



Hima-Leh-Yan

2021



“Travel isn’t always pretty. It isn’t always comfortable. Sometimes it hurts, it even breaks your heart. But that’s okay. The journey changes you; it should change you. It leaves marks on your memory, on your consciousness, on your heart, and on your body. You take something with you. Hopefully, you leave something good behind.”

Anthony Bourdain





Foreward

Kardungala! Every bikers dream. Kardungala pass is the highest motorable road in the world and every bikers dream to ride to.

International Fellowship of Motorcycling Rotarians (IFMR) India decided to organise a ride to Kardungala pass and have a circular route where we start from Chandigarh and ride through Manali, Jispa, Sarchu, Leh, Kardungala, Nubra, Pangong, Tsomoriri, Leh, Kargil, Sonamarg and Srinagar. The ride was planned for June but, with Covid19 had to be postponed a few times. Covid 19 could not curb the determination of the riders from undertaking this trip and, finally the ride started on 19th July 2021.

“A picture is worth a thousand words”

This coffee table book a brain child of Rtn. Vinod Agrawal captures the ride beautifully through pictures. This book will surely be a starter of many stories, in years to come with children, grand children and friends for all the riders who were part of this ride..

Three cheers to all the riders, the organisers and A big shout out to IFMR India.

Rtn Prashanth Babu S.J.
PP IFMR India



Preface

Some time in March 2021 IFMR - India Chapter announced that it has planned a Trip to Leh Ladakh around June, and has named it Hima-Leh-Yan, the route will be Chandigarh-Manali-Jispa-Sarchu-Leh-Nubra-Pangong Tso-Leh-Kargil-Sonamarg-Srinagar. It will be a 17 days trip starting from Chandigarh and finishing at Srinagar. Unfortunately 2nd wave of Covid started by April and continued till June resulting in pushing the dates to 19th July to 4th August. After yes no yes no, 11 riders registered for the bike trip and decided to take their bikes from Bangalore, the dream of riding on own bikes to the worlds highest motorable pass was in everyone's bucket list. Bikes were transported in a specialised container truck on 12th July, with a clear one week lead for it to reach Chandigarh. All the route plans, stay, inhouse mechanic, support vehicle and other nitty gritty was planned and sorted. Everyone were tested for fitness with TMT and RTPCR and started their dream ride on 19th July, 2021 by boarding their flight from Bangalore for Chandigarh.

This Coffee Table book gives you a complete journey through the pictures taken during this historic journey. By god's grace it was 100% successful bike ride, all came back to Bangalore without any mishap or injury while riding through the most treacherous terrain of the world, the entire journey had 2200kms of bike ride.

Hope all of you will enjoy the journey with us through this book.

Thank you





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The Riders



Ajit SR

Is very meticulous, totally balanced and readily handles any eventuality admirably. Always grounded.



Prashanth Babu SJ

The go getter of IFMR, extensively experienced on riding and automobile, the go to man for any Rider to learn finer aspects of riding.



Dr Shyam Mohan

Multifaceted talent, daring and very courageous in handling extreme situation.



Dr Anjana Unnikrishnan

Fun loving personality, loves to be a pillion rider with Dr. Shyam.



Punit Bajaj

A very humble person, loves to be the second lead. Ready to call a spade a spade, doesn't hesitate to air his opinion.



Amit Poddar

He enjoys all the moment, even small things in life. Totally devoted to Rakhi ji, his life line.



Vinod Agarwal

Ready to take challenges, for him age is just a number.



Raghavendra P Inamdar

Lovely human being, enjoys singing songs and very attached to his children and family.



Rajesh A R

The most stylish rider aka Firoz Khan of IFMR, has great riding skill. When he is on a bike, it looks he rides it but in case of many others it looks bike rides them.



Karate Shanmugan

He believes in perfection and cleanliness, ready to challenge on fitness with anyone.



Prashant Mishra

Flamboyant and practical, always ready to take lead position in rides and justifies it fully



Avinash Ravish N R

The baby of the team, very quiet and calm, ably guided by his father Ravish, a role model for him

Day 1

After all the uncertainty on Hima-Leh- Yan trip, our journey finally took off on 19th July, 2021 with nine riders and Rtn. Prashanth Babu from Bangalore joining along with two riders from Thrissur. The first task of our journey was to transport our bikes to Chandigarh in lorry before we reach there on 19th July, Rtn. Punit Bajaj worked on it and found a bike/car passionate person who facilitate on this logistic and loaded our bikes on 12th July in a specialised container, without removing a single nut and bolt from bikes and without packing them in gunny bags, all the bikes were loaded in standing position like the factory transportation of bikes.

Flight tickets were booked for 19th July to Chandigarh, on schedule date all 10 Rotarians reported to Kempegowda Airport, all the checks were done and boarded the flight at 11am and reached Chandigarh at 2pm. Checked-in to a good hotel, team decided to have pucca Punjabi Dhaba food for lunch, headed to Lucky Dhaba. We were informed that our bikes container has reported to Chandigarh and we need to collect our bikes. Reached to truck parking place in Chandigarh and to our amazement, not a single bike had any scratch in transit and unloaded them, every one drove their bikes to hotel happily with mandatory guidelines to fill up the petrol tank for next day start to our biking journey to Leh. All decided to retire early to bed because of long journey next day to Manali. Great journey had started on a good note, all were excited to an awesome trip and bonding.





