

Published based on [Trio Complete SS1600K & Bunburner 2500K](#)

# **Trio Complete SS1600K & Bunburner 2500K**



The trend of doing challenging long rides in India is not so frequent. Earlier riders had only one motorcycle which they could trust for their long journeys (the Hero Honda Karizma), but now with many more performance bikes being launched, riders just need a reason to ride. Three such bikers from Andhra Pradesh, took the SS1600K and Bunburner 2500K challenge to put man and machine through extreme difficulty, emerging out successful. The three - Ram Varma on his Honda CBR250R, Sri Harsha and Abhinav Santosh on their Kawasaki Ninja 250R each, have shared their story with us, which makes a very interesting read for all bikers amongst us. So here goes.

It all started with when Ram read about the iron butt association while doing a Google search for some XYZ reason. He found it interesting and with his past endurance drives, he decided to give it a shot so the planning started soon after he read about it. It took close to 8 months to fix on a date and look out for company because company is the only thing which gives you more energy to do the task. It helps.

Ram in his own words "After I bought my CBR in may, I met some really interesting people (read bikers). Initially I found them to be just bikers but soon after a couple of weeks got to know them more and more. End conclusion was that they're much more than just bikers. I saw the real meaning of brotherhood. Now we (bikers from Hyderabad) are a family. We hang out every so often, whenever possible not just to talk about the bikes but we end up doing much more".

Meanwhile two of his very good biker brothers (Abhinav & Harsha) were ready to do the SS1600 but were confused how to convince their families about the ride. Being confident of convincing their families somehow they started planning.

First point of contact was the legendary biker from AP named Vinu S.V. aka MadMax. He is the benchmark for us. They had multiple talks with him about the SS1600.

The three of them finalized October as the deciding month but soon after confirming a disaster struck. Harsha's parents took away his bike because a famous celebrity's son died in a SBK crash. For them, a ninja is a SBK and hence bike was ceased. The plan was postponed to November keeping their fingers crossed on Harsha getting his bike back in time. Meanwhile Abhinav and Ram continued to plan and get themselves physically fit for the SS1600K.

On one fine day when Ram was on his daily jog, he got a call from Abhinav

Abs: What are you up to?

Ram: Endurance jog...

Abs: Let me tell you something...I was thinking of taking the endurance run to the next level?!

Ram: like?

Abs: We just planned to do 1600 kms in 24 hours, How about doing 2000 kms in 24 hours?

Ram: Let's do the 1600kms first, we'll do the 2000kms thing later. What say?

Abs: No! SS1600 is not a big deal, Let's do something big. Come over to my place and then I'll reveal my plans to you!

Ram: Hmm, Okay, I'm game but what about Harsha?

Abs: Not a big deal to tempt him and pull him into this ;) but first we need to get rid of his free flow! More than harming his bike reliability, the sound alone will tire us!

Ram: Yup, Let's work it out then.

Soon after that conversation Ram spoke with Harsha and started planting the endurance seed in his mind and tempting him. To be honest, it didn't take much from Ram to convince him. Ram was busy shopping for a family car and failed to turn up at Abs's place.

Yet again on another day, Abs called Ram and the talk started again

Abs: I've got another plan.

Ram: What's it?

Abs: Let's target the big fish, Not so big but bigger than what a regular person can think of.

Ram: 2500kms in 36 hours?

Abs : Absolutely! We can achieve all three awards for three of us in one ride! SS1600, SS2000 and BB2500!

Ram: Nice!!

Abs: Harsha?

Ram: Same old thing, Let's plant another bug in his mind.

Abs: Let's work it out then.

Ram called Harsha for a get together soon after, all three of them sat together and decided to do the BB2500 challenge. The problem with Harsha was the fact that he had to 'manage' two nights for a BB2500 as opposed to one night adventure which was needed for the SS1600.

All this time Ram and Abhinav were talking daily about the routes, petrol stations, possible traffic and taking into account all other factors as well. After a couple of weeks, Harsha called with good news saying his bike is back! Both Ram and Abhinav let out huge sigh of relief.

The three decided to do the run by the end of November and the pre ride preparations were well underway. Bike servicing, other necessary accessories like GPS, Clear visors with pin lock inserts, Visor cleaning kits, red bulls, Gatorade, medication, tank bag, bungee nets and etc were all sourced.

