



Hike up to Gunung Datuk

by: Ir. Siew Yaw Jen

Apparently in 1372, Dato' Pepateh Nan Sebatang led a gathering of local chieftain to the peak to appoint a Datuk. So it appears to be the place for Datukship appointments and hence the name Gunung Datuk. Gunung Datuk in Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, is the fifth hiking trail organised by Highway and Transportation Engineering Technical Division. It is 884m high and a popular trek for beginners before climbing higher mountain.

A total of 17 IEM members and friends met up at Seremban R&R along the North-South Highway on the 31 July 2011. Soon after breakfast, we headed towards Rembau where Gunung Datuk base camp is located. Being the day before the Muslim start fasting during Ramadan, we expect the car park to be quite empty.



A group photo before the hike



Getting ready for the hike



Clear wide path up to the peak



Climbing up the ladder to the peak



Rembau town covered in light haze



Cool breezy break at the top



Lunch break at the peak



Enjoying the view

After gearing up, stretching and a group photo session, we headed to the trail up the peak. The trail is straightforward with only one clear path leading all the way to the top. It is pretty wide, so trekkers should be able to find their way easily and also not being held back by thorny veins. The first stretch of the trail is rather demanding, climbing up a 70 degrees steep slope. After climbing up 300m in elevation, hiking up becomes easier. As we approached the peak, sound of strong flapping wings of hornbills could be heard. As the thick lush tree covers the top, their silhouette could only be seen.

Two hours after starting our hike, we finally reached a flat camping site. From the camp site, it is a vertical climb using steel ladders provided to the peak. Formed by several gigantic boulders, the peak offered a 360 degree view of the surrounding. One side is the view of flat ground of Rembau town, while the back is the mountainous view with its thick forest vegetations. The cool strong breeze blowing towards your face makes it a refreshing experience.



Another view from the peak



Our two young hikers



Itsy bitsy spider



Spot the snake?

After having a good rest and soaking in the magnificent view, we prepared for the hike down. Going downhill was rather easy initial and one of us even spotted a tiny snake, well camouflaged in the thick under growth. It stared at us for a few minutes and slowly slithers away. As we approached the last 300m, it is tough going again. Some even wonder how they managed to climb up such a steep slope early that morning.

Everyone reached the car park safely and after a quick shower, we bid farewell and wish Vasan and his brother in law a safe hike to Mt. Kinabalu in two weeks time. We hope to catch up with them to share their hiking experience when we meet again for the hike to Gunung Irau at Cameron Highlands.