



we are the people



EDITORIAL

If you spend your day just waiting to get on your bike and shred, and then get impatient to shred another day, you probably are in love. Love with this sport. Sweet lines, sick trails, amazing sceneries, and the sheer versatility of the sport are just irresistible. Summers are here and it's time to service those bikes, strap on your gear and go out and just ride. Ride in a city, ride a trail, explore, shred with friends, whatever you may like, but ride. We come out with issue 2 of our magazine and we are also proud to announce that Mesum Verma is now the team manager and rider for the Mag41 downhill team in China and is now riding for Mag41, Scott bikes, OBG, Hongkong Cycles Ltd, SDG and Schwalbe tyres.

This issue is about the amazing people who surround us. People who love to ride bikes. People like Sam who ride to live and live to ride and give us a view about their lives. People like horsemen, porters, guides and the locals of Ladakh who make a trip unforgettable and without whom we cannot ride there. About people like Jagan who have talent just waiting to be displayed. About people with passion like Fabian, the urge to ride. And the people who make it happen.

It's really good to see the biking scene grow in India day by day. More and more people are getting into the sport. So if you choose your bike over anything, and live to ride, you are a mountain biker. Let's kick off the new season and ride on.

Keep it real

Prateek Singh

PRATEEK SINGH EDITOR IN CHIEF



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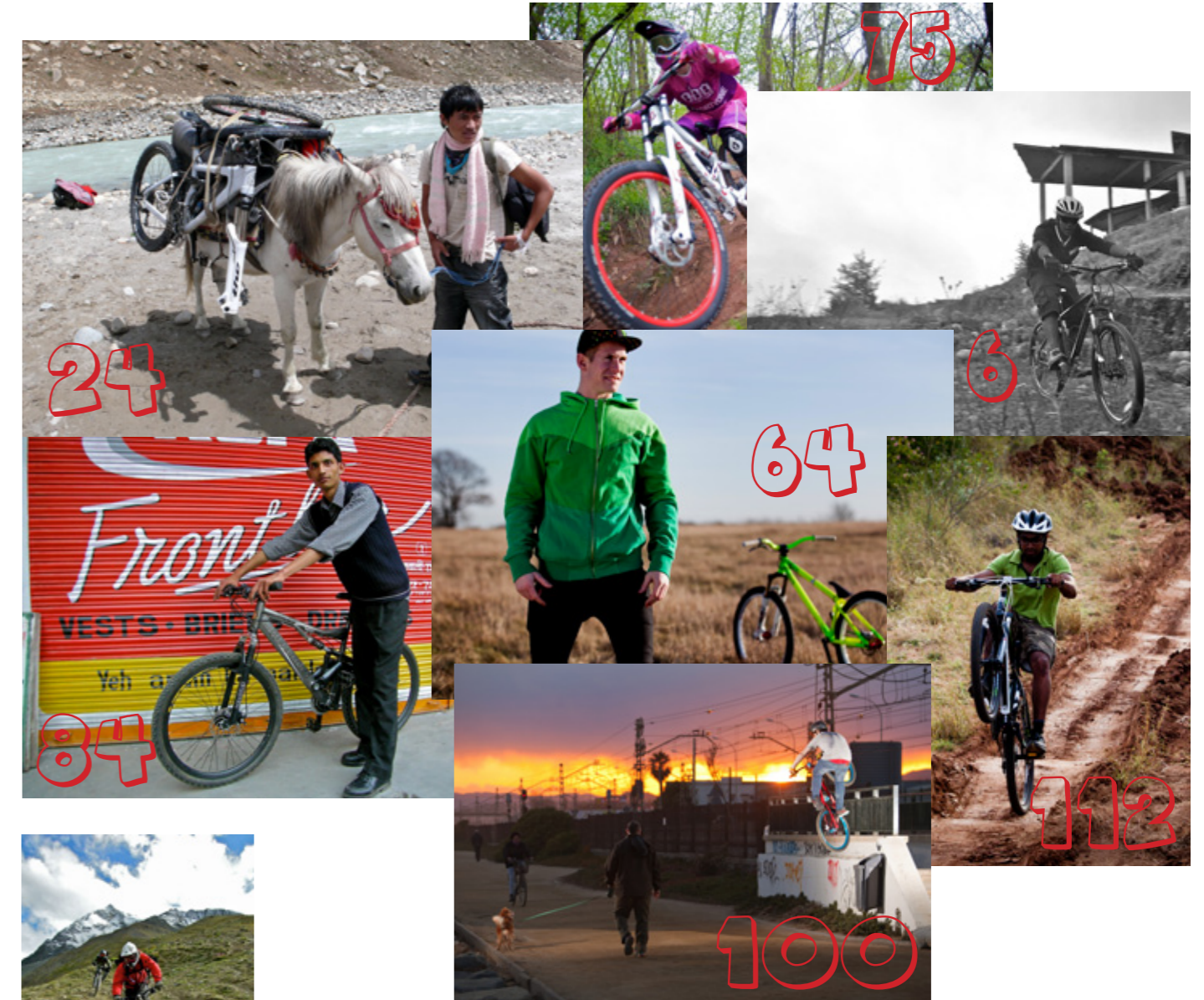
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photo: Mesum Verma
location: Shingo La, J&K, India

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„the men behind the mag“
a peek into the lives of the people who make the mag work

MTB INDIA
6



प्रतेक सिंह

Text: Siddarth Sharma / Photos: Rahul Majumder, Avik Mahato

The first time I ran into the guy, I almost addressed him as 'Sir' based on what I had heard about him and assuming him to be in his mid-20s and. Then I found he's only 17 years old. Guess that's all the more reason to address him as such for accomplishing so much at such a young age.

Editor in chief of MTB Mag India and a mountain bike instructor who also reconns trails and supervises bike camps, I think he may impute a bike to his body one of these days. His room already resembles a pimped out bike garage, mutating his body into a bike wouldn't seem like such a far away step. I guess as far as one can, he and his bike have already reached a union as one. I've been on rides with him, and it's a strange sight to see someone decked out in proper biking gear rip through the streets of Kolkata, hopping clean over manholes and on and off curbs.

Allow him to explain:

I see you ride on, and it's a very rare case to come across a biker like you in this city. How did you get started in this?

Hmm... well I started riding as I wanted to do something which was fun to do outdoors. I never liked field sports. Since a kid I was fascinated by mountains and hills, they gave me an unexplained high and excitement whenever I was amidst them. Once on a trip to my uncle's place in Dehradun, I started riding my elder brother's bike. It was a crappy Indian full suspension bike but it didn't really matter then. I used to ride to the woods behind their house and ride the trails there and that was when the bug bit me. Soon, I had figured; this was it. Since then I have learnt more and more about the sport with each passing day, learnt more about riding, got onto better and better bikes, improved my skills, and then started competing. Now it's more than a passion. I'm obsessed with my bikes and biking itself. Now it's a pipedream to earn a living riding bikes and being in the sport.

Being in a country like India where biking is not that prominent, I plan to change that. I'm more into downhill and technical trail riding. Love freeriding and urban freeriding as well. Riding is an addiction. Worse than a drug. Eat, sleep, ride, repeat is the notion I live on. Ha-ha. Party on the trails.

Editor of MTB MAG INDIA, how did this magazine come into being?

Yeahh...Mtbmagindia is a mountain bike magazine which features the biking scene in India and also keeps one up to date with the latest happenings of the world of mtb everywhere along with tech tips, tricknology, etc. It started when Sir Mesum Verma (an elite DH biker from China/ a professional photographer) , whom I consider my mentor told me he had quit a previous bike magazine he used to run in India. The news was shocking that there were some business troubles and treason by the deputy editor of the previous mag. So he asked me if I would like to be the editor in chief of a new magazine. So now we have mtbmagindia, with me as the editor in chief and Mesum Sir as the CEO/photo director. Check out www.mtbmagindia.com for more

What kind of riding do you do? What about it appeals to you?

I am basically a "mountain biker". I enjoy all disciplines of it. Freeriding and downhill appeal to me the most. Currently I'm just increasing my skills on a Hardtail XC bike which I abuse like dirt jump bikes. Haha. I love riding. (except road -_-) love my bikes more than myself. In a word, I love riding. I love riding aggressive mountain style stuff. Anything that gets me stoked.

What are you up to these days ?

Well...I'm in 12th grade. Last year of high school. I'm almost 18 years of age (not yet 18...haha). I'm a mountain biker, the youngest mtb instructor (with Himalayan Footprints), a race organizer, trail supervisor and editor in chief/owner of mtbmagindia. I spend my days travelling, riding, biking camps, working, and when I'm in town and free from biking trips, I spend time with friends and my girlfriend....haha and I go riding with the local group of biker friends. And at times I try to study but end up riding...Hahaha

In MTB Issue 1 quoted you „We have the greatest mountain range next door“. Care to elaborate?