Day 2

All were informed to be ready for 7.30 am start to Manali after our breakfast, as it was our first day on bikes for the trip, all were on time. Had a good Punjabi breakfast. All the bikes were looking great with bags saddled up neatly. President Ajit and Secretary Rajesh did a briefing session with all the team members, wished good luck to all and requested Rtn. Shanmugam to offer prayer for the safe and auspicious beginning to a life time bike journey for all. Took few group pictures with our banner, meanwhile our tour guide Vinu had arrived and informed all that everything is fine on the route to Manali and not to worry, he was accompanying us.

All started the dream come true trip of Leh, sequencing of bikers was decided with Rtn Prashanth Mishra as Lead and Prez Rtn Ajit as Sweep. Our first stop was at Swarghat for tea break, a good 70 kms from Chandigarh. Experienced little drizzle on the way resulting in muddy road but nothing serious. Mid way of 310 kms to Manali, we stopped at a small hotel for lunch, all were hungry and enjoyed a hearty meal. Reached Mandi by 5 pm had another round of tea with Thepla brought by Amit and Punit and our guide decided not to take normal highway route from thereon due to heavy traffic and blockade, took all of us to a different route from two mountains, via IIT Mandi. As they say seeing is believing, the route chosen was like a trailer to route from Manali to Leh, absolutely mind boggling, totally scenic gliding through fog and full of adventure negotiation, it needed our biking skill to navigate the route. Reached our pre-booked hotel, Maple Retreat in Manali, all were dead tired after a long journey, all retired to beds in their respective allotted rooms.





Day 3

After a long ride yesterday everyone woke up slowly and liesurely, more so when it is a rest day for all today. To the amazement of everyone, one could see an enchanting view from our hotel window, besides our hotel, river Beas was flowing and was surrounded by mountains and on top of it covered by snow, supposed to be Rohtang valley, amazing view for all. As it was a rest day, everyone came down for breakfast aaram se, had a good breakfast, mix of continental and Indian food.

Prez Ajit Ram suggested that all are on our own today, and informed that who ever wants to get their bike cleaned and some kind of topup of oil etc can be taken up. All of us went to a nearby bike wash center and got our bikes a nice foam wash. Few went to RE service centre for a last minute check ups. All assembled for lunch to a new restaurant called Indian Flavour, the open sitting area was adjacent to River Beas giving us cool breeze and a stunning backdrop, it so happened that the owner of this place was a Rotarian, introduced himself on seeing our Rotary T Shirts, which were worn by us, this is Power of Rotary, got a fantastic service from his team of staff, everyone were busy taking few pictures due to the backdrop of place. Prez Ajit Ram had fixed for a meet with Manali Club for a flag off nexr day to Jipsa with their club president. All retired to their rooms for an afternoon siesta to give some more relaxation to our body. Towards the evening our trip advisor Ankur had scheduled a meeting with all of us, we had good interactive session with him and had an early dinner for a long overnight sleep and next day's preparation for journey to Jipsa, which is beyond famous Rohtang valley, a bikers dream to cross that.





Day 4

As per instructions of last night we were informed to get ready for saddle up by 10.15 am for onward journey, all started coming down to restaurant for a good breakfast by 9 am, all were ready for Jispa, approx 110 kms from Manali. Had a huddle meeting called by Prez Ajit Ram, brief was given about the safety aspect of today's ride, was asked to Vinod to recite a prayer, he obliged it by reciting Gayatri Mantra for everyone's well being and safe ride. Our first stop was at Hotel Riverine Villa, property owned by Prez Bharat Khurana of Rotary Club of Manali, had a joint meet with members of Manali Club, Prez Ajit Ram exchanged IFMR flag with their President and gave away souvenirs like Caps/Key Chains to all members present. For our onward journey, they had arranged big bag of Sandwiches. After all the bonhomie and banter, took few pictures and requested their President to flag off our next leg of journey, which he obliged willingly. Rotarians of Manali club were very happy to meet all of us, told they were unaware of such meeting members of fellowship groups.

We started getting out of Manali and things also started getting exciting, the roads were totally curvy but in great shape, all rode one behind each other slowly and cautiously, slowly the scenario started changing, the mountains views were mind blowing and breath taking, stopped at few places for quick photo ops. Soon we reached the newest construction marvel of India, The Atal Tunnel, a long 9 km tunnel made thru Rohtang valley, hats off to Border Road Organization for a fabulous job done. In opposite a big convoy of at least 50 Hippos trucks of Armed forces crossed us, treat to watch, big salute to armed forces for their hard work in rough terrain. Slowly started seeing snow capped peaks and temperature started dropping steadily. Stopped around 1.30 pm for a good lunch. Started our journey soon, to witness some thing new every time.

Saw some great road safety signage like - Don't be Gama in a Land of Lama, Safety on Road gets you Safe Tea at Home, Heaven Hell & Mother Earth is here Choice is Yours, but best one was In curves don't hug me just feel me. By 4 pm we were at our Jispa Journey Swiss Tent resort next to Beas river flowing and snow capped peaks, checked in to our allotted tents, had a round of tea with Sandwiches and few started exploring the property, around 8 pm had a review meet and early dinner and all retired to their tent by 9 pm or so.