Abhinav and Harsha went to seek last minute advice from Vinu (who thought the three were attempting only the SS1600 but little did he know they had their minds set on all the three goals) regarding the start time and any other overlooked factors. Abhinav revealed the BB2500 plan to Vinu for the first time and Boy was it helpful! The start time, important landmarks in Bangalore to take the turns required, additional help on the certification and most of all a run through of the entire 2500km stretch! Vinu was more excited than the three doing the ride maybe because he inspired us to do this and felt very happy indeed. Both made sure as to not spill their plans of SS2000 to Vinu as it was meant to be a surprise for him. Abhinav and Harsha both conveyed the same to Ram and the final plan eventually came together.

A day before the ride, both Ram and Harsha visited Abhinav's place at 3.00 am. Yes you guessed it right, the three of them were walking zombies for a week by now synchronising their sleep times with the potential ride times. Ram installed a car charger on Abhinav's ninja to power the GPS and with that the final preparation was done. The three discussed on the do's and don'ts such as formation, safety breaks, hand signs, overtaking situations, villages, diversions, bypasses, other potential hazards and above all they made an important pact.

The pact being in the event of a mechanical problem the remaining two riders will carry on but in the event of the second bike suffering mechanical issues then the ride would be cancelled because at no point should a rider ride solo away from home (riding solo towards home/Hyderabad is agreed and deemed safe as at that point that rider might not be in a position to achieve goals). If one feels like giving up then the rest will carry on. In the event of a crash then the ride is cancelled altogether.

#### **ROUTE: HYDERABAD-KANYAKUMARI-HYDERABAD-CHEGUNTA.**

Nov-23-2011 - D-day :

We planned to leave between 6pm and 7pm and the meet point was Katedan (10km from International airport). Ram reached the start point at 6pm and the wait started. Abhinav and Harsha joined Ram and the last minute checks are all done, they tanked up, wished luck to each other, got electronic receipts and started their journey with a big smile on their faces. The Three Musketeers were confident.

Just 10km into their ride, they hit a traffic jam! Grrr!! Some politician was coming in the opposite direction and traffic was stopped by cops. It's a very frequent sight in India. They lost 20 minutes out there. Once the cops gave a green signal the journey started yet again and kept riding all the way towards Bangalore. It was a smooth run. All three enjoyed the ride and were very excited. First fuel stop was at Kurnool which is good 200kms from our start point. They tanked up, clicked a couple of important pictures each and off they went again. By this time they got the hang of riding with each other at good speeds and each took their turn for leading and sweeping. They were fast approaching their next fuel stop, Ananthapur which is 150kms from kurnool. They were sticking to their plan of re-fuelling at specific petrol stations even if their fuel range is more than sufficient because they didn't want to risk Anantapur and Bangalore stretch due to the lack of petrol stations in between and the last thing any of them wanted was pushing their bikes when that energy is much needed elsewhere. The priority of short listing petrol stations was largely dependent on their ability to provide electronic receipts 24 hours. During the refuelling, Abhinav and Harsha had to make calls to keep the people concerned updated on their whereabouts and for Harsha in particular who's had to 'manage' his parents yet again. Harsha also pointed out that the average speed was less than 100kmph at that point. They made their way towards the dreaded Bangalore knowing they had plenty of time to play with (with respect to BB2500 but not SS2000).

The plan was to get re-fuelled at Devanhalli but they decided to give it a miss to make up for the lost time. Little did they know that it's virtually impossible to make up for lost time when entering Bangalore. Around 30km from Bangalore the roads started playing games with them. The roads were almost empty as it was midnight and they were doing good speeds and all of a sudden a huge speed breaker appears right in front of them, all three jumped over it and manage not to fall, looking at each other and confirming that everyone is fine and whether the bikes took the impact, luckily all was well! They went ahead and its then they were forcibly reminded that they were fast approaching Bangalore. Every few seconds speed breaker after a speed breaker followed and wait another speed breaker followed by another. Bangalore was full of speed breakers!!

They were now very frustrated with speed breakers and bad roads in Bangalore which was eating away most of their time. On one of the speed breakers, Harsha almost lost control and rear ended Ram's CBR. Harsha had small cuts on his leg due to the small mishap. They were clearly struggling to get through Bangalore, no one knew the routes in Bangalore and to make matters worse even the GPS was confused. Somehow after a very tolerant and patient phase and a few wrong turns later they found themselves underneath the big silk board flyover which reminded them of a lost opportunity as they needed to be ON the flyover so that they'll have additional evidence from the toll gate as proof of passing through Bangalore. They were faced with yet another problem of petrol reserve lights coming on all bikes and to make matter worse there wasn't even a single petrol station open in that stretch at that hour. To further confirm their fears, they asked a passerby about fuel stations and he straight away said none of the stations around here are open. By now they're regretting not stopping by at Devanahalli. So they kept riding past Bangalore and towards Tamilnadu hoping to find a fuel station open. They rode for 30km and the more economical of the bikes, the CBR E indicator started blinking as well but luckily they saw a fuel station which brought wide smiles to their faces.