The Himalayas! The greatest range of all. The versatile terrain, the dizzying altitudes, the amazing sceneries, the natural trails, and what not. The vast stretch of the ranges, The endless downhills, all scream about how amazing the Himalayas are for mountain biking. India even has amazing hills in the South, the Western Ghats, The plateau region has some trails too. Eastern Ghats, the aravalli range, and so on! India is full of awesome places to ride. So, why don't we ride?! We have the privilege of such riding conditions which others spend so much to travel to in our backyard. Its like you got a "goldmine" in your backyard and you don't even know it.haha

Which states have you been biking in?

I have ridden in several states but my favorite would be Sikkim. Other states are Uttarakhand, Himachal, North Bengal. My next plan is to go to Ladakh, and also to shred the trails around Pune, India is so full of places to ride. Like a huge menu card where you are spoilt for choice...hehe





A basketball player dreams of dunking, a soccer player of doing a banana/bicycle kick. What's an epic trick/move you want to nail?

I would love to nail the backflip someday. And also tailwhips like Dylan Sherrard. These two trick are on the top of my wishlist. Rest are barspin drops, really big drops, and high bunny hops. Wheelies and manuals don't fancy me much.

You rode in the Kolkata Cyclothon. I know your views on road biking, but the event must have taken you aback with the passion for cycling in Kolkata.

The cyclothon in Kolkata was a surprise in itself. Then again the number of participants was another surprise. Elite riders, well, it's a road bike event. And.....road biking. no comments .

A mountain bike rider would yearn to rip through the hills. Residing in Kolkata, what kind of shredding do you do here and where do you do it?

There are some pretty sweet flatland trails to ride around Kolkata. Good to do on an occasional weekend. Regularly I just make shredding fun. Jumping off kerbs, Hopping over big potholes, Getting air on the bumps, just having fun, Zipping through the traffic, and I also enjoy the stares. Hehe. They see a crazy nut wearing a helmet and jumping over shit , they are bound to give a second look. People in cars give second looks, and the best is the "what the fuck just happened" look. I personally love the broken and cracked Kolkata roads a lot. Smooth roads make me feel sleepy while riding.



MESUM



VERMA

Text: Matthew MacDonald / Photos: Doris

The first time Mesum Verma asked me to photograph him downhill bicycling was after several days of torrential rain in his home base of Nanjing, China had finally come to an end. Early in the morning of what was fast becoming a sweltering day, we slogged deep through the woods and muck of Purple Mountain – he leading the way with his bike, me following behind with the camera equipment – to a trail that he had in mind. In particular, he had some jumps that he wanted to get for his new magazine: Freerider. This would be my first close look at downhill riding and my first in-person look at my friend in action.

We spent the morning working our way up the trail, setting up and taking different shots, and we had come to our last stop where we planned a very close-range photo of Mesum making a jump from a small drop approaching a turn. I barely saw anything as he flew by but I heard the crash loud and clear, turning only in time to see him disappear over the embankment marking the edge of the trail. Hurrying over and looking down the slope, Mesum was tangled in a pile of loose, broken tree branches – his head resting against a rock, groaning through gritted teeth. Horrified, I edged down the ten feet or so and helped him to slowly and carefully work himself free. When we figured out that he hadn't broken any bones or knocked himself senseless, we crawled back up to the trail and stood silently – Mesum with his hands on his slightly bent knees – collecting ourselves. After a stretch of time where only his breathing and the buzzing of mosquitoes could be heard, he very wearily looked up and opened his mouth: "Did you get the shot?" I had forgotten to look. We checked. I hadn't. It had already been a long morning: Mesum, covered in sweat, mud, and a little blood, looked done. But, without saying much of anything, he pulled up his bike, pushed it up the trail as I went back to my spot next to the drop, and came speeding down again, and again, and again. Until he got what he was looking for.

I learned two things that day:

1. Downhill biking is an intense, addictive sport, and
2. With Mesum, bicycling comes first.

The Long, Winding Trail

Mesum was born in Lucknow, India in 1975 but, due to the untimely deaths of both of his parents, he was sent, at the age of 5, to live with a family in St. Gallen, a Swiss village in the foothills of the Alps. It was during his childhood here that he developed his love of bicycling, alpine sports, and photography.

By the time Mesum had reached his late teens, he had become expert enough at snowboarding to secure a professional contract with Never Summer Snowboards and Zeal Optics. This arrangement continued until after he was drafted into the Swiss Army, where he served out his tour with distinction. After his discharge, having reached the conclusion that his snowboarding career was winding down, Mesum decided to take up photography as a profession, using his snowboarding expertise and contacts to establish a name for himself within the industry. Through it all, he continued on with his extreme involvement in bicycle racing, regularly competing in XC (cross country) races and constantly training.

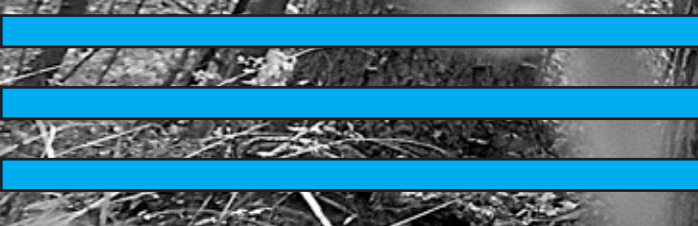
In the years since then, Mesum's name as a bicyclist and sports photographer has steadily grown. Downhill racing success, international racing photography assignments sponsored by the likes of Red Bull and Adidas, magazine photo essays and stories, and limit pushing, expert level Himalayan bicycling tours have continued to add to his professional reputation.

Freerider and MTB Mag India

Since permanently relocating to China in 2009, Mesum has continued pursuing his passions, recently forming the mag41 racing team and acting as rider/manager as it competes throughout China in the effort to get down the hill fastest and amass Cup points within the growing Chinese racing scene.

Although Swiss in nationality and currently living in China, Mesum has never forgotten that he is Indian in essence. Maintaining his close connection to the country of his birth through frequent trips back home, many friendships established, and a deep awareness of who he is and where he comes from, in 2010 he began fulfilling a longstanding dream of sharing his love of mountain biking with the people of India by founding and publishing Freerider Magazine, the first one of its kind in the country.





Although immediately successful within the budding Indian mountain biking community, Mesum decided to discontinue all involvement with Freerider in October 2011. As a result of this, MTBMagIndia – the second issue of which you are reading right now – came into being. With this new publication, Mesum is confidently hopeful of continuing exactly what he started with Freerider: making available the same great stories, the same great photos, and the same great information for mountain biking fans throughout India. And, just as importantly, by reading MTBMagIndia, you can find out what I found out that morning on the trail: that mountain biking is an intense, addictive sport, and that, with Mesum, it comes first.



Fabian Mitterhauser

Hi guys!

My name is Fabian Mitterhauser and i am from Austria! There are all over beautiful mountains to go shredding! I live in Kaprun, it's a small town but there are so many options to ride your bike! I am so happy that I live there because I can go biking whenever I want to, we have a small dirtpark with a pumptrack and wonderful single trails. The Bikepark Leogang or Bike circus Sallbach Hinterglem is only half an hour away from Kaprun! This year the worldchampionchips are in leogang.

So my season never ends because in the winter you can also ride your bike on slopes or snowy trails and that is so much fun! About ten years ago the were the worldcup has stopped in Kaprun. You can still ride the old downhill-worldcup-trail although not all but a small piece.

I started mountainbiking about 6 years ago, I got a downhill bike with 22 kg and it was still funny. At the time a got three bikes in my "stall", a dirtbike, a freeride bike and my new one the downhillbike! I am still waiting for the bikepark opening cause at the time I am shuttling with my mum haha ;-) I am so hot for the upcoming season! I will be at the Scott gang battle in Saalbach Hinterglemm and maybe at the Wildkogel trailmaster in Neukirchen. Pictures and text will follow for sure! I think mountainbiking isn't only a sport , it is a lifestyle, having fun all the time. It clears my head when I am angry and makes me still happy when I am on my bike. If you want to see my short video where I am riding in the winter, search on youtube for the canal monsterfabs23 and the video is called "pure freeriding"





RIDERS PICTURE

rider: rahul majumder
 photo: siddarth sharma

I am glad to be the deputy editor of the MTB mag India. So big thanks to Mesum Verma and Prateek Singh. My riding shirts are at the printer to print the logo of the mag them. So I will write some reports of the festivals around my region and some technical contributions.

I hope you like my first story in the mag , I am not a man of the big talk so ride on.. keep it real !!
Cheers from snowy, wet, and hopefully soon springlike Austria!