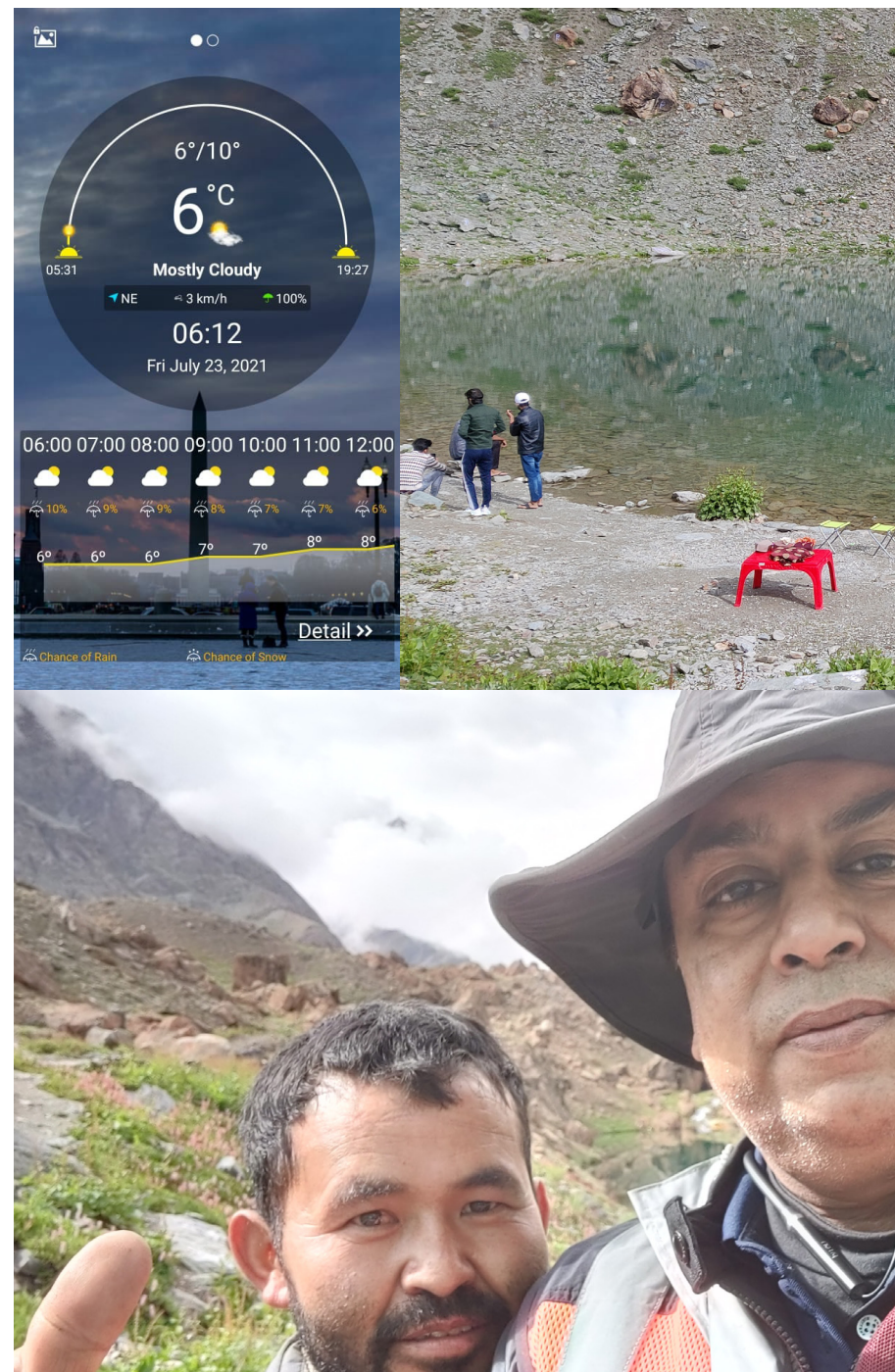




Day 5

As decided in the last night briefing to start from Jispa for Sarchu little early to avoid glaciers water in various nallas on the way, all woke up early for 7.30 am start. All had a good rest overnight and after freshen up, started saddling up their bikes, assembled in the dining tent for quick breakfast. Gathered near the bikes for huddle meet, Captain Rtn Rajesh gave instructions on today's ride and informed riding sequence for today's ride and wished good luck to all. Prez Ajit Ram suggested Ann. Avinash to recite the prayer for safe journey, he obliged it by singing a mantra. Today happened to be Prez Ajit Ram's birthday, all wished him happy birthday with long and prosperous life, all sang birthday song for him.

Slowly one by one all started their bikes and came out of the resort. The journey to Sarchu began on serious note, all were following each other like ants and the sight was awesome from various levels of climbing the mountains. The surrounding mountains were changing every few metres, giving a fascinating look, was getting a felling of helicopter taking off and scene changing with height. Reached Deepak (Suraj) Lake, named after an IAF pilot, whose chopper had crashed at the site. Had fresh tea made by a Lama Tenzing and took few pictures of lake backdrop. Resumed our journey and reached our first landmark milestone in any Leh - Ladakh trip, Baralacha la, which is at a height of 16000 ft. All were excited and took lot of pictures with the Milestone, met few more biker groups at the spot, exchanged tips for onward journey and wished good luck to each other. By lunch time close to 1 pm, we had reached Sarchu to our resort, a Swiss Tent camp, very popular in this terrain. Were welcomed with hot tea and after sometime later had good simple working lunch without any frills. It was pre decided to take rest at Sarchu for better aclatimisation to higher altitudes, all decided to relax in their tents post lunch. All gathered close to 7 pm for briefing and dinner, had a good interactive session, everyone view was asked. All shared their opinion and had a light dinner and retired for an early sleep, to ensure timely departure for Leh.