Tanks filled up, they had some snickers, mars bars, red bulls, washed their faces, cleaned their visors, toilet breaks and off they headed towards Salem. It was a cool journey after that till Namakkal. They've encountered lots of trucks, buses, cars and even short ghat sections. They've even had to face a fully blinged out cruze trying to overtake them rashly. After many failed attempts high the three eased on their throttles and let the racer overtake them. Soon after this Abhinav's ninja started behaving weirdly, his temp needle didn't want to come down. They saw nothing unusual and kept riding forward, 10 minutes later, Abhinav pulls over and says that he can smell something burning. They stopped on a very large bridge with BLACK all around them and Ram noticed the coolant leaking. Harsha noticed the bridge swaying, Abhinav noticed they were on a river (he's scared of water at night) but all of them noticed the smoke coming from the bike due to the spilled coolant evaporating off the engine (it was Ram's guess). It was still pitch dark so Ram turned on the torch and with the help of headlights of other bikes they started looking for any leaks inside the fairing but found nothing so decided to open the fairing and diagnose the problem. As soon as Ram started opening the fairing, there was smoke coming from inside the fairing and it kept increasing. At this point all three were tensed and did the best to open the fairing as fast as possible. They later confirmed that the smoke was because of the coolant being evaporated after spilling on the super hot engine. Abhinav called up the mechanic at Hyderabad PBK and he said its fine, just an over spill. 30minutes later with the fairing in place, they started the ride once again. Yet again after a couple of minutes Abhinav's Ninja was missing from Ram's RVM. Both Harsha and Ram rode back and found Abhinav on the service lane confused what to do with the bike. The bike was over heating again. The three talked for some time and soon realised the bike cannot be fixed there, Abs made a call that his ride has come to an end and urged Ram and Harsha to continue with the ride and he'll head back to Bangalore when possible. The pact was honoured. At this point they were in Karur which was 860km from the start point and just under 11 hours from the start time. They realised the BB2500 was still doable but the hopes of SS2000 were fast fading as they've lost more than an hour because of this coolant problem and not mention the fuel breaks becoming lengthier due to the fact that all three had to re-fuel at a single vendor (mid night time), all three had to get electronic receipts, all three had to take photographic evidence, all three had to eat and drink and all three had to make calls/sms to the concerned people.

Ram and Harsha continued on their journey hoping some good to happen with Abs. The two pulled over at a fuel station somewhere near Dindigul and filled up their tanks and Ram called Abs to check on his status but no answer. Meanwhile Abs realised he could still salvage a SS1600 provided his bike permits him hence to be on the safe side for documentation Abs went about taking photographs of the U-turn point with the sign board and his bike in view, he also rested for over an over refreshing himself and at the same time giving his bike time to cool down sufficiently. All that was being done in a petrol station where he faced never ending queue of people asking him about his bike and etc, which was a welcome distraction from the disappointment of his bike. Elsewhere after some 300km or so, Harsha takes the lead and Ram kept following him. All of a sudden, Ram was stunned to see something falling off Harsha's bike and splitting into two halves out of which each half going in opposite directions. Ram couldn't recognize what it was but he was hoping it wasn't an important part of his bike. While taking the lead, Ram noticed Harsha's exhaust wobbling a lot so he pulled over and found that the bolt which holds the exhaust in place fell off. Ram's birth skills came to the fore and he performed a DIY by fastening the exhaust to the holder using an electric wire for time being. Soon after some 30km, the exhaust was hanging again. This time Ram decided to use something which could take the heat and so he used some bungee net

hooks by joining 3 of them and fastened the exhaust. It was holding the exhaust pretty well. Again this unexpected stoppage in ride took more than half an hour of their time which by no means is negligible in a ride like this, but they somehow kept their spirits high and decided to not take unnecessary stress upon themselves and so they continued on their journey.

After resting for more than an hour, Abs decided it was time to start again and he rode with a will to complete the SS1600. Whenever the temperature needle started rising, he slowed right down to 40kmph and maintained the speed so that the needle comes down. This worked for him and he kept going with slowly increasing his speed for 60kmph, 80kmph and sometimes to 100kmph as long as his bike was allowing him to do so. He contemplated stopping by at Macdonalds near Krishnagiri but decided against it but he found it rather tempting though. During this painful ordeal of sometimes being overtaken by heavy trucks, slight drizzle (which worried him no end as he was wearing leathers) and intermittent stoppages of 30minutes each for every hour of riding, he never let any of this get to him! He called Ram and updated them about his status and was breathing a sigh of relief about their status even after Harshas exhaust mishap.

