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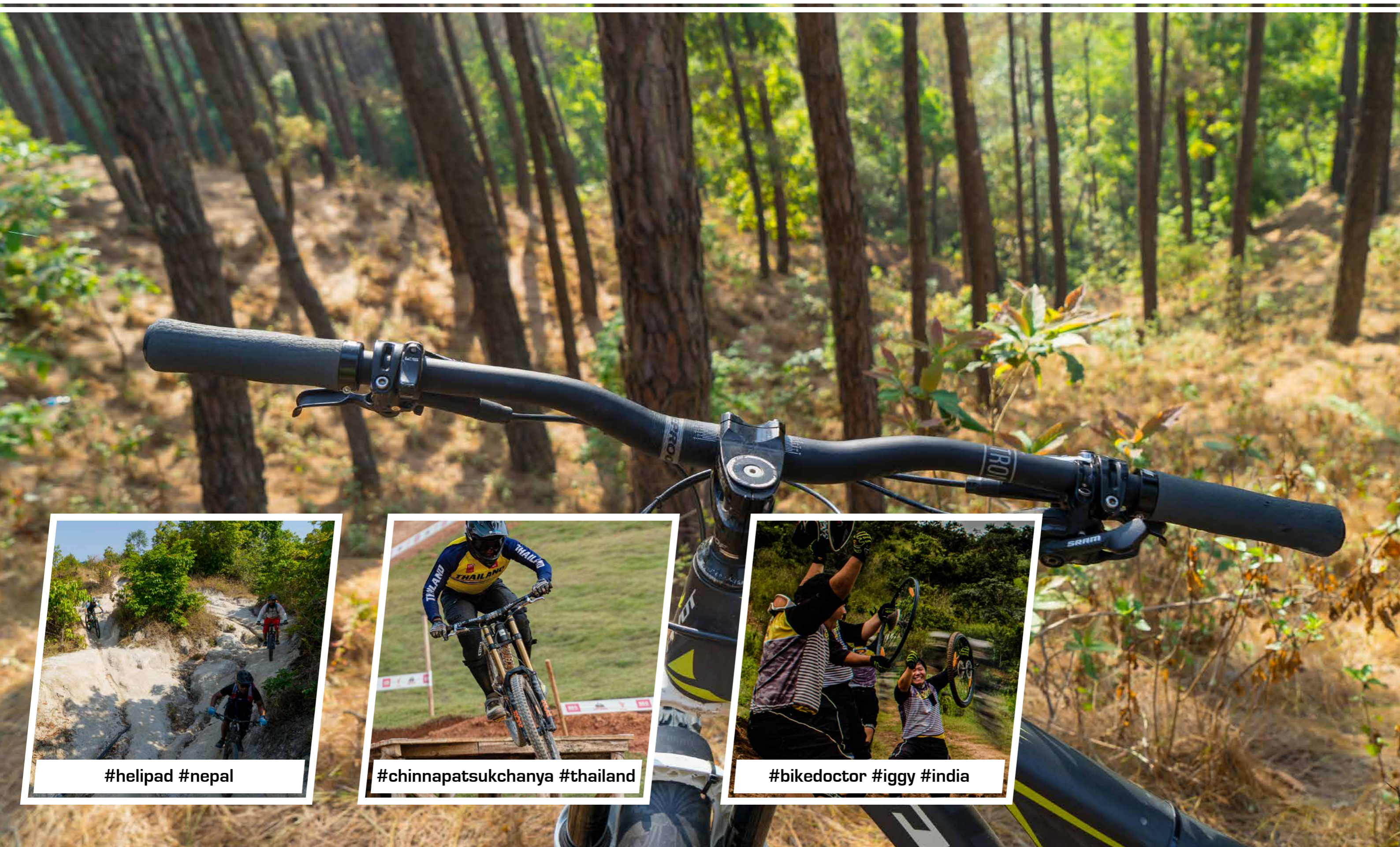
#helipad #nepal

#chin #thailand

#iggy #india







#helipad #nepal



#chinnapatsukchanya #thailand



#bikedoctor #iggy #india



SPEED RACE WHITE



PANTS SEND IT



GLOVES RAD RED

 Sunil C. Sharma


 Sunil C. Sharma

**W H E R E
W O U L D
Y O U
L I K E
T O
R I D E
T O D A Y ?**





How many cities worldwide have the amount of trail network to offer riders unlimited choices to shred? Well, I know just a place nestled among the big green mountains (up to 2700 meters) and meandering rivers - Kathmandu. You don't have to ride the same trail twice in this valley, even if you stay up to a year. The valley is home to some fantastic world-class mountain biking trails for both cross-country and enduro-style riders. For the culturally inclined, the three queen cities (Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur)

A full-page photograph of three mountain bikers descending a steep, rocky trail. The lead biker is in the foreground, wearing a black jacket and a grey helmet. Two other bikers are further up the trail. The trail is composed of light-colored, uneven rocks and is surrounded by dense green foliage and trees. The scene is captured from a high angle, looking down the trail.


of the valley offer a maze of intricate trails to get you lost forever-If you want to.