Day 6

Day started with auto mode alarm in all the riders, our saddle up instruction last evening for today's ride was 6.15 am, all got up early, after quick freshen up started getting their bikes closer to tents for saddle up, had a huddle meet with Captain Rajesh taking the centre stage, today's rider sequence was informed and he volunteered to offer the prayer for today's safe journey. After a quick breakfast we started our journey from Sarchu to Leh sharp at 7 am, wanted to avoid gushing nalla from flowing of glaciers water at many places. Especially at Bharatpur. As soon as we started we were welcomed by a long muddy road and a big nalla, which was a big surprise, fortunately all crossed it and reached the HP border leaving Lahol district and entered Ladakh administration. Immediately after that it was the anticlimax or as they say Picture Abhi Baki Hai Doston we were welcomed by a sand field with 4 to 5 inches layer of sand all over distancing roughly 5 kms, with truck movement on it, it had already created a dust storm all over, with poor visibility somehow all of us managed to cross it slowly and cautiously. But on reaching the other side of sand fields no one could recognise each other, all of us had a good coat of dust on us all over. Had decided to go non stop till Pang because it was one of the most dangerous stretch of 90 kms, stopped in between for bio break at an Army camp and managed to reach Pang, on the way scenic beauty cannot be explained, one has to feel it, just suuper se ooper.

Proceeded to next great stop over in any Leh trip is Tang LangLa pass at 17500 ft. All of us got down fast for a quick photo ops as oxygen level was dropping. Again decided to continue journey and have lunch only at Rumtse a 70 kms from Tanglangla, but the roads from Tanglangla to Leh was the best so far in this journey, a 40 kms stretch was a straight road with sand deserts and rocky mountain with snow on top on both sides of road was a sight to behold. The road condition was like an airport runway, in emergency an army aircraft can land too, in fact for night visibility reflectors too were installed. Many Bollywood movies have been shot here like Jab Tak Hai Jaan with SRK and recently Web series Family Man of Manoj Bajpayee. Reached Rumtse close to 3 pm, stopped at a popular food joint, saw world over Rider clubs stickers pasted on their glass wall, Prez Ajit Ram and Captain Rajesh fixed our IFMR sticker to the wall of fame.









At Rumtse mobile networks had started working, for last 48 hrs we were out of network, all got busy calling up their near and dear ones to inform their well being. Had a good lunch of Rajmha/Chawal and started again, we were only 75 kms from Leh. After reaching Upshi - 26 from Rumtse were welcomed by a checkpoint of Covid checks, as per rules a within 96 hrs valid negative report is required to enter Leh and we were carrying 6 days old report hence the official suggested to undergo Rapid Antigen test right away in their camp and with little anxiety all went thru the process and reports came in next ten minutes, all were Covid negative, big sigh of relief, we were issued certificate and allowed to let go. But now we wanted petrol in our bikes, reached Karu, 30 kms away from Leh, all lined up at the only petrol pump we found at Tandi after leaving Manali, took good 30 minutes for all of us to fill all bike tanks.