Elsewhere Ram and Harsha continued to ride as all was fine till some 100kms but nature had a small surprise for them as it started drizzling which got them very tensed as they were neither expecting rains nor were fully prepared for it but they kept on riding as finally to their luck it was only a drizzle and we were delighted when the rain totally disappeared. After that, it was a peaceful journey. No issues at all. The two reached Kanyakumari at somewhere around 10:30am which wasn't a bad timing and well on course for BB2500. They tanked up, took atm receipts, few photos and informed their dear ones that they've reached half way and were about to start their journey back home. They started from Kanyakumari, stopped by on the highway to lube their chains, topped up the engine oil and also performed safety checks. They also spent a good 20 minutes playing around in the fields over there to let off a bit of steam and started heading back to Salem. After riding continuously for 200kms the two riders have stopped at a petrol bunk to refuel, perform the same drill and resume our ride again. After a while Ram and Harsha were stopped by a cop near the toll plaza. They went near to the cop only to hear him talk in Tamil which proved to be a communication obstacle as they did not understand a thing but after repeated attempts they've managed to deduce that the cop was talking about over speeding (they felt it would've been easier had Abhinav been around as he can communicate slightly in Tamil). The cop was saying the speed limit for 2 wheelers is 60kmph :O but little did he know Ram's rebellious nature towards narrow minded, old fashioned authorities hence Ram tried convincing the cop that speed limit for all the vehicles are same (Ram guesses) but all in vain. 30 agonising minutes later (in which the cop scared them by saying they should appear in the court which would have meant the end of their BB) he asked for 200rs each openly and let them go.

Meanwhile, somewhere past Hosur and lots of traffic, Abs reached the toll gate of elevated flyover at 11.45am with a smile hoping he'd be able to complete the SS1600 as he had 500km and 7 hours left to complete them. Once on the flyover he switched on his GPS and plotted the course to Bangalore New Airport and voila! Being a Hyderabadi, he might've gotten used to all the wrong side overtaking, honking, bad roads and no lane discipline whatsoever but he heard the opposite about the Bangalore traffic so hoping good things he proceeded ahead only to find himself in middle of HELL aka Bangy traffic! The GPS guided him through thick and thin without a single mistake on its part but it was tough for him to cope with the sheer volume of traffic on ridiculously congested roads with construction happening left right and centre. Finally holding his nerve, he reached new town Yelahanka petrol station at around 1pm and luckily so as his bike was on reserve much before he reached Yelahanka! He took his time to regain his composure, made a few calls to Ram and Vinu, had couple of red bulls, mars bars and washed his face as well as not forgetting to take photos. More than anything he rested his bike for one hour before he made his way back to home sweet home but not before doing the math that he still had 450km to cover in 5 hours which even on a good day is a challenge!

Ram and Harsha decided not speed much though it was safe but the downside being their average speed was pathetic for the next 200km. Soon after, they saw the milestone Salem 40 km. This was the point where they would finish the first leg of the challenge, 1600km in 24 hours. Sensing the proximity of such a milestone, they redlined the bikes running to the checkpoint. Alas, they found a fuel station, swiped their cards and relaxed for some time to enjoy the feeling and shared their status by informing everyone that SS1600 is done and BB2500 is what's coming next.

Abs knew one more stoppage to let the bike cool down would end his SS1600 and he took extra care by easing on the throttle at the slightest hint of the temperature needle rising above the normal. He rode fast and didn't stop for fuel at Ananthapur to make up lost time which meant his next stop was Gooty which was just over 300km from Hyderabad and 260km from Shadnagar (point where his SS1600 would become a reality) and so he sped past vehicles (he knows Ananthapur-hyderabad stretch inside out) and taking extra care whilst overtaking. He reached Gooty safely without any drama from his bike now but still he couldn't take things lightly. He refuelled, ate mars bars, drank red bull and took the photos and started again. His next stop would be Shadnagar and he had to trust his tank range to give him 260km and so trusting his bike he resumed his high speed pursuit fast passing small villages. Towards Kurnool though, he had a problem with the sun being almost in his eyes so he rode with his head pointing to the east as the sun was very low on west. He passed Kurnool with care, Jadcherla with speed and approached Shadnagar at exactly 5.30pm. With the sun fast setting, he quickly changed removed his tinted visor replaced it with a clear visor. There wasn't an atm visible anywhere on the highway and the petrol station didn't accept the card so he was left with no option but to travel to Hyderabad hoping his bike will last that much longer. He finally reached Shamshabad at 6.30pm which meant he travelled 540km in just under 5 hours! With that he got back to the start point, collected the electronic receipt and atm receipt with photos at 7.05pm and the start time being 7.14pm so he let out a HUGE sigh of relief that he's finally successfully completed the SS1600 with hardly 10 minutes remaining though he's completed 1730km in that allotted time. He was more than satisfied with the result and thanked his stars and also ordered them to watch over Ram and Harsha! Now he knew Bangy-like hell would welcome him in the form of 7pm mindless Hyderabad traffic.

