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#iran #somy #struggle #woman

#kenya #cedrictassan

#redbull #rampage #notojudge

#preview #china #ferei #brake







#IRAN #SOMY #STRUGGLE  
#MTB #WOMAN



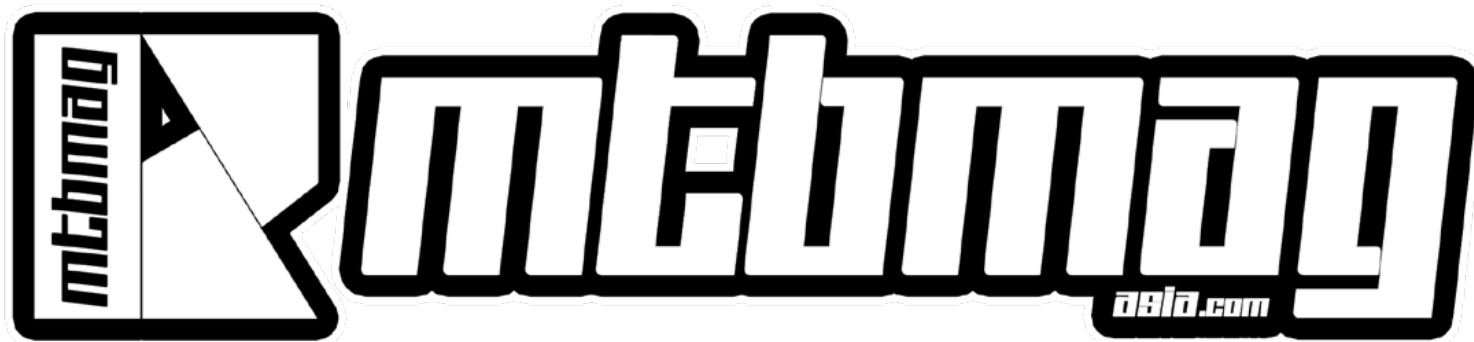
#UTAH #REDBULL #RAMPAGE  
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#KENJA #CEDRICTASSAN



#CHINA #PREVIEW #FEREI  
#MTB #BRAKES



#ISSUE91

#NOV2023

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Fuel

Orange

Tan

Turquoise

Green

Purple

# THE EVOLUTION CONTINUES - EXPERIENCE THE NEW BEL-AIR III

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# سمیه - مبارزه یک بانوی دوچرخه سوار حرفه ای در ایران

SOMY -  
THE STRUGGLE  
OF RIDING  
PROFESSIONALLY  
A MTB AS  
WOMAN IN IRAN



PHOTOS: HAFT TEAM, SOGAND YOUSEFI,  
ALI SALSALI, VAHID AHMADI, SALAR

WORDS: SOMAYEH FARAHANI



مسابقات  
مسابقات





## Obstacles and problems of cycling, especially mountain biking in Iran:

As you know, there are many sanctions against Iran. Maybe before that, i.e. a few years ago, the situation was not like this, and creditable brands and companies were operating in Iran and there was competition between them while there is currently no competition.

Since the sanctions increased and bikes were considered imported luxury goods by customs, apart from the rising prices, it became even more difficult to access and buy accessories.



Another issue is technical cycling tracks. All the tracks were built by the riders without support from the federation and with minimal tools (shovel and pickaxe), which means that the tracks are very short, simple and far from reach. Due to its mountainous geography, Iran has the ability to build technical tracks, but unfortunately, most of the tracks are free-ride.

The next problem is the lack of experts for training, even at the national team level. There are no professional trainers for DH or Enduro in Iran.



The lack of sponsors is another problem. Since the costs of biking, supplying parts, and participating in competitions are very high, without financial support, it is almost impossible to continue this process, which is one of the reasons for the decrease in the number of professional riders, especially in mountain biking.

Failure to allocate appropriate funds to the mountain range, especially DH, and as a result, the failure to dispatch athletes to international and Asian competitions and the loss of athletes' motivation, are other reasons for the

decrease in the number of participants in the competitions.

I have been training professionally for about 3 years to participate in the Asian Championship, but unfortunately, even though I am ranked number one in my