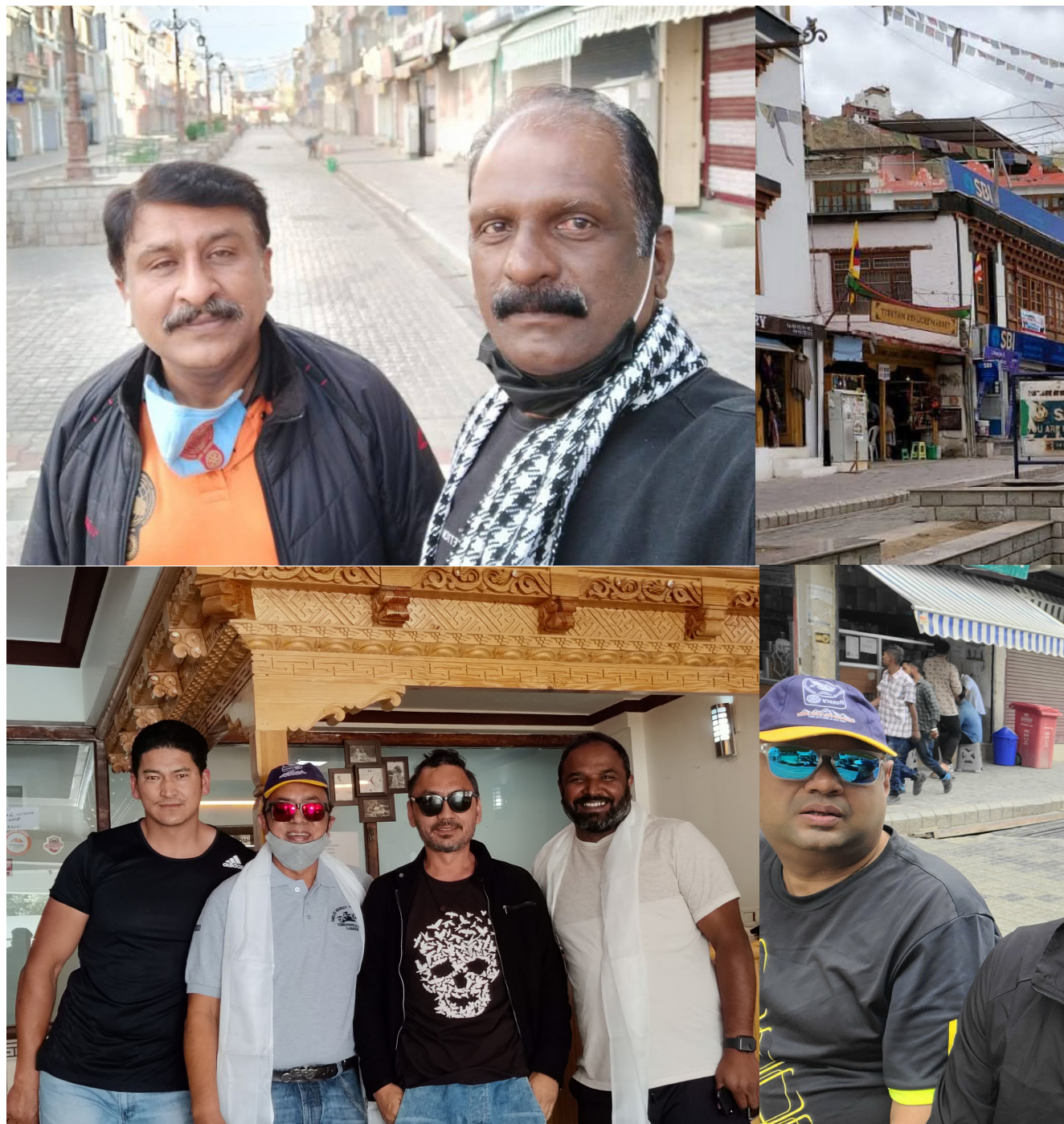
Started again and reached Leh's designated hotel - Palace Hotel. All got into the rooms and took time to take good hot bath, for last two days we could not take bath due to tent stays and chill and zero availability of hot water. All came out of rooms for an awesome dinner waiting for all of us close to 8.30 pm. There is no ride next day as it is Rest Day for all, so no review meet tonight. All were totally relaxed for having completed a major journey from Manali to Leh.

Distance covered on Day 6 : 275 Kms

Day 7

As per itenery today was a rest day in Leh for all, it was more for acclimatization to the altitude. All got up post 8 am, strolled to the dining room for a totally relaxed breakfast. Around 10.30 am we had an interactive session with the tour operator person Mr. Inaam, who explained us the position of route for our next three days trip to three different places i.e Nubra Valley, Pangong Tso and Tso moriri.

We were informed that few routes have temporarily closed down due to landslide, and it was decided that we will go ahead with the trip and change the course of trip as the situation arises. All the minor issues were discussed and all dispersed after that. Few decided to get their bikes checked with RE service centre and with our tour mechanic. Few left for mall road for the window shopping and time pass. We were also informed by the team lead that we can go out for lunch on our own. All were instructed for a briefing at 8.30 pm, accordingly all gathered in the lawns of our hotel, Captain Rajesh explained us about tomorrow's ride to Nubra Valley and morning schedule. Subsequently we were joined by our Tour Operator contact person of Thirlophilia at Leh Mr. Satya and Mr Inaam for briefing. President Ajit Ram took this opportunity to felicitate all our tour operator team, he gave a beautiful IFMR memento and wind sheeter carried from Bangalore to Mr Satya of Thirlophilia and his support team comprising of Inaam, Vinod, Murli and hotel manager Shabbir were felicitated with IFMR Cap and Key Chains. Team was thanked for all the efforts put in so far. Soon all dispersed for dinner and all retired to rooms for good sleep.





Day 8

As decided last evening we all were to saddle up for our next leg of trip i.e Leh to Nubra Valley via Khardungla pass at 7.15 am, all were ready accordingly and had a quick breakfast. All were charged up to touch base with Khardungla Pass, an equivalent to Mt. Everest in a bikers life, one time to banta hai. Had a huddle meeting, Captain Rajesh briefed us about today's ride, Prez Ajit Ram offered himself for today's prayer, after which we took a group picture along with our bike and IFMR banner for future reference and memory.

Due to last minute paper work for inline permit for our tour guide we started our journey around 8.40 am. The journey to Khardungla was a 36 kms from Leh but elevation goes up from 11000 ft to 17800ft in no time. The ride was uphill and daunting, due to regular tourist destination even from non bikers the traffic was more than an average. After a good 20 kms journey we were seeing adjacent mountains below us covered with snow, it was as if we were teasing those mountains that we are above you now. Encountered few water nalla and all managed to reach Khardungla close to 11 am. Already there were many non biker tourist at the spot, but our happiness was just not going away, all started taking solo and group pictures with the milestone tomb. Took a spot video of all members sharing their happiness. There were few spot with full of snow, took few pictures with snow too. As it is mandatory not to stay more than 20 minutes at Khardungla, we started our bike to head to South Pullu for tea break.