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Text: Thomas Knecht

NOMAD TRAILS

IN ZANSKAR AND LADAKH

Photo: Thomas Knecht
Our camp at night surrounded by Himalayan scenery

Photo: Mesum Verma
Our bikes and material getting packed at Delhi airport for the trip towards Manali. A lot of material needed to be prepared and packed for this trip in order to be almost autonomous



Photo: Mesum Verma
Base camp at the south foot of Shingo La Pass. The picture is taken towards the south side with some humid clouds, we are hoping for dry conditions on the other side of the pass

Growing up in the Swiss Alps I was always spoiled with some of the best mountainbike trails you can just imagine. Having most of those trails right at my doorstep, the urge of going abroad to find the ultimate trail Nirvana never grew big enough to make me leave the Alps with my bike. This changed three years ago on a boring day at the university library, when I stumbled over an advertisement of this guy called Mesum that organizes mountainbike trips through Ladakh and Zaskar. After having enjoyed marvelous pictures from a travel report from this region, the dream of exploring this region myself was persisting in my mind since then, and now I even got the possibility to do this by bike. After some discussions with Mesum there were no doubts that this is the perfect All-Mountain Bike style bike trip that you could ever dream of: Singletrails as much as you could ever dream of, technical as well as high speed sections, and all that the wonderful alpine sceneries of Zaskar and Ladakh, with altitudes up to 5100m. Mesum put together a crew consisting of two local guides and two horsemen with 10 mules to carry the necessary material consisting of tents, food and our bikes: During the 15 day trip, 10 passes were waiting for us. The plan was that during the climbs, the mules would carry our bikes, so we could enjoy the scenery and save energy for the downhill on the other side.





Photo: Otmar Graf
Ready to walk! Our guide Manesh along with one of our brave mules, ready to carry
Otmars bike on top of the next mountain pass



Serious preparation for such a trip is a very crucial factor, so everything was cautiously prepared beforehand. Mesum taught us that being in a remote region does not only mean that there is no bike shop to take care of your smaller or bigger bike problems, but you can't expect any help for any bigger issues. Having the skills, tools and spare parts to perform most bike repairs ourselves, bike issues could not really worry us. In case of a more serious medical problem though, no nearby doctor, no rescue helicopters will be available for your help, you have to rely purely on yourself. A several day horseback ride being the only rescue option, this was a hard fact to accept for a European tourist as me.

The group took forms and finally consisted besides me of my Swiss friend Otmar and Hasi from Austria. Packing lists were exchanged, and I asked myself how I will survive this 3 week trip with a minimal supply of 2 pairs of socks and 2 shorts as Mesum suggested...

In the end of August 2009 our plane finally touched ground in Delhi, including our bikes cautiously packed in boxes. Mesum and Dorje, the lead guide, welcomed us with the first Chai, which immediately made us feel home. Our material was packed into the bus, and we quickly left the lively chaos of Delhi and its surroundings to drive up north, towards the mountains. After some adventurous experiences on the Indian roads – with honorable mentions to our driver that drove 16h with a single short break and pulled several miraculous maneuvers to prevent collisions with cycling kids on the highway – we arrived at more quiet grounds in Manali, a tourist destination beautifully placed in the first range of the Himalaya mountains and hometown to our guide Dorje.

Photo: left: Mesum Verma, right: Wolfgang Haslinger
One of the many encounters with the friendly and curious local people during our journeys. They are mainly transporting goods between the small mountain villages, as here for example some baby goats



Photo: Thomas Knecht
Mesum on his way down from Shingo La Pass towards the Zaskar valley, overlooked by the big granit monolith on the right side called Gumburanjan (5900m)

Photo: Mesum Verma
Tara Chen and Baghi,
our brave horseman,
preparing dinner in
their spartan tent



Photo: Otmar Graf
The kids are curiously looking at Mesum
and his bike while they welcome him to
their village



The plan was to stay here for two days to get ready for the trip, set up our bikes and enjoy some first rides to do some minimal acclimatization (Manali is at roughly 2000m). During our stay in Manali, our bikes and we were the main attraction of the town, something that will follow us for the rest of the trip: Our All-Mountain/Enduro bikes must have looked like some extraterrestrial weapons to the local people, and our full face helmets just added perfectly to this. Manali is a Hindu town with an important population of Tibetan refugees. To be prepared for our trip, we had a reception at the local monastery to receive blessings for our adventure from a Tibetan monk. Early in the morning of the third day, we left Manali, and with this as well the civilization for the next 3 weeks. Packed in a bus, Mesum the trip organizer, Dorje the guide, Manesh the chef and we the tourists (Hasi, Otmar and me) drove towards our starting point up north, the small town of Darcha (3400m). In Darcha it was planned to complete our group by the two horsemen, Tara Chan and Baghi, and to start our journey that will bring us during the next 15 days through the picturesque landscapes of Zaskar and Ladakh, far away from civilization, to our final destination Leh, capital of Ladakh.



Photo: Mesum Verma
The Zaskar valley is generally a dry place with few precipitations. Though on day three, we had the pleasure to experience 24 hours of snowfall, which forced us to walk all day behind the mules as the trails were not visible any more



Photo: Wolfgang Haslinger
Otmar and Mesum approaching Testa, a small village on the way to Purne



Photo: Wolfgang Haslinger
Mesum and Otmar on a brittle trail high above the rapids of icecold Kargyak river - no errors allowed



Photo: Wolfgang Haslinger (above a monk)
Visit at Pukhtal Gompha, the oldest Buddhist monasteries in the Zaskar valley.
The monks were happy to have some visitors, while the young monks were very curious and enthusiastic about our bikes and full face helmets



Photo: Wolfgang Haslinger (above a monk)
Visit at Pukhtal Gompha, the oldest Buddhist monasteries in the Zaskar valley.
The monks were happy to have some visitors, while the young monks were very curious and enthusiastic about our bikes and full face helmets



Photo: Thomas Knecht
Mesum rocking a marvelously handcrafted trail



Photo: Thomas Knecht Panorama after Padum with some higher mountains (about 7000m). The picture is taken on one of the roads that are currently being built starting in Padum to connect the small villages in the valleys



Sooner than expected we were grateful having received the blessings at the monastery, as heavy rainfalls suddenly started and soaked the unsurfaced roads all day long. When the bus finally arrived at our planned starting point in the tiny village of Darcha, the Police informed us that the roads towards our first night camp were closed due to landslides. Having no choice, we possibly made the best out of this situation as we installed ourselves in the only hotel of the town. The hotel actually consisted of two tiny rooms, which served as a sleeping hall, storage room, kitchen, dining room. Our money wisely invested into a bottle of delicious "Old Monk" rum, we had a lot of fun that night and when we finally fell asleep we sent some prayers to the Buddhist gods for the rain to stop. The only downside of that night was the fact that we slept at a lower altitude than planned (3400m instead of 3900m), with the result that we violated one of the most basic acclimatization rules, not to exceed 600m of altitude difference between two night camps, for the night to follow. If I only were aware at that moment how much I would regret the consequences of this during the days to follow...



Photo: Thomas Knecht Panorama at one of our night camps along the Zaskar river after Padum, with mountains exposing an incredible range of colors



Photo: Mesum Verma Tibetan flags were often encountered along the trails as here on our way up towards Margum La, shortly after the village of Lingshed



Photo: Thomas Knecht "Good morning!" – Manesh waking us up early in the morning with a cup of chaï tea

The Zanskar region is separated from Darcha by a mountain pass, Shingo La, with 5100m the highest out of the total 10 passes that we planned to cross during the whole trip. But most important, the mountain chain of which Shingo La is part of represents the weather boarder of this region, preventing the clouds from carrying their humid load from the rainforests in the southern lowlands further up north. As a result of this, the regions north of the pass, Zanskar and Ladakh, do not see to much precipitations during the year. Due to this, air humidity is low, which allows for an incredible clear visibility with the intense colors this region is known for. But first, we had to get to the sunny and dry side by passing Shingo La. The success of this depends strongly on weather conditions. Snowfalls can be a serious danger in such remote places, and the absence of the possibility to get rescued by a helicopter – a fact not so easy to understand for European people - should never be forgotten. We were all hoping for the rain to stop. To our positive surprise, it seems that our prayers were listened to, as the rain had stopped by the time we woke up the next morning.



Photo: Dorjee Mesum taking some speed on his way down from Hanuma La

Photo: Dorjee Which trail to take? Thomas spoilt with choice on the flowy and steep trails down Hanuma La





Photo: Thomas Knecht Mesum pushing his bike towards Margum La. In the background visible is Hanuma La with its long downhill towards Lingshed



Photo: Mesum Verma Luckily, we did not encounter many problems with our bikes. If so, some freestyle repair skills solved the problem: Thomas replacing a lost washer by a coke lid under the curious eyes of the local kids. Problem solved!