Meanwhile some 550km from Abhinav, Ram and Harsha then rode to Bangalore with their hearts in their mouths looking at the traffic!! What transpired next can only be described in person but to sum it up, it took the duo 3 hours to get through Bangalore's traffic!! By this time the SS2000 was still a dream for the future but knowing that the major hurdle is over, they continued their ride with smiles on their faces as they still have 9 hours to cover 500kms but they were brought back to reality very harshly. It was when they just passed Ananthapur which was around 350km from Hyderabad, the sleep bug bit them making both of them drowsy. Sleep was hunting them. To make matters worse it was midnight. It was a tough time to control sleep even with all their sleep synchronisations before the ride. It was close 40 hours since they woke up. The climate was brilliant for a romantic getaway but not for endurance riding with temperatures going below 15C and that's without the wind chill! Soon after Ananthapur it was a disaster once again. There was a massive speed breaker on the highway! Who would expect a speed breaker to be there on one of the fastest highways? Damn! Harsha was in the lead and he couldn't sense its presence and jumped over it, the impact was so high that his exhaust fell off completely! He couldn't pick the exhaust, first thoughts were to wait for it to cool down and then take it back home but since they were hard pressed for time they took a bold decision to just leave the exhaust there (Harsha mentioned he had a slightly dented but fully working exhaust at home so he didn't mind to abandon it). With that they both sealed the fate of that poor exhaust and so they rode on.

Few minutes later, they just couldn't control their sleep so they had to stop every 50km for a break to keep them alert. This routine continued for the next 150kms which made the BB even more difficult that it already was but even then they didn't want take additional risks which could very simply result in a mishap hence they rode very sensibly with proper breaks in between. They were now both hungry and sleepy so found a tea stall and sipped the hot tea, ate an omelette as they simply couldn't control their hunger. Soon after that, sleep started hunting them again. Unable to deal with it, they stopped by and looked at each other wondering what to do and that is when a sound in Ram's mind said " try till u die but never quit ". He was mentally strong, so was Harsha and they had only one thing in mind "300km more and BB is ours!! That's when the realisation of their ride hit them, the first Ninja in India and the first CBR in the world to do the BB2500 challenge. They can't miss this opportunity after undergoing all the pain. After that both of them seemed to have beaten the sleep bug, Ram took the lead and started averaging speeds above 100kmph passing through hundreds of trucks and Volvos. Harsha was right on his tail following his lines. Within no time, they reached Hyderabad and the final destination was Chegunta which is 70km on the other side of Hyderabad. Ram grew up in Hyderabad so he knew every route in Hyderabad so that was an blessing, they took the fastest route and perhaps embarked on their scariest ride through their hometown ever as it was early in the morning and its usually the time when people start coming onto the road with sleepy heads. It was a hard time to concentrate on riding, escaping sleep and also to be alert for people jumping onto the road out of nowhere. They somehow managed to get out of Hyderabad quickly and headed toward

Chegunta. After 60km of most numb riding, they found a board with a left sign marked for Chegunta. They took that turn hoping it's the right turn and they ended up redlining in every gear. 4km later they found a board saying "Welcome to Chegunta"! Both were ecstatic! They then headed towards the nearest ATM and swiped their cards. And voila!! The challenge is done! The seemingly impossible obstacles have been overcome! Months of planning, days of efforts and there they are!

Ram called one of his friends to check on Abs's status. He informed that he was done with SS1600. Both Harsha and Ram were more than happy to know that Abs could do it though he had bike issue. They had two friends (both biking friends but ever since the first meet, they've become more than just biking friends) who were waiting for them which must've made the tired riders very happy indeed.

The END (I guess some real stories do have a happy ending after all)

Special credit should go to Vinu S V aka MadMax. The first person in AP to do the SS1600, the first person in whole of South India to do the BB2500 and maybe the first for future riding records as well! He gave us valuable inputs and advised us from a brother viewpoint not just as a friend. Thanks for inspiring us and Thanks for being there for us! We hope you get a worthy sponsor soon and may you enjoy riding for years to come!

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