

Our Last Day in Hyderabad, and a long long way home

Redwood City, USA - February 23, 2008

Amy:

Our last day in Hyderabad was spent shopping. Most of the day, anyway. Brent woke up early and went for a walk around the neighborhood. We had a delicious Bengali breakfast of puri, a fried bread-like round yummy dish, and a sweet mixture, I can't remember the name, and tea. I love the tea here, both the English tea and masala chai. The English tea has milk and sugar and is delicious, as is the masala chai.

Brent and I went with Tapas to his office in Hi Tec city. Tapas showed us his office and we met some of his team. We got the royal tour of the Microsoft Office buildings, which are new, modern, and look like silicon valley. There was a gym (Brent was jealous), many cafeterias, a chocolate carousel, a bank, all underground in a mall-like setting. Outside there was a cricket field, tennis courts, a basketball court and an outdoor café.

After the tour, we said goodbye to Tapas and his driver,



New San Jose?

Akbar, drove us (passed some buildings going up that looked exactly like they could be new San Jose condos) to Shilparamam, which is an arts and crafts "village". We planned to meet him in 30 minutes b/c he had to pick up Madhumanti and get Akanksha at school.

When we got to Shilparamam, we realized that it wasn't open yet, so we told Akbar that we'd find our way home and that he didn't have to wait for us.



Shilparaman entrance

We wandered around, waiting for Shilparamam to open. When it opened, we went inside and wandered around because it seemed as if many of the booths

were not up and running just yet. We walked up and got some coffee and water at a restaurant, and wandered around the buildings. There was a lake



Shilparaman walkway

and many statues of artisans, as well as huts where it looked as if artists could learn different crafts, such as pottery. There was an overlook as well, and a park/playground with swings.



Shilparaman swings

We spent a few hours at Shilparamam, shopping and drinking coffee and wandering around. It was very relaxing, not at all like the frenzied shopping in the Old City of Hyderabad.



Shilparaman shopping



sweet ride

We took a rickshaw back to Tapas' place, and started packing and getting ready for our (long) flights home. A few hours before our flight, Tapas got a call on his cell phone for me. It was our homestay "family" in Kerala! They knew that we were flying home that night and wanted to wish us a safe trip! They're so nice.

We had a (last) delicious dinner with Tapas, Madhumanti, and Akanksha. They had been such great hosts, we were sad to be leaving L But we'll see them in July when they're back to visit California...

We drove to the airport at around 9:30. There was a great deal of traffic, and our driver drove in the middle of 2 lanes, creating a third land. We



To the airport

decided (again) not to look out the window. At the airport, we breezed through the checkout and security, then waited 'til our (1st) flight, which was at midnight.



Airport waiting room

Our first flight on Thai Airways was about four hours and was from Hyderabad to Bangkok,

Thailand. We landed at around 5:30 a.m, and waited for our next plane. We had to wait in a long line (almost 2 hours) which ate up our layover time in the airport. All of the Thai Airways planes have a picture of the king of Thailand on them, and have the words "Long Live in the King"



Long live the king of Thailand

Our next two flights were on Cathay Pacific Airlines, which I love because each seat has individual tvs. Both the flights were uneventful. Long and uneventful.



View of India from Hong Kong airport

The food was good – we didn't sleep very much – watched tv and read.



Going home

[Naresh: We left Tapas' at about 9pm Friday night, and got home around 11:30 am Saturday morning, and yet we'd been traveling for about 32 hours. Weird.

Our cab driver from SFO to home was a tail-gaiting, lane-switching maniac. We weren't surprised to learn he was from India.]

Now we're at home and very very very jet-lagged. It was a great trip but we're happy to be home.

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