Streets were opened up again, and when the first sunrays broke through the clouds, our weather worries were immediately blown away. We were all excited about that fact, that 15 days of single-trail riding, hikes, and adventures were waiting for us, and all of this embedded into a breathtaking landscape with huge mountains and monasteries. From now on we were on the road, and a certain positive routine started. In the morning, our 11 mules were packed with all material needed to be autonomous. On days with a mountain pass waiting for us, the mules also kindly volunteered to carry our bikes uphill, while we volunteered to ride them downhill on the other side. The downhill trails were of rather technical character, including rock gardens and switchbacks, but usually also a good amount of high-speed passages, and we always ended up with a big smile on our faces. Due to our remote situation, we tried to keep the risk level as low as possible, so, the only biking casualties during the whole trip were some minor bruises, nothing to worry about.



Photos: Mesum Verma Tent life: After a long day on the bike, the kitchen tent was the place to hang out, discuss and recapitulate the happenings of the day while the kitchen crew was preparing delicious food. Nights were spent at the bonfire while sipping on a glass of good rum while watching the mountain tips in the moonlight and the endless starry sky





Photo: Dorjee Getting our bikes ready after unpacking them from the backs of the mules on top of Sisir La



The crew upon our arrival at the final destination in Lamayuru, enjoying the icecold pleasures of civilization

More problems were caused by the high altitudes: due to the insufficient acclimatization due to the first night spent at a too low altitude, I got a minor form of altitude sickness after the first night spent above 4000m, the day before passing over Shingo La, what started in the morning as a sore throat, ended as some kind of very intense flu that knocked me a bit out during the first few days. Although it was no severe form of altitude sickness, it was strong enough to considerably slow my muscles and brain down during we climbed Shingo La pass, with the result that I had to walk my bike down on the other side as I was not able to concentrate myself on the trail. I had some rough days in the beginning, but was well again after some days on the trails, while my friend Otmar did it the other way round. After he almost collapsed upon our day 7 arrival in Purne, which was the only town during the trip accessible by car and therefore the only emergency exit of the tour, he took the tough decision to stop the trip here and take a taxi that will bring him directly to Leh, where medical supply was available. For the rest of us, once acclimatized, the remaining trails were no longer a problem. This was also due to the basic, but always excellent food that Dorje and Manesh prepared each morning and night for us.



Photo: Mesum Verma *Tsomo Hill in Leh*



The evenings in the kitchen tent were always a highlight of the day, tasty as well as spicy food was served, as well as some rum which is, according to Dorje, help to prevent altitude sickness. Not sure if my doctor would agree with this. I will always remember the nights in the small and warm kitchen tent, discussing what happened during the day, and once in a while we were happy enough to be able to buy a canister of Chang from local farmers. Chang is some kind of beer which is brewed in gross - looking canisters.. Though it may look like rotten yak pee ,it did lead to some good parties.

Our trail, that led through some of the most beautiful parts of Zaskar and Ladakh, is well known among hikers. Though, people riding this narrow, steep and stony trails by Mountainbike are still looked at as species from outer space. This impression was even more increased by our bikes, fullface helmets and goggles, that made us look like darth vader. Reactions from encounters during the journey were diverse. European travellers were often in complete misbelief that we are able to ride these trails with our bikes, while local people developed a keen interest in our equipment, and the most common question we had to answer was regarding the price of our „horses“. Luckily, not too many problems occurred to our horses during the trip. Though we took many spare parts with us, a lost spacer from my rear hub once forced me to walk my bike during half a day. In the evening, with the help of the whole crew and half of the village, a new spacer was manufactured using available material, which was actually the plastic lid of a coke bottle, which worked out fine for the last two days.

After 15 days and 10 mountain passes, uncountable kilometers of singletrails and nice downhill in the middle of a breathtaking landscape, we arrived in Lamayuru, from where a taxi took us to Leh, capital of Ladakh. After all these days without the slightest luxury, we celebrated the end of our trip with all the joys of civilization: hot showers, chicken masala, and some good beer. Beards were shaved, the last reserve of fresh clothes were put on, and we enjoyed the remaining 3 days in Leh to the max before flying back to Delhi and Europe.

Biking the Indian Himalaya together with this crew was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and it was the best decision to take!

Thomas Knecht

SAM PILGRIM

Interview with a Meteorite!!

Photos: Simon Nieborak



Sam, You are known as one of the best dirt jump and freestyle riders out there. Tell us a bit about yourself.

Ok, so my name is sam pilgrim i'm 21 years young from Colchester, UK and I'm a professional freeride mountain biker!

How did u become what you are? What's the story behind becoming what you are now?

Well when i was very young i asked my dad for a bike then of course i got more into bike riding an i started doing wheelie's an small stunts! My dad then brought me a motorbike an i started racing motocross from the age of 11, i then won my first mtb event when i was 14, i keep racing motocross until i was 15 then i stopped racing an started doing more mtb contests then i got better an better an now I'm here!!!

Recently you have won the FISE Costa Rica Mtb pro finals, Redbull District Ride in Nürnberg and also just now the Vienna Air King. How would you describe the feeling when you stand on the podium?

Its the best feeling ever it can't be beaten by anything!





*How do you feel before the start of an event? Do you get nervous?
I get a little bit nervous but that feeling is really good actually!!!*

*What would you like to do on a perfect day other than riding?
Surfing!!*

*What does riding mean to you?
Is my life an its the reason i get to do all these great trips
and buy cool things! I love it!*



What kind of bike would you choose for a trip if you had a DJ, FR, DH and 4X bike in front of you?

I'd take the dirt jump bike straight away!

Favorite food?

Pasta

Favorite iTunes?

Electronic music!!!

Best place to ride?

California!

What according to you is the most difficult trick that you have done?

Windshield wiper (youtube it)



How do you manage to do the backflip to manual, how did you learn that trick?
That took quite a few go's but i just went for it at the skatepark!

Who would you like to thank for your tremendous success?
Parents of course!

Were you really found inside a meteorite thousands of years ago?
YES!

What is your goal for this season?
To win loads of events, and hopefully better my overall world tour ranking!

GRAND



MTB MYNDIG
75

riders: antti rissanen | photo: lars scharl





rider: ludi scholz | photo: tom bause



rider: joscha forstreuter, hans rey, richie schley | photo: mesum verma



Maintenance of a bike

If you are traveling somewhere where is no bike repair shop, it is good if you can do some simple maintenance of your bike.

We show you just some basics. For that we took a bike totally apart, and build it up anew

PHOTO AND TEXT
MESUM VERMA

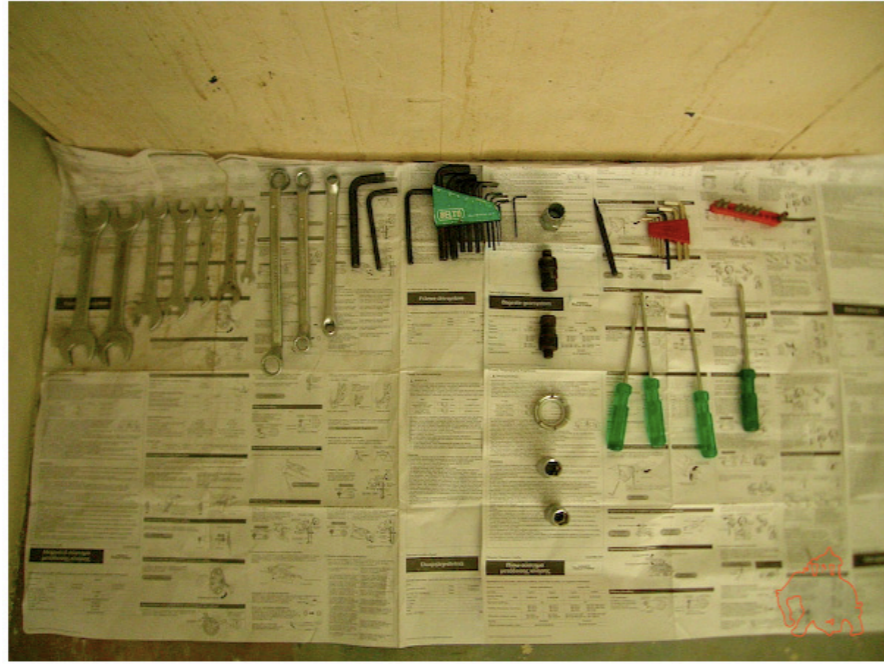
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GOLDROP
ADVENTURES
Regd. with Dept. of Tourism Govt. of H.P.



