the ascent began at 8:00 AM. The trail featured a mix of scenic views, challenging climbs, and opportunities for team bonding. Monsoon rains enhanced the trek's beauty with lush greenery and cool breezes, while the fort's historical significance and panoramic views made it a memorable destination. Participants explored various sections of the fort, including the temple and bastions, before capturing a group photo at the summit. Steep climbs and slippery paths posed moderate challenges, but teamwork and perseverance ensured a smooth ascent. After descending to the base village, the group enjoyed a well-deserved lunch at a local eatery before returning to college by evening. The Sarasgad Trek was a successful event that strengthened camaraderie and adventure within the Podar Hikers Club while fostering a deeper appreciation for history and nature.

Leader: Soham Berde & Pratik Godse

4) Valmiki Ashram Trek: 25th August 2024 (2300 ft)

Participants: 49

On 25th August 2024, the Podar Hikers Club organized a one-day trek to Valmiki Ashram, Dehene, reaching a height of 2300 ft. A total of 49 participants, including junior college students, embarked on this adventure, eager to explore the natural and historical significance of the site. The journey commenced from R.A. Podar College at 5:45 AM, with a bus ride to the base village, where the team arrived by 10:30 AM. The trek began at 11:10 AM, leading through dense forests, small streams, and steep patches, requiring moderate fitness and careful footing. Despite a sudden drizzle making certain sections slippery, the team navigated the challenges with enthusiasm. The serene ambiance of Valmiki Ashram provided a spiritual retreat, enhancing the experience. However, mobile network issues posed minor communication difficulties. The weather remained pleasant, with light drizzles adding to the trail's beauty while increasing its difficulty. The trek leaders ensured proper safety measures, guiding beginners through the more challenging sections. Key takeaways

from the trek included the importance of time management, carrying waterproof covers to protect belongings, and preparing participants for network limitations. The descent was smooth, and the group shared a meal before heading back, reaching the college by evening. The trek successfully fostered camaraderie, resilience, and an appreciation for nature and history, leaving participants with lasting memories.

Leader: Neelay Naikpadave & Kushal Ghosalkar

5) Tahuli Peak Trek: 17th November 2024 (3478 ft.)

Participants: 49

The trek to Tahuli Peak on 17th November 2024 was a thrilling yet challenging experience for all 49 participants. The journey began with an early morning assembly at 6:10 AM, though a slight delay in the bus's arrival pushed our departure to 6:45 AM. On the way, a brief halt at 9:15 AM became an inspiring moment when Shubham Dada assisted an injured boy, reinforcing the values of compassion and teamwork within the group. Upon reaching the base village at 10:15 AM, a guide was hired, and we started our ascent at 10:45 AM. The trek was filled with breathtaking views of the lush Sahyadri ranges, misty valleys, and rugged terrain, pushing our endurance as we navigated steep climbs and tricky rock patches. The core and committee members played a crucial role in guiding and motivating everyone, especially the newcomers, ensuring no one was left behind. After an arduous climb, we finally reached the peak at 2:45 PM, where we captured memories, enjoyed stunning views, and had lunch. The descent at 3:30 PM initially went smoothly, with a brief halt at Shiv Mandir at 4:30 PM. However, an unexpected miscommunication led to the group splitting, with one team mistakenly taking a different base village route and another crossing three mountains due to a longer path suggested by the second guide. Despite the exhaustion and initial concerns, the group displayed resilience, maintaining high spirits throughout. Eventually, everyone reunited at the bus by 8:45 PM, and we commenced our return at 9:00 PM, reaching college safely by 11:00 PM. The experience taught us valuable lessons about navigation, group coordination, and adaptability, reinforcing the spirit of adventure and camaraderie that defines Podar Hikers Club.

Leader: Soham Berde & Samit Ghag

6) Durgabhandar Fort: 30th November – 1st December 2024 (overnight) (4248 f.)

Participants: 49

The Durgabhandar Fort (Brahmagiri Hills) trek on 30th November – 1st December 2024 was an exhilarating overnight adventure, with 49 participants embarking on a journey that blended nature, culture, and teamwork. The trek began with our departure from college at 6:00 PM, reaching the hotel at 2:00 AM after a long but enjoyable journey. After a brief 3-hour rest, we had breakfast and set off at 5:00 AM to begin the trek from Iruppu Falls, Karnataka. The 9-kilometer trail passed through dense forests, grassy plains, and steep rocky climbs, making for an exciting and scenic ascent. Iruppu Falls, the Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, and Thirunelli Temple were key highlights that added beauty and cultural significance to the journey. Despite the presence of diverse wildlife, including elephants and leopards, we encountered no significant hurdles, ensuring a smooth trek. The

weather was pleasant and cool, adding to the joy of hiking. The group took 4-5 hours to reach the 4,248-foot peak, where breathtaking panoramic views of the Western Ghats left everyone in awe. The descent was relatively easier, taking about 3-4 hours, and wildlife sightings along the way made the experience even more memorable. The trek emphasized camaraderie, endurance, and respect for nature, with participants ensuring environmental conservation. Future treks could benefit from local guide assistance, proper pre-trek preparation, and safety gear recommendations to enhance the experience. Overall, the trek was a perfect blend of adventure and cultural exploration, with the group's enthusiasm and teamwork making it a truly unforgettable journey.

Leader: Anish Kudtarkar & Pratik Godse

7) Peb Fort Trek (2050ft.): 19th January, 2025

Participants: 49

The Peb Fort (Vikatgad) trek on 19th January 2025 was an unplanned yet thrilling adventure that tested our adaptability, teamwork, and endurance. Originally set for Matheran Sunset Point, our plans changed due to an accident on the route. Upon reaching an alternate base village, locals advised against continuing to Matheran and suggested Peb Fort instead, though no guides were available. Determined to take on the challenge, we relied on teamwork and navigation skills to proceed. The trek, starting at 10:00 AM, involved steep inclines, rocky patches, and a tough rock-climbing section, making it a moderate to difficult climb. The scorching sun and demanding terrain required frequent hydration and breaks. After an arduous ascent, we reached the 2,050-foot summit by 1:00 PM, where we relaxed at Ganesh Mandir, took group photos, and refilled water from a nearby source. The descent began at 2:30 PM, testing our endurance as we navigated through steep sections before reaching the base village by 6:00 PM. The return journey was delayed due to traffic, and we finally reached college at 11:00 PM. The experience highlighted the importance of pre-trek planning, proper hydration, safety gear, and local guidance. Despite the unforeseen change in plans, the trek was an incredible test of resilience and camaraderie, proving that sometimes, the most unexpected adventures turn into the most memorable experiences.

Leader: Neelay Naikpadave & Tejas Vhatkar