On reaching South Pullu, got the mobile network, shared our joy of conquering Khardungla with the world. Non stop congratulatory messages started pouring in. Continued our journey to Nubra, reached the lone petrol pump around Nubra Valley, all decided to top up their petrol tank. There is a Buddha Monastery near by called as Diskit Gompa, all headed to it to get blessings from Lord Buddha and thank him for our journey so far and for rest of it also, the best part of this Monastery was that we could see Siacheen Glaciers from one side. Soon all were getting hungry and we decided to stop over at a nice restaurant in Diskit itself. After which we marched towards our hotel Skylark Resort and Camp in Nubra Valley, reached here close to 3 pm. Settled in our Swiss tent for some time and slowly few took a stroll of the resort which is situated next to Shyok river and in the mid of a dessert we could see Apple and Apricot orchards. Few years back it was a complete dessert but people have changed it for better future. All came out for tea around 7 pm and continued with our review meeting and next plan. All shared their experience of today, Captain Rajesh suggested that since our next ride is to famous Pangong lake tomorrow, we start early to avoid any gushing nalla from constant melting ice. It was fixed for 5 am saddle up. All had a good and light dinner and retired to their tents for early start. Today's distance covered is 150kms.





Day 9

Last night it was planned to leave early for Pangong so that we can cross the nalla (water crossings) before it swells up. Time was fixed for 5.30 am saddle up and departure, resort was asked to pack sandwiches for breakfast, all had woken up accordingly and were ready to go, quick huddle and prayer was done, Annette Avinash sang the prayer for everyone's safety, Ride Capt Rajesh informed the bikers sequence for today's ride. It was great refreshing morning for all and in no time we covered a distance of 70 kms and reached Agham close to 7.30 am, but to our surprise the road to Pangong was declared closed due to previous night land slide, there were many like us who were stranded for Pangong, we decided to have a review over Tea and Sandwiches, stopped at a restaurant in Agham, discussed all the possible ways to reach Pangong. The best possible alternate route was to go to Sakti - Kharu(for petrol filling) - Sakti- Changla - Dubkar - Pangong. The route was not easy, additional 210 kms from that position, so 280 kms in total for today. All agreed and started without realising what we were getting into it. Soon we started our bikes towards Sakti and to our horror the stretch was brutal, totally rough terrain and slushy and in few places deep nallas (water crossings), experienced riders too found it difficult but some how we managed to cross the deadly stretch, to add to our misery saw road blockade for 1 hour due to road widening work, slowly the heat was getting too much for all to tolerate, fortunately road was cleared and we moved but it had started taking toll on us. Reached Kharu, 42 kms away from Leh, few decided to withdraw from onward trip to Pangong due to exhaustion, finally just 6 of us decided to proceed to Pangong, without knowing what is waiting for us. All had a break at Kharu and had little early lunch as our breakfast was just sandwiches, started around 1.30 pm for a distance of 150km, soon our trouble started on the way to famous military post Chang La Pass, road was totally rough and again road blockade where in an earth moving equipment was busy cutting the mountain to make wider road, again the heat was getting onto us. After half an hour break, we were allowed to move but to our shock saw few nallas (water crossings) wherein huge traffic jam was happening due to deep gorges, cars and bikes were trying there best to cross the nalla (water crossings) with help from each other.

Luckily we all managed to cross it in one attempt, similar scenario continued non stop till we reached Chang La Pass, had decided earlier to take photos with milestone in return journey but traffic got stalled due to military truck movement, some more delay, some how our Bahubali Captain Rajesh who was the lead too managed to get all of us out of





traffic jam. But our trouble was not stopping, rough road continued and nallas (water crossings) were non stop, till we reached Durbak, stopped over a quick tea close to 4 pm. We were still 55 kms away from our resort at Pangong, road started looking good but nallas (water crossings) were too frequent, by now had lost count of nallas (water crossings), soon close to 6 pm we could see Pangong lake from distance, were very happy. Unfortunately the regular route from that spot to resort was closed due to road work and were asked to take plain area road. Were still happy that soon we will reach our resort. But something extraordinary was waiting for us, it was a battle mine, the entire stretch of 12 kms was only fields without road and designated route for resort.

It was full of big boulders and water streams all over, patches of sand dunes, since it was post 6pm, melting of snow from adjacent mountain was at peak. It was next to impossible to ride the bikes leave alone crossing nallas (water crossings), which we had stopped counting by then again. Slowly it was getting dark, to cross this 12 kms we had taken over 70 minutes, it was a do or die situation to cross this deadly stretch. We were in a situation where in we cannot go back and option was to keep moving forward only, finally, as they say luck favours the brave, reached our beautiful Swiss Tent resort Wonderland adjacent to lake, by 8.20 pm we were in our tent. All came out for dinner by 8.30 pm, temperature was below 10 degree centigrade, all were stuffed in their best of woollen. No one was thinking about return journey from deadly stretch, just wanted to live for the day. From the experience of this last stretch, we can easily say that reaching Khardung La and other passes were nothing compared to this ride, all were Masters in crossing nallas (water crossings) by now. We can never forget this experience even in next seven lives. In one word it was a MIRACLE Ride that we did.

Would like to place on record special appreciation and thanks to Prez Ajit Ram and Ride Captain Rajesh for handling all of us with kid glove, despite focusing on their ride they were also monitoring each one of us with any difficulty being faced.