001 Tools



tools are the key for good maintenance:

- tools should be clean
- tools should not be broken
- tools should be organised somewhere, where you can have good access
- keep only the tools you are using, not other tools

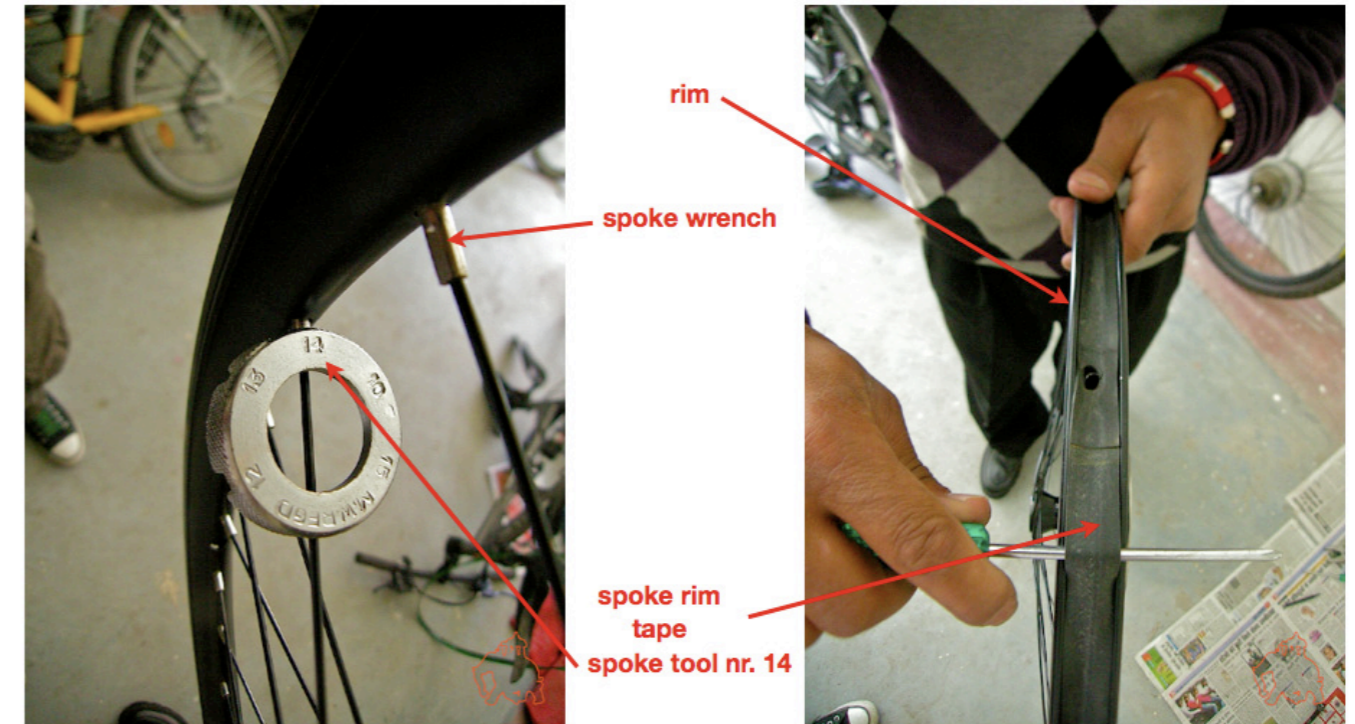
002 taking it apart



take apart the MTB:

- clean the bike properly, so there will be no dust and oil on it
- take the bike apart, only that part you need to do maintenance on (is it whole, then do the whole MTB)
- while taking the bike apart, put the parts aside, in a clean place where you have enough space to keep them
- if there is a lots of grease on some parts, clean it carefully
- if any parts are broken, don't keep them, throw them away
- small-sized parts should be kept in a small box, including all the bolts

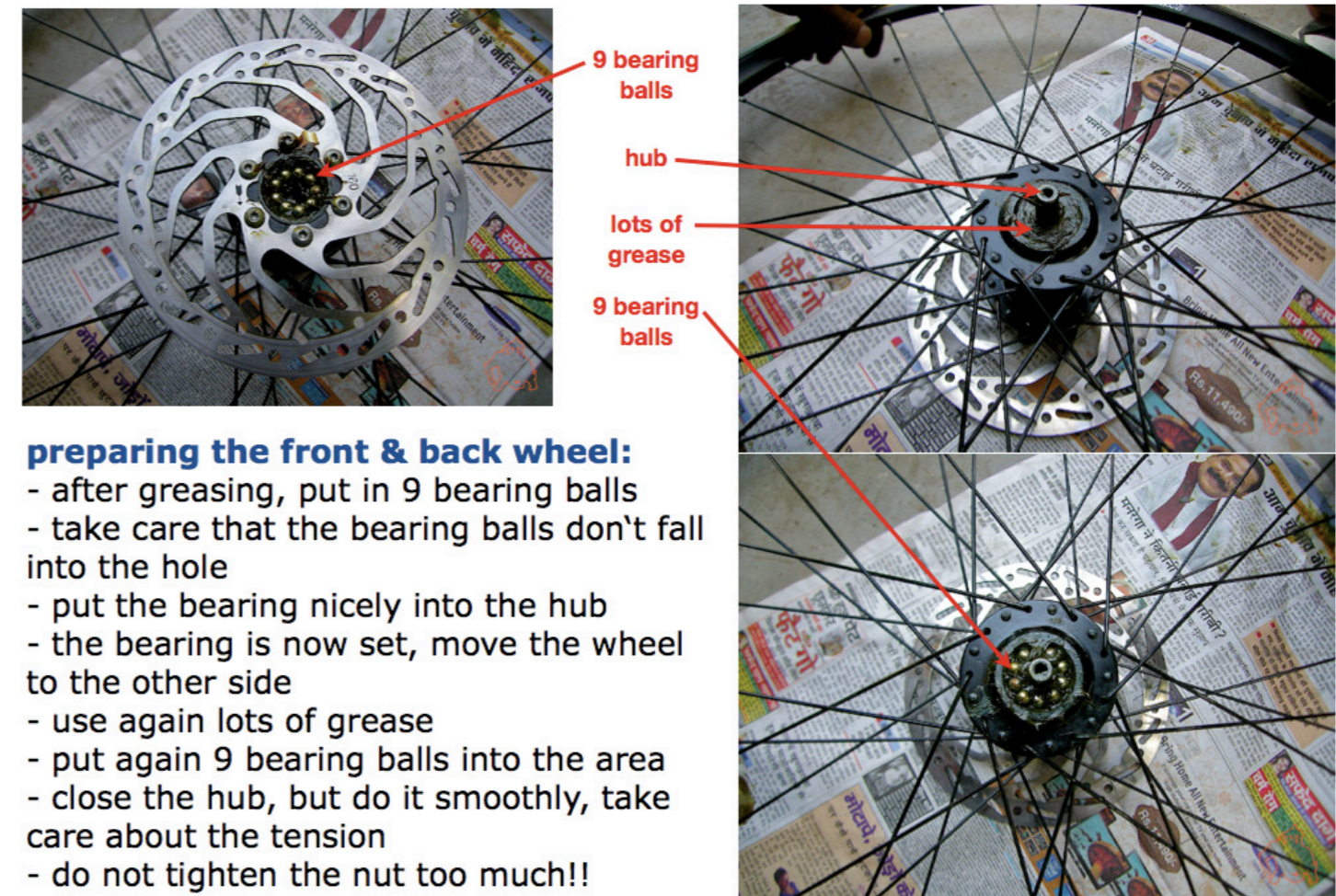
003 Wheel



preparing the front & back wheel:

- attract all loose spokes with the spoke tool (nr. 14)
- check all spokes wrenches, change when you feel you can not attract the spoke
- remove the rim tape, clean the rim and the rim tape
- put the rim tape back again in the rim, make sure it is located in the middle of the rim

003 Hub



preparing the front & back wheel:

- after greasing, put in 9 bearing balls
- take care that the bearing balls don't fall into the hole
- put the bearing nicely into the hub
- the bearing is now set, move the wheel to the other side
- use again lots of grease
- put again 9 bearing balls into the area
- close the hub, but do it smoothly, take care about the tension
- do not tighten the nut too much!!

004 Rear Shock



dry bearing bolt, with grease

assemble the rear shock:

- take the dry bearing bolts, use a little grease

004 Rear Shock



put some superglue on the bolts

superglue

assemble the rear shock:

- put some loctite (blue) or when you don't have this, then put some superglue on the bolt

005 Dropouts (hanger)



dropouts

assemble the dropouts:

- the dropouts is needed because, sometimes you may hit the rear derailleur really badly, so then the whole frame will be not damaged
- use a new dropouts when is needed

005 Dropouts



installing the wheels:

- install the rear wheel first
- install the front wheel next with the quick release lever on the right side

open ended wrench / nr. 15

006 Crank & Pedal



use some grease, do NOT put grease into the screw thread



bolt 8/14

crank (left side)

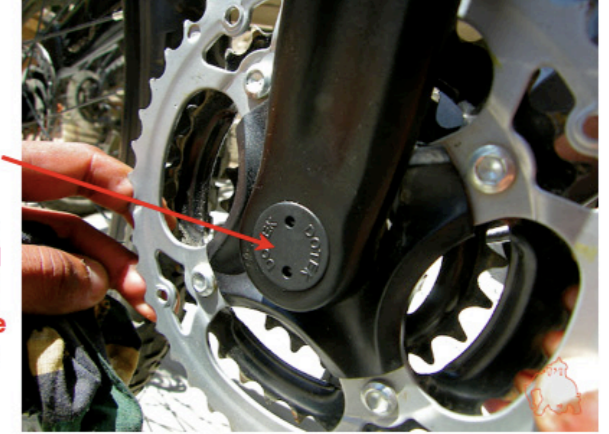
006 Crank & Pedal



crank on the right side is to be installed 180° opposite then from the left side crank



put the cap on, because then it will get really dirty inside if you do not!!

