

8 **STAGES****of Amateur Trekking**

FATIUL HUQ SUJOY

Trekking, in simple terms, is travelling on foot through adverse terrain that usually include forests, swamps or mountains. While mostly pursued by adventurers and professionals, total amateurs can give trekking a try as a holiday getaway. But that doesn't mean it is all fun and games. Here are the 8 stages casual trekkers go through in their escape to the wilderness:

**The Hype**

It's the hype that fuels everything. Its inception is started off by a mixture of an impending holiday and an excessively manipulated picture of a scenic place on social media. The hype helps gather fellow travellers and also helps cope with rejection from the rest. The hype helps to forget the pile of work that was needed to be done. The hype gives strength when confronting parents for permission or the boss for an extra day off. The hype never disappoints.

**The Hoarding**

"So I hear the path is slippery this season. Boots will be great for gripping the soil and saving me from inevitable death."

\*buys expensive hiking boots\*

"But with all this rain, there could be puddles and little streams to cross and shoes could be an inconvenience when wet. Better take a pair of sandals."

\*packs a pair of sandals\*

"But that'd get dirty in the mud. So I'll take these extra sandals for when I get back to the hotel."

\*packs an extra pair of sandals\*

"But sandals are prone to getting torn so I'll take spare shoes."

\*takes an extra bag to accommodate the spare shoes along with an encyclopaedia, a Wi-Fi router and eleven packs of Energy biscuits\*

**The Flying Start**

The day of the journey starts on the back of a near sleepless night on a rickety bus/train. But a classic breakfast of porata-dim and the promise of milestones to reach and on-fleek selfies to take provide the strength to carry on. Add the false perception of physical fitness and you'll get an over-enthusiastic amateur trekker (A.T.) who thinks running is the best option to climb a steep path. Ironically, the A.T. will occasionally stamina-shame his fellow travellers for not keeping up.

**The Realization**

It doesn't take long for reality to hit A.T. as he watches his stamina-shamed fellow climbers waving at him from some 20-30 meters ahead while he struggles for oxygen. Blaming the hectic schedule of classes and work for hindering exercises, or the streets being too dirty to jog on are common responses to this situation. The wisest approach is to announce that

you're taking your time to enjoy the scenery.

**The Denial**

Sometimes life gives you lemons, and sometimes an epiphany of how human existence is pointless. It could be a bad breakup, an accident or a depressing meme or it could be on a mountain pass with your feet aching and your heart rate rising as you look out over the vast stretch of multiple shades of green, get a whiff of wet clay and dried leaves, and listen to the arbitrary chitters and calls from birds and unknown beasts from deep inside the forest. And at that moment A.T. thinks to himself that this could well be a fitting resting place.

Like all situational philosophical deep thoughts, this eventually subsides. With the help of his friends' continuous

motivational "oi uthos nah ken?" and their guide's repeated insistence that their destination is right around the corner, A.T. gets going one step at a time.

**Finally Made It**

Whether it was a miracle or an over dramatization of a lack of stamina from A.T. is up for debate, but eventually (an hour or so late) A.T. and crew reach their destination. And the freezing water from the stream or the strong breeze on the mountain top dissolves the pain in no time. Though later everyone needs to take muscle relaxers and Paracetamol. But for the time being everyone focuses on taking on-point selfies, profile pictures, and the obligatory group-jumping-in-unison photo.

**The Journey Back**

Returning is never easy because first of

all, leaving such a heavenly place will sadden anybody. And secondly, the climb down is more complicated and riskier than the climb up. Going back to civilization is a necessity and the full meal that awaits there is incentive enough after such a hard day of trekking.

**The Bragging Rights**

With civilization comes access to the internet. Describing all the fascinating journeys you just experienced (leaving out the times you cried because you were tired) and of course, posting all the pictures of the beautiful scenery with your full face on the foreground is a must. Then there's using references from this journey amongst friends who didn't go. But most important of all, for the rest of your life you'll have memories to cherish, a story to tell and retell, and an example to use when you have to prove that you're not a "farm er murgi".

*Fatiul Huq Sujoy is a tired soul (mostly because of his frail body) who's patiently waiting for Hagrid to appear and tell him, "Ye're a saiyan, lord commander." Suggest him places to travel and food-ventures to take at fb.com/SyedSujoy*