Day 10

It was discussed in the last night huddle meeting that we will leave by 7.30 am, so that we can cross all the nallas (water crossings) of the first 12 kms of mine field stretch. Many had started getting up as early as 5.30am itself to get the fresh look of mighty Pangong lake, which was besides our resort, many walked down to the edge of lake, took pictures, touched the water, the view of mountains with lake was just stunning. Slowly all started gathering for a quick breakfast and joined for saddle up. Annette Avinash was asked to offer prayer for safe journey and rider sequence was informed by Captain Rajesh. Slowly we started getting out of the resort and to our surprise we didn't see much water flow in the first 12 kms stretch, all managed to cross approx 40 nallas (water crossings) in that stretch safely. Our first stop was popular Shooting Spot area of Pangong lake, where famous movie 3 Idiot was shot, we had reached here by 8.30 am but crowd had already gathered, all of us went around the place trying to connect it with the movie, took some great pictures with the prop of movies. Took a group picture with our IFMR-India banner too.

Started our ride for safe exit from Pangong, continued for next few hours and reached Durbak military post for a break for Tea, all were in a relaxed mood, knowing that we had already mastered the return route yesterday. Lot of banter and bonhomie was taking place on the previous evenings ride, all were thanking each other and God that we had managed to complete the previous days gruelling ride. Slowly started our ride to great Chang La pass, saw some of the nallas (water crossings) and treacherous road stretch which we had crossed them yesterday and were feeling astonished that we had really crossed them yesterday and today we had mastered them to cross it easily. But all said and done the stretch was not easy to cross, definitely not for a faint hearted rider, it needed a great deal of riding skill. There was a huge traffic pile up on the way due to road widening work, slowly reached to Chang La Pass, second highest motorable road, all were happy and excited, took solo and group photos with our IFMR-India banner. Started ride again, but light drizzle had started and made things little tough, somehow reached Kharu around 2.30 pm, had a good lunch. Some of us filled petrol in our bikes and decided that we will go to our booked hotel in Leh straight away and take rest/sight seeing for next two days and start our last leg of trip to Kargil-Sonamarg-Srinagar. All met during dinner and exchanged their experiences of last two days ride, slowly all dispersed to their rooms and private program.





Day 11

Today was a rest day for all, no riding program for anyone. All were relaxing in hotel, went out for shopping and sightseeing. All were on their own.





Day 12

Today was again a rest day for all but we had an exciting program lined by our team head Prez Ajit Ram and Ride Captain Rajesh, our tour operator had fixed a visit to famous Stok Palace and Ladakhi Authentic lunch in a house which is over 200 years old and their kitchen is equally 200 years old. All got ready at 11am to visit Stok Palace, on reaching the palace which was 16 kms from our hotel, all went around the palace, museum and took some great group pictures. After sometime went to the nearby 200 years old house for the lunch. It was a great experience to have 4 course meal made by the family, the setting was totally original on how a Ladakhi family treat their guests.

After lunch, we were taken around their 200 years old house, son of the family explained in detail about their house how it was used by various generation. Soon we left for Leh and got back to hotel for a scheduled review meet for the last leg trip starting tomorrow to Kargil-Sonamarg-Srinagar. In the review meeting in the evening, IPP Prashanth Babu too joined us over zoom, he explained us the safety aspect to be observed during the last leg of the trip starting tomorrow morning. Capt Rajesh spelt out tomorrow's starting time and other logistics. Prez Ajit Ram shared his views on next leg of trip.





Day 13

Our last leg of trip was starting today after a break of two days, all were looking forward to it. Saddle up was at 7 am, with rolling out at 8 am. All were ready with their bikes and bags ahead of schedule time, Captain Rajesh announced the rider sequence for the day, Prashanth Mishra recited the prayer for everyone's safety. Took a final picture with all in Leh including hotel guys. Had a sumptuous breakfast for today's long ride, bid farewell to hotel staff and management and started rolling out sharp at 8 am. Our journey started and it took us to the cantonment area of Leh for the highway to Kargil, slowly we bid goodbye to Leh and were rolling towards Kargil.

Our first stop was at Gurudwara Pathar Saheb, close to 20 kms away from Leh, it is a Gurudwara maintained by Indian Army, very popular with them and all Sikh Community, any one crossing the place has to stop over here and bow their head in front of Guru Nanak ji and a huge pious rock. All of us too visited the place, took blessings from Nanak ji. Soon we were on highway, to see a huge signage written on a hill as Magnetic Hill, here the Newton's law of gravity is defied, at some places near the hill it does not work, saw it from distance and decided to move further. Soon we were at a popular destination known as Sangam, confluence spot of River Zaskar and River Indus, could see two rivers coming from different direction and merging together with two color mixing up. The spot is world's highest river rafting area. Took a break here, had tea and didn't want to miss out on photo ops, captured many pics.

Resumed our journey slowly, soon our ordeal too started, at many places it was full of thick slush and had





difficulty in negotiating those roads, problem started when we were negotiating them and military convoy were approaching from opposite side. We had managed to cross 120 kms and reached a place, where traffic was halted due to landslide last evening, fortunately clearing work was on and after a wait of over one hour we were allowed to go further, we reached another popular destination in Ladakh known as Lamayaru, stopped here for lunch, had another popular Ladakhi food, Thupka. Still we were facing heavy slush muddy road all over, was challenging to move, fortunately all managed them by taking risk of getting all their riding gear and bikes, dirty. At many places the mud/slush had dried up and any movement on those stretch was causing dust storm, finally we reached our hotel Chutuk Heights in Kargil, the best hotel to get in this trip, in fact was informed by hotel management that actor Aamir Khan had checked out of the same hotel that morning after his shoot in Kargil. All were very happy with the property and settled in for a peaceful stay tonight, it was a long journey of 250 kms.