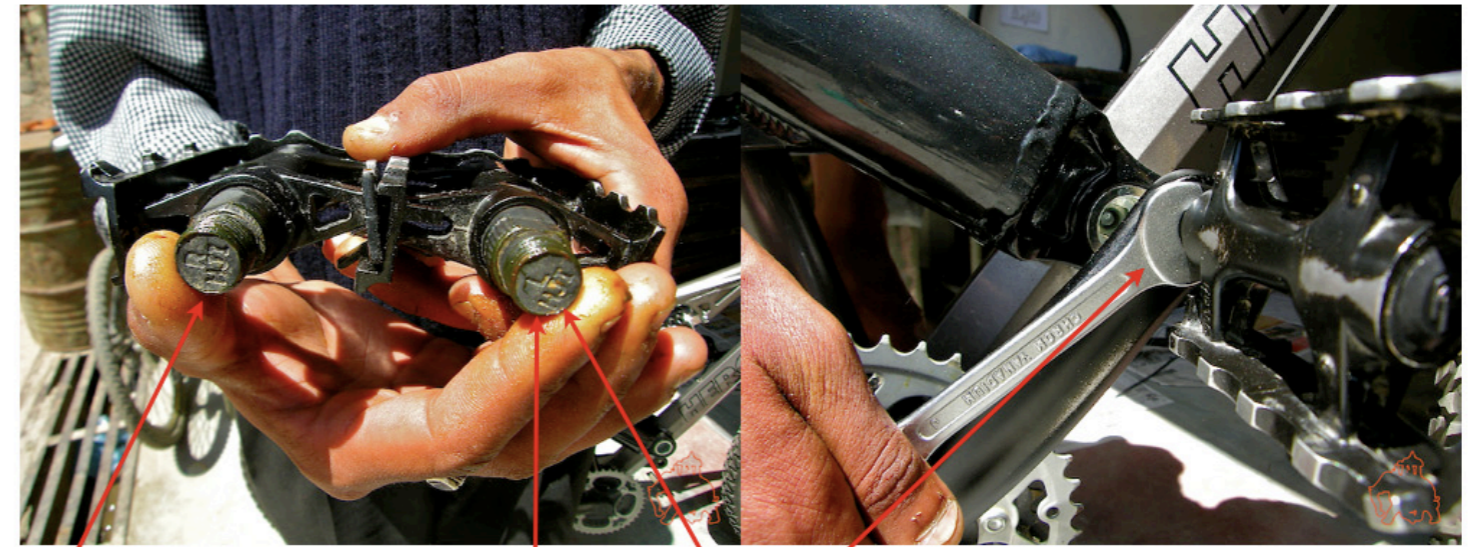


006 Crank & Pedal



wrench socket nr. 14, pull hard on the wrench

006 Crank & Pedal



right pedal (there is a sign with R)

left pedal (there is a sign with L)

use the open ended wrench nr. 15

use some grease on the screw thread



007 Handelbar & Shifter & Brake Lever



use the Allen key, for adjusting the distance on both side

Allen key nr. 5

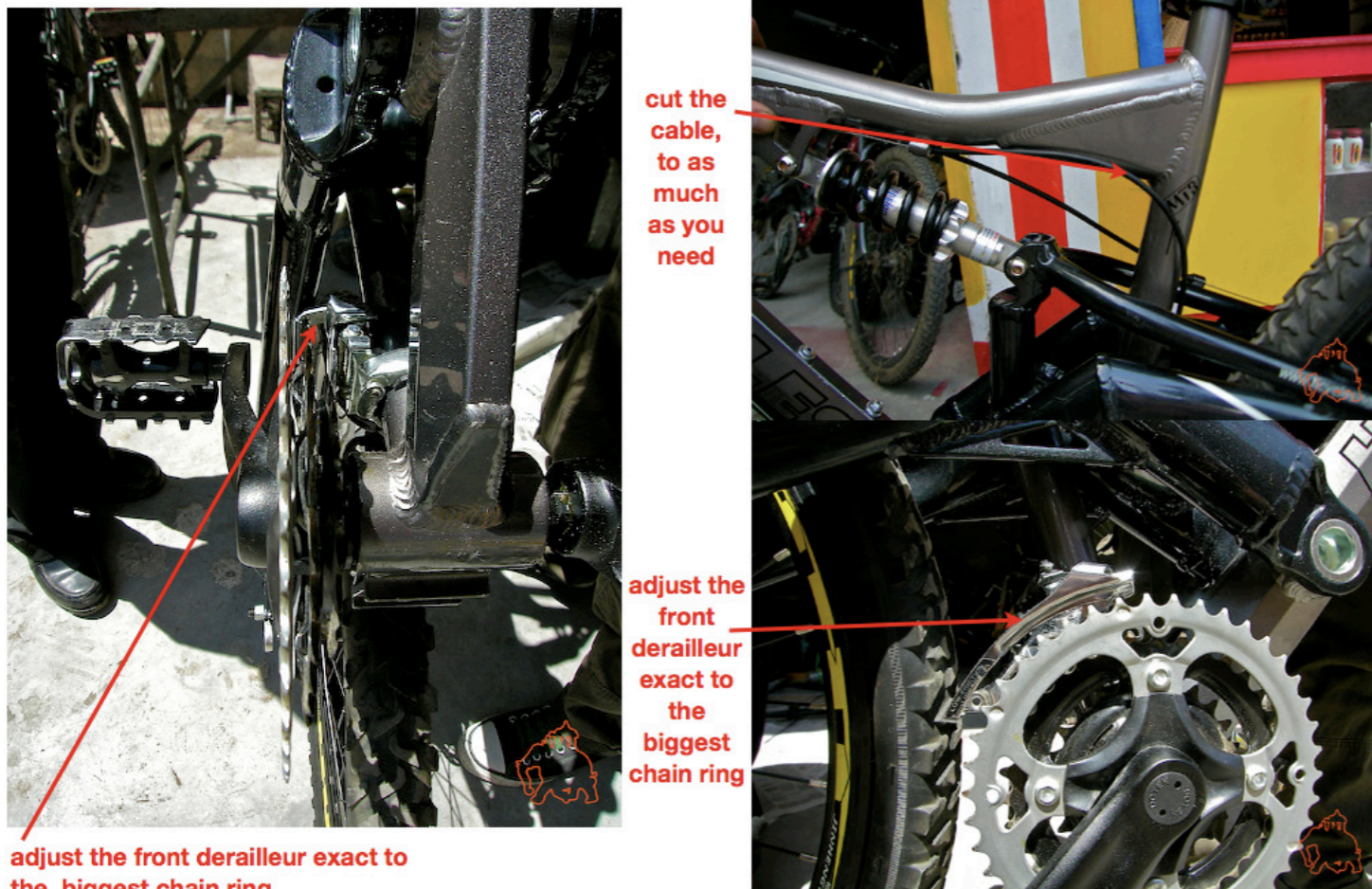
put the brake lever angled downwards, so you can easily reach with two fingers

008 Front Derailleur



to adjust the cable, the front derailleur has to be NOT be in action / the cable has to be tight

008 Front Derailleur



cut the cable, to as much as you need

adjust the front derailleur exact to the biggest chain ring

adjust the front derailleur exact to the biggest chain ring

009 Rear Derailleur



install the rear derailleur to the dropouts / Allen nr. 5

use everytime a cap, on the end of the cable screw for adjust the rear derailleur (1-7)