I know all of you will be super envious to hear about my trip to Nepal, especially during the ongoing pandemic, and I managed to do plenty of riding in many corners of the valley. Among my favourites is the HeliPad trail, situated just 9 kilometres north of the city centre. Today, I am going to let you in on the sights and the feel of this trail. Enjoy!



Local riders frequent this trail due to its proximity to the city and the versatility of the rides it offers. The trail enters from a broad pasture (what used to be - now there is a small cafe) and quickly drops altitude via a sandy landscape. I have seen seasoned riders shred this section at breakneck speed with their mouth wide open in ecstasy, their tires billowing a cloud of sands on to the trailing riders.

Before you adjust your posture from the onslaught of the dust, get ready

A full-page photograph of two mountain bikers descending a steep, rocky trail. The lead biker is in the foreground, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, red shorts, a black helmet, and a backpack. He is leaning forward on his black mountain bike. Behind him, another biker in a black shirt and shorts is also descending the trail. The trail is a narrow, light-colored dirt path carved into a steep, light-colored rock face. The surrounding area is a forest with tall, thin trees and some green ferns in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

to descend a technical rock garden stretching a good 200 to 300 meters. This section is a sheer joy for riders with intermediate-level skills but a living hell for a novice. The multiple line choices in this stretch make it a popular area for the riders to do a session for taking photos and videos for their Instagram.

The downslope continues until the section rightly called “Widow Maker.” This technical section has 2 or 3 line choices of varying difficulty and a “Chicken line”, too. I am yet to



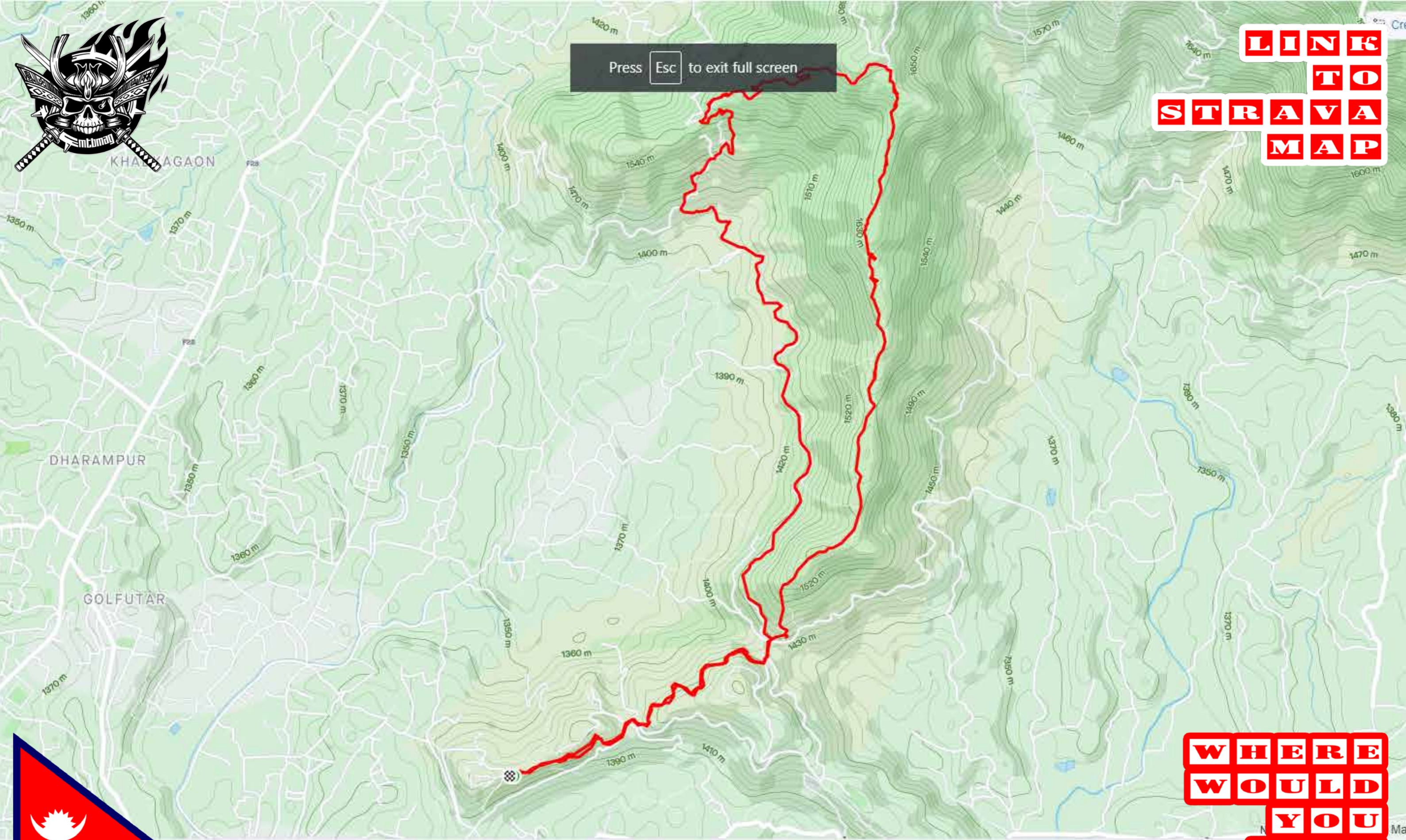
conquer the mainline in this section. I guess I do not want my wife to be a widow just yet. But I am working towards hitting the mainline without getting hurt. Wish me luck.