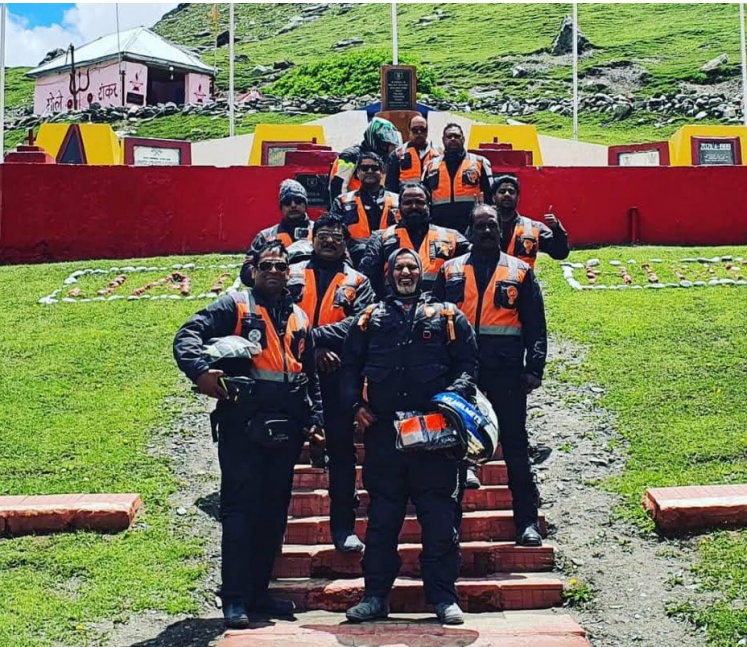


Day 14

After a good dinner and sleep last night all woke up in a relaxed way as the ride for today was a shorter one. Saddle time was 8.15 am and rolling by 9 am. All had a good breakfast and were on time for huddle meet, Captain Rajesh briefed on rider sequence and hazard on today's ride. Prez Ajit Ram spoke on maintaining good distance among the sequence and ensure that all are riding together, not getting divided in groups. Captain Rajesh offered prayers for today's ride success.

As we got out of the hotel, saw a petrol pump, it was pre decided to stop and fill the tanks to last till our journey to Srinagar, all ensured the same. Started immediately after refilling and was trying to get out of the Kargil town. Next 90 minutes journey covering a distance of 60 kms. It was a smooth ride, stopped straight at Kargil War Memorial near Drass. All went inside and spent over 45 minutes, took some group pictures and learnt about the 1999 Kargil War, saw main mountains like Tiger Hill and Tololing on which the battle was fought. Soon we started again to stop after Drass for a Tea Break and some more group pictures against scenic backdrops along with our motorbikes. Rode for next one hour and were reaching Zojila War Memorial and got a super duper surprise IPP Prashanth Babu was coming from opposite side and joined us for the remaining part of tour. All stopped to greet him and take pictures in Zojila War Memorial area. Now the problem route had started, the surface has made of old style road bricks, and it had got narrower, it was totally off roading track, few water crossing also came, finally all crossed this stretch close to 15 kms slowly but successfully, we were stopped at few places for military convoy movement too. Close to 2 pm reached to our hotel in Sonamarg. All settled in their rooms and after some time came out for lunch with total rest for remaining part of the day.





Day 15

So far the trip was a roller coaster ride, today was the last day of our trip, all got up with mixed emotions that soon it will end and back to grind in Bangalore from 5th morning. Saddle up time was 9.15 am and rolling at 10 am. All had a good breakfast and joined for the huddle meet, Captain Rajesh explained on today's ride, informed the sequence of rider and Rtn. Amit was asked to offer prayer, he recited Gayatri Mantra for everyone's safety. As it was my birthday, all had already wished me and decided to sing the birthday song in my honour. Felt very emotional. Last night it had rained for a long time, resulting in wet road for us during ride. First 40 kms was little difficult with slush, heavy traffic and military convoy, once we crossed 40kms, things became easy but traffic was getting heavy as we were approaching Srinagar, and worst was total disregard to traffic sense by general public. Had a tea break before entering Srinagar around 12 noon, for the first time in 15 days we had Samosa and Ice-creams, long over due for all. Close to 1 pm reached our hotel, slowly started checking in, with instructions to get ready for luggage to be sent in lorry along with bikes to Bangalore today afternoon. Our truck had come last night and was parked near hotel for bikes loading and safe transportation to Bangalore. We had completed our bike ride with Odo reading close 2200km. Officially The Hima - Leh -Yan bike trip of IFMR is over.

This will be my last write up on the trip, thought of informing you something on behind the scene activities. First of all big thanks to Prez Ajit Ram and Captain Rajesh who worked tirelessly everyday to ensure things goes smoothly, not only looking after our stay and food but riding safely at all times. Guided riders who were not keeping well health wise in between. It was a great learning how to remain cool and calm at the times of difficult situation. Made sure that entire trip goes as per the itenery and actually it went like a perfect T. Another man who was not physically present for most of the trip but ensured to send us off from Chandigarh and to welcome us at Zojila pass was IPP Prashanth Babu, awesome person, physically we all missed him but honestly speaking he was present among us in the entire trip spiritually and mentally. He worked behind the scene with the connected agency and ensured we all had a safe ride and come back home in one piece. I personally am going to miss all my co riders, we all had great bonding which will last for life time.





Remarks





Designed and compiled by Studio Baftnama.
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