009 Rear Derailleur



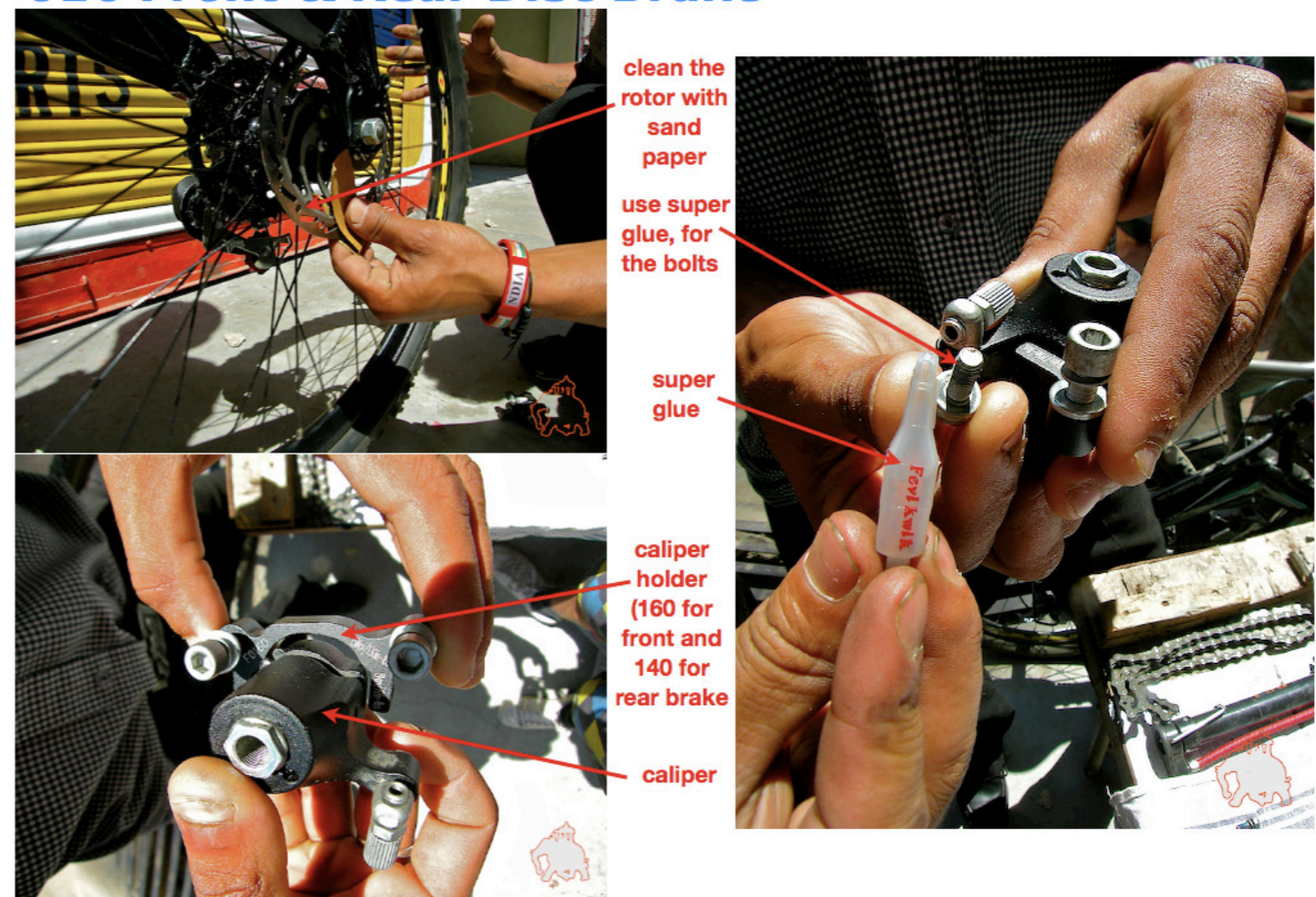
the cable should be not to long (thats good)

but here you need a little bit of cable for flexibility as the rear derailleur moves, should be not too tight

setting up the rear derailleur:

- attach the shift cable, keep the rear derailleur loose, not in action, keep some tension, not muh and tighten the cable bolt on the derailleur
- check how the shifting is, go from 7 to 1 and back and see if shifting is proper and the chain is shifting to all cogs accurately.
- accordingly adjust the limit screws. H - higer limit, L - lower limit. Keep the derailleur in 7th gear and see it should be in line with the last and smallest sprcket on the cassette by adjusting the H screws. Then, keep the derailleur on 1st gear and make sure the derailleur cage is on line with the largest sprocket on the cassette by adjusting the L screw
- these are to prevent the chain from falling off the first and last gears
- then use the barrel adjusters on the shifters and at the derailleur to fine tune the shifting

010 Front & Rear Disc Brake



clean the rotor with sand paper

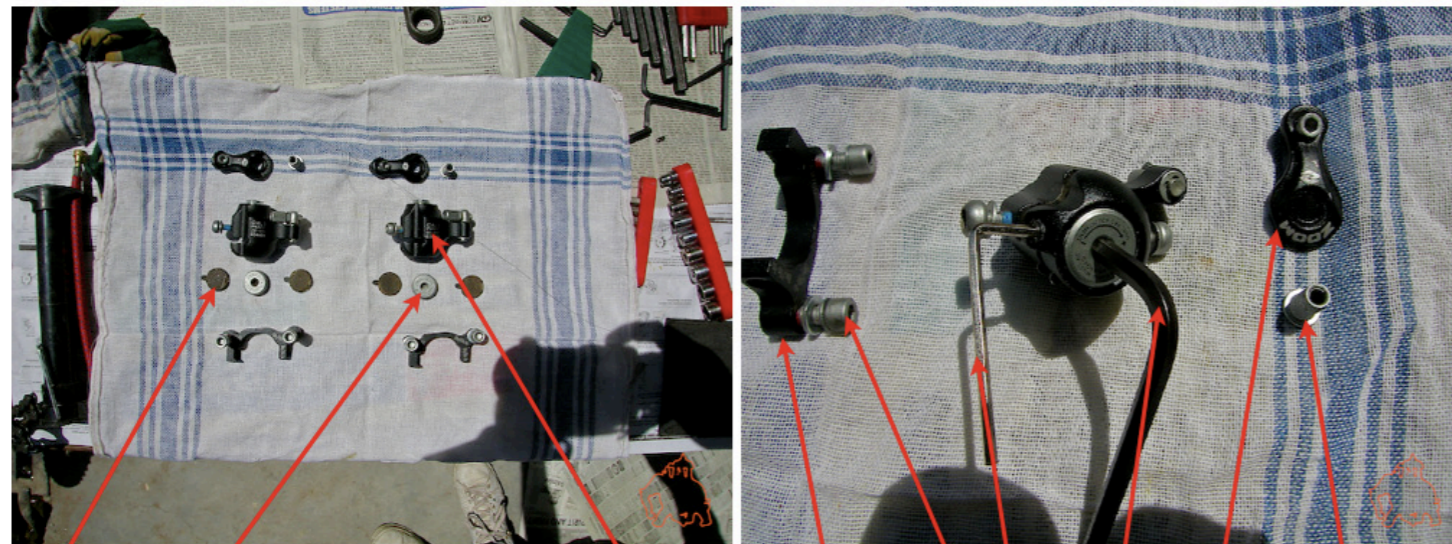
use super glue, for the bolts

super glue

caliper holder (160 for front and 140 for rear brake)

caliper

010 Front & Rear Disc Brake



break pad

adjuster bolt

caliper

caliper holder (160mm for front and 140mm for rear)

allen key nr. 2.5

caliper arm

outer bolt

allen key nr. 5

setting up the front & rear disc brake:

- clean the whole brakeset, best would be with a proper brake cleaner (do not use lubricant based cleaner)
- assemble the whole brake as far you can do it

010 Front & Rear Disc Brake



use a washer while installing the front brake if need it

use a washer while installing the back brake if need it (here NOT)

010 Front & Rear Disc Brake



cut the brake cable, how much you need, you should twist the handlebar 90° to the right



install the cable to the caliper arm, check the pads will touch the rotor in operation (there should be a little bit of tension)

011 Finish



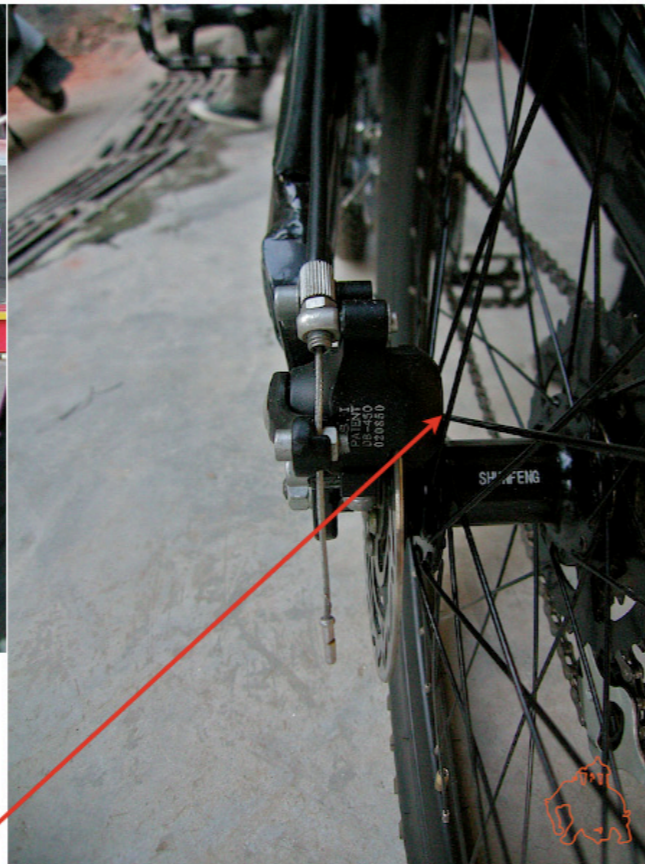
finish and testing:

- clean the whole bike to free it from grease
- do a test ride, check: front & rear brake, front & rear derailleurs
- brake hard in safe conditions to test them and shift in all gear configurations to see if the gears are shifting smoothly and running properly
- ride fast, ride slow and make some turns, to check everything is smooth like the crank, the headset, the steerer, brakes and fork

010 Front & Rear Disc Brake



install the cable to the caliper arm, check the pads will touch the rotor in operation (there should be some tension)



adjust the front & rear disc brake on the adjuster bolt (be carefully as the wheel should be still spin free) then fix the fixed bolt (allen key 2.5)

012 Front & Rear V - Brake



cut the cable as much as you need, the cable should be without curve going in to the cable holder for the brake

adjust first both brake shoes, should be aligned with the rim and should not touch the tyre

adjust first both brake arms, (levers) there should be same tension on both (wich you can handle with the barrel adjuster)



then at least you adjust the cable (test the brake)



rider: martin soederström

TROUGH LENSES AND SHUTTERS WITH LARS SCHARL

AN INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST PHOTOGRAPHERS WHERE WE GET A PEEK OF HOW PHOTOGRAPHY CAN BE TURNED FROM A HOBBY TO A PROFESSION. AND CAPTURING THOSE MOMENTS TO SHARE WITH THE WORLD. ARMED WITH A CAMERA, A PHOTOGRAPHER IS NO LESS THAN A TIME TRAVELLER.

Lars, you are a well known photographer, but still, tell us, where are you from, and a bit about yourself.

Right now I'm 28 years old, I was born in the Oktoberfest-town Munich and currently I live in Bayreuth, which is in the north of Bavaria. Besides my photography business I try to finish my studies in biology, chemistry and sports, which is kinda hard to do with very little preparation time. I'm an easy guy to be around and I'm also very competitive when it comes to sports and photography.

When did you get your first camera? Was it love on first sight?

My first really serious camera was a Canon EOS 20D, which I bought in 2006 I think. It was definitely love at first sight!

How and when did you realise, that photography will be your profession?

I was never that much into photography, actually... as a child and teenager I played around with point-and-shoot cameras, but that wasn't anything serious. Then, somehow, when I had my first summer job as lifeguard at the local swimming pool during my first university years and I had earned some money, I spontaneously decided to buy the EOS 20D mentioned above. From then on, it kinda run its course...



rider max weickl

What did you do in order to study photography, did you attend workshops, or did you study photography in a university, or is it a self taught art ?

It's entirely self-taught. In the beginning I read a lot of online articles, tutorials and such stuff. Today I feel that this was actually the best way to get to know the basics, the theoretical part and also the main concepts of the technical side... I was also lucky to find some new buddies who were as photography-crazy as I was and that kept the motivation to learn at a super high level.

Why sports photography? And who was the first one with whom you went out for shooting sports photographs?

I'm a very active guy myself - snowboarding, skiing, cliffdiving, biking, climbing and a lot more - so it wasn't a big problem to find my motives... also, I've always been an avid magazine reader and I was strongly influenced by the awesome photography in there. The first guys I took photos with were Max Weickl (snowboard), the DH riders of BRUCHPILOTEN Germany and the guys at the European Cliffdiving Champs in 2006.



Which was the first picture you sold and where? And how was the feeling for you?
I took a really nice shot of Andy Krieger during the session with the BRUCHPILOTEN DH team and that became my first gallery shot in FREERIDE Magazine Germany. The feeling was funny and I was quite proud of the magazine when I had it in my hands. It's still the same feeling whenever I have a publication somewhere...

Which would be the best trip you have done while working?

Right now, I'd have to say that's the trip to Whistler, Canada, during the 2011 Crankworx Festival - because Whistler is just plain awesome ;) I can't find better words to describe it, it was just super nice there... very good pictures, good weather, a lot of bears, beers and parties, two weeks with good friends, an AWESOME bike park... perfect time!

In every job, there is a sunny side and a shady side, what is it for you?

Sunny side: being in the right spot at the right time and realizing that I just took a really really nice photo - preferably of a good rider-friend.

Shady side: being around when a rider hurts himself...

What does photography mean to you?

Besides writing, photography is the best way to express myself. I can show my view of the surroundings to the audience. It's also a very personal thing, even in action sports photography.

Beside sports, what else do you shoot?

I love to photograph nature, landscapes and people, too. I haven't published much of that yet though, but I keep on working on it!

In India, many people do not have a proper dslr, some basic tips for shooting with a compact digital camera?

Compacts are so good nowadays, it's perfectly possible to take award-winning photos with them. So don't worry about inferior equipment. Master your camera and shoot as much as you can - but always keep your brain turned on while shooting. And if you have the possibility to shoot in RAW format, do it and learn about post production as well.



rider: danny hart

LARS SCHARL
photo.com



Have you travelled so far in Asia? For a shooting or even just personally? If not, which country in Asia would you like to go to first?

I haven't been to Asia yet. I really can't wait to go there one day since I love to travel and see different countries and cultures. If I had to choose, I'd say China or India or Japan, since those are the countries that you hear about the most in Europe. I'm perfectly sure that there's way more to experience „over there“ and I hope that I get the opportunity to find that out sooner rather than later!

Do you only shoot sports or are you into all the sports you shoot yourself? Like for instance, biking. Are you a rider yourself?

As I mentioned before, I'm really active and yes, I also ride bikes myself. I used to race XC and road races as a teenager and now it has shifted to having fun on freeride bikes. I'm not that crazy on bikes though, so it's more playing around on small jumps and flowy single tracks, not riding aggressively on technical tracks. I save the tricks and big jumps for snowboarding and skiing, that's when I'll go upside down myself ;)

Something you wish to tell us, your opinion, to thank, to let the world know?

Thanks to all the riders I've worked with so far - it has been a blast for me and I hope for you, too!! I can't wait for my next assignment and I hope that I can deliver some more bangers in the future!

Thanks to my backpack gear supporter F-Stop and to you, Mesum, for giving me this opportunity!!

Any words of wisdom for the young photographers who wish to take up photography as a profession in India?

Have fun at what you're doing and keep in mind that it's a tough job if you want to make a living out of taking photos. You'll have lots of competition and you'll be tempted to sell yourself way below your actual worth, just to have some quick success. And also - don't stop learning and progressing, even if you're starting to get clients... always keep your motivation high and experiment!

 **LARS SCHARL**
photo.com

JAGAN MATTHEW

YOUNG GUN

Photos: Marshal Ashish



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Hi Jagan, where are you from? How old are you? Tell us something about yourself.

I am Jagan from the motor sports capital of India, Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. I'm, 22yrs old, finished my graduation and doing my animation now in Bangalore.

When did you get infected with the virus „biking“?

I got infected with the virus biking 8months ago by couple of my friends from Bangalore.

What bike did u ride first?

The 1st bike I rode was a Giant revel 0.

Tell us..., why biking?

I was already into dirt racing, motorbike freestyle stunting with India's one of the best Team Throttlarz. I quit years back as I didn't get any support from my family. Dirt jumping and downhill are my favorites because it has the same flavor of dirt biking.

Your best spot to bike? (Like city, town, or area)

The best spot to bike are the streets where you have footpaths and other things to do betta stuff..

Best trail you got addicted to?

The best trail I got addicted to is JIN built by me, Iggy and Nelly situated in Thurahalli, Bangalore..

What bike do you ride now?

Now I ride a KHS 1000 hard tail frame with Race face components on it. Soon getting myself a downhill bike..

Your idols?

My idols are Sam Hill, Aron Chase, Andreu Lacondeguy and Brandon Semenuk.



Favorite music?

My favorite music is metal and tranz

Favorite food?

Favorite food..... Everything from flying, creeping, running, walking....lol.

What is your aim, your goal, what do you want to achieve in biking?

To innovate things, explore new possibilities and have fun riding.

You would like to thank?

I would like to thank Akash for taking me to Thurahalli, Bangalore where I met Ramesh, Nelly and Iggy who spoiled me as a biker. lol.

Best achievement in biking till date?

I didn't achieve anything as a mountain biker yet but if there is some race and events happening in future I might...

What do you do apart from biking?

Apart from biking I'm an extreme sports photographer and a wildlife photographer. I do a bit of artistic shit like painting, sketching and sculpting, I also do body boarding, touring on bikes, I travel a lot, bit of climbing and much more. Basically I don't like staying in 1 place...

I do wildlife photography and once I started riding I'm more of interested in extreme sports photography becoz as I know where to stand for a perfect shot and now I'm into film making too doing my 1st video on bike freestyle stunts. I will be getting my downhill bike soon so may be after that I'll be fully into it as I'm from Coimbatore area, which is surrounded by mountains so I have spots to ride on but no riders to accompany me, may be in future I will find some...

Life without bikes?

Life without bike is like a trial without jumps..



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