A small pedally section to go over a hillock, and you are in for the final treat - a continuous gravity-led descent dotted with many humps to help you get airborne. If you are a first time visitor to this trail, the last section is sure to mesmerize you with literally innumerable line choices and swaying Buddhist prayer flags to welcome you to the zone. You head home feeling Bikvana.



LINE
TO
STRAVA
MAP

Press Esc to exit full screen



WHERE
WOULD
YOU
LIKE
TO
RIDE
TODAY?





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150mm	31.6mm	440mm	573g	07561

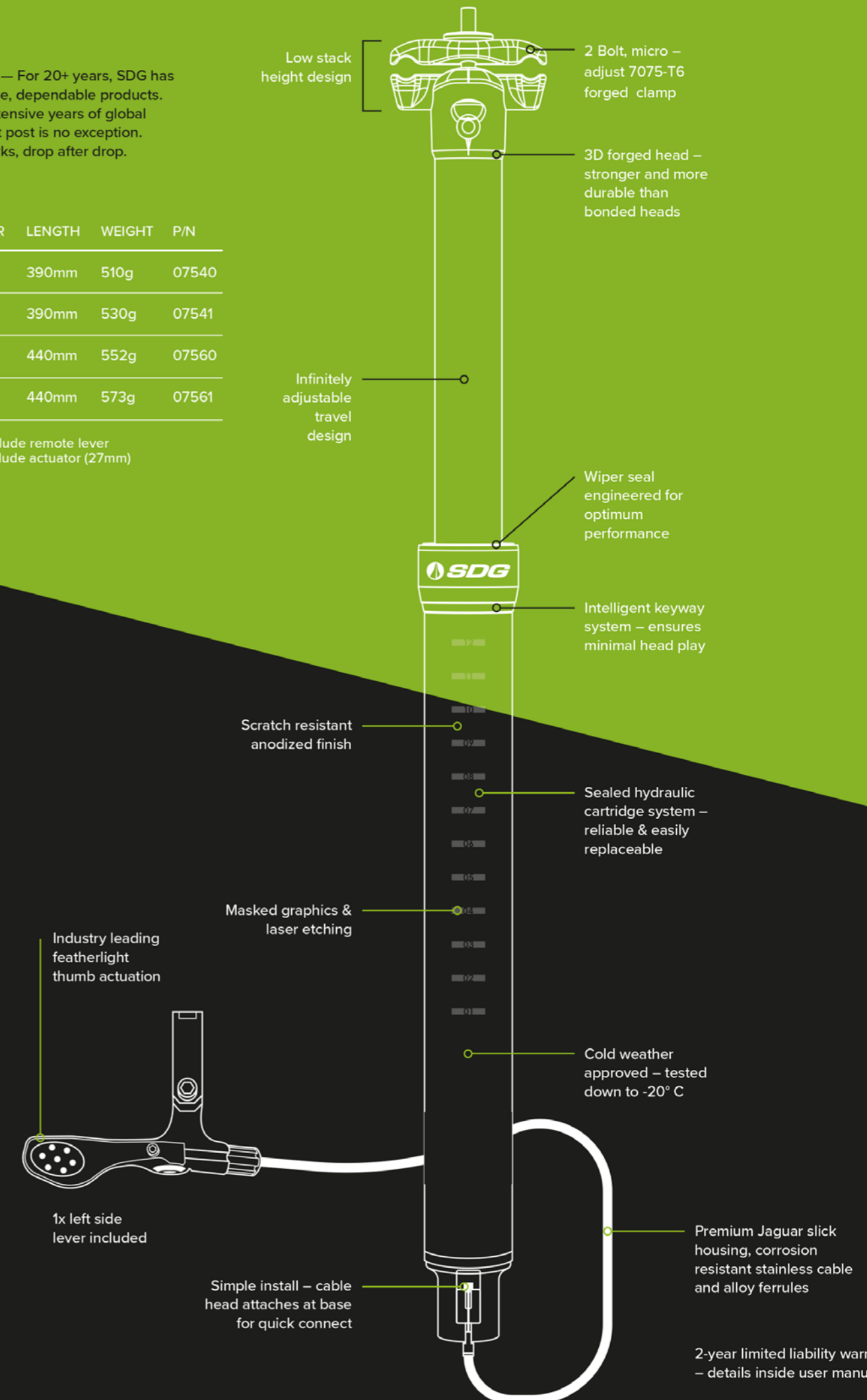
* Weight does not include remote lever
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A CUP OF COFFEE WITH CHAN FROM THAILAND



“Every day where I ride a bike is a good day! I love cycling so much!” was the first statement I heard from Chin after he introduced himself. Chin, full name Chinnapat Sukchanya, is a 21-years young rider from Thailand. He was born and grew up in the city of Nakhon Ratchasima in the northeast of Thailand. Being a member of the Thailand national downhill team and one of the few Asian riders who participating at the world downhill cup, he belongs definitely not to the normal hobby and amateur mountain bike riders.





Just to highlight two of his successes: He won the silver medal in the 2020 Asian Championship and participated in the World Cup 2018 in Switzerland. Now Chin is studying film-making and film direction in Bangkok and has already worked as a video shooter and editor for a bicycle tire company. That's why he is basically very busy with his studies, and I'm glad he still found time to have a longer chat with me.

Before he dove into the world of mountain biking, his riding began



pretty early at the age of 6. His first bike was a small kind of mountain bike with no suspension. He remembers he had lots of crashes. Riding two wheels seems to be a real family culture for Chin. His brother, 6 years older, also rides a bike, and Chin's father likes motocross and let Chin ride motocross bikes since he was a kid. Together with his brother and father, he travelled a lot to different bike spots and for races. "That's probably why I love cycling," says Chin.



During our chat Chin showed me some of his riding clips and it was very interesting that right beside his house is a pump track, so he of course often takes the chance to ride there, not only on bike but also on his skateboard.

Near competitions, he makes the 2.5 hour drive to the bike park 2 to 3 times per week, but during normal times he practices at home. Luckily there are enough single trails to ride his Enduro, also about 2 to 3 days a week. Before bigger events





he increases his riding frequency up to 6 days a week: 2 days downhill on his 27.5er Santa Cruz V10, 3 days Enduro and also 1 day in the gym for maintaining his basic physical condition.

It's always interesting: the best downhill riders I talk to tell me they do sports beside downhill. It's the same with Chin: he also speeds his road bike down the streets, dashes through the parks in his running shoes, pushes his skateboard over the pump track and surfs the waves





of the nearby ocean.

But overall, the selection of places to ride MTB in Thailand Chin finds isn't satisfying. There are not many training grounds in Thailand and many people prefer to ride road bikes. Chin estimates that there are roughly 300 to 400 serious mountain bikers in the whole of Thailand. Downhill and Gravity-oriented MTB is something special and a pretty expensive hobby.

Chin's mountain bike rider idol is





Luca Shaw - I wondered why and he told that he met him at the DH World Cup 2019 in Switzerland, where they both coincidentally rode the same gondola up the mountain. "He is very friendly and good at training!" states Chins about his idol. One of his best riding memories he had at the Asian Championships in China. This was where he met Mesum Verma, the chief editor of mtbmagasia, for the first time.

That Chin isn't just an average mountain biker you can see from his





future plans. Chin can't wait to go to France to practice on the downhill tracks there, together with a small team of Thai downhill riders. There at the tracks he wants to shoot some good footage and edit one or two professional MTB videos. Originally he'd planned that trip in 2020 and had booked the flights. But then COVID-19 destroyed his dream.

However, Chin is full of hope and already looks forward to travelling to foreign places for mountain biking as soon as the pandemic is over. And if he and me are lucky enough, we will meet in Thailand for a real and some serious real riding session.





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Mastering the Art of Fixing Bikes

Robin Darius Conz

Anissa Lamare

Chinese by ancestry, but born and brought up in India, Ignatius Chen (or, as he's known to friends, Iggy) calls Bangalore home. The thirty-five-year-old bike enthusiast does not only ride bikes but fixes them up pretty well. After all, there's a reason why he is known as "The Bike Doctor."





But before reaching the pinnacle, Iggy traces his roots to 2007. “A regular desk job” may have seemed too stagnant for Iggy’s nature. Like many in Bangalore working nine to five, Mr Chen sought to find a “different mode of transportation”. Coincidentally, cycling was the feasible medium for commuting in the streets of the city, while also keeping Iggy fit and active. He soon found that opportunities for cyclists are, without any exaggeration, boundless. From “exploring my neighbourhood” to “working for awesome bike shops and companies,” Iggy picked up the art instinctively. Eventually, the momentum led Iggy to become a “happy bike mech” who has dedicated over thirteen years of his life to fixing, servicing or setting up bikes professionally.

The span between 2007 and today is almost fifteen years. Pursuing a livelihood as a bike mechanic at the time may have seemed to be an impractical choice for many. Yet, the bike guru stands tall even as he tells me how there was “no establishment or organisation where you could get help in getting trained”. So, how in the world did Iggy do it? Well, “take chances, make mistakes. That’s how you grow.” It’s that simple!

As a professional bike mechanic, Iggy also reiterates that one does not need to acquire a bike certificate “to become a professional.” However, sometimes, it also “depends on how much you want to improve your skills and continue learning.” A bike course will definitely strengthen “the path you have taken,” says Iggy, but “don’t forget to have fun along the way.”





India is seeing a “significant rise in bike mechanics since 2019,” alongside “mechanics opening their own stores across the country.” One clear-cut reason is the “availability of bike specific tools at their disposal and the support that comes along with it.” Adding to the growth are brands with “high-end bikes” offering “training workshops to their retails.”

A traditional behind-the-desk job at times may seem to absorb most of your personal life as well. But, the assurance from fixing bikes, be it “geared, non-geared, hard-tail or full suspension”, cannot be quantified in figures or words. “This feeling of seeing someone smile while they ride is an amazing energy around you, and that is what keeps me going”, says Iggy, I believe with an even bigger smile.

Working around and with bikes allows for comparatively flexible weekdays and weekends. “It’s mostly working from home during the weekdays, maybe sneaking in a ride in the midweek to shout out to my boss, Arvind,” alludes Mr Chen in a rather mischievous way. But hold your horses boss, please don’t cut Iggy’s paycheque. After all, the “bike doctor” works wonders with tools and deserves bonus points for the smile. Nonetheless, “in the evening if there are bikes in for servicing, I start to work on it,” says Iggy. But that’s not all; weekdays are also filled with rides “with my buddies, Robin, Manik, Sid and Smaran, in Nandi or a trail build or maintenance.”

At 35, Iggy fixes bikes with the most delicate touch and rides because it awards “inner peace” and allows him to connect with nature. These two things for Iggy mean learning on your own without any pressure from any external element.





Apart from being an active cyclist or mountain biker, Iggy is an active spectator of the riding scene in India. The recently-concluded Gadag Nationals in Karnataka saw more youths participate, leaving an optimistic future for the sport. Noting some of the systemic lags in the sport, Iggy highlights the need for “the local governments to be more proactive in building the infrastructure for the sport as this is the most crucial time to be in.” If infrastructure is in place, it would not be impossible for India to “start hosting races for world series” in the next ten years.

But for now, Iggy has a message to all the bike mechanics; “never assume that your job is not important; you are not just a bike mechanic but an advocate for all your customers”. As for riders, Iggy urges all to “take care of your ride as much as you have fun on it. It needs some love from you, so follow your service schedules and continue to shred hard”.

Iggy's food for thought and practice.

- * Anything that you put your time and effort into is expensive. I do not have a set of rules, but one make sure you enjoy what you do.*
- * Two, have the craving to know more and how to improve yourself at things that may be difficult for you.*
- * Three, you don't need shiny tools or equipment; start out small if you feel you like tinkering with your bikes, then go for it.*



#ABOUT

MESUM
VERMA
CEO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

ANISSA
LAMARE
SENIOR EDITOR

AURELIUS
SATLOW
EDITOR

#PHOTOS #EDITORS

Sunil C. Sharma, Aurelius Satlow, Chinnapat Sukchanya, Robin Darius Conz,
Anissa Lamare

#DESIGN

Mesum Verma

#ADVERTISING #INFO

Mesum Verma: mv.mtbmagasia@gmail.com

#SPECIALTHANKS

Bryan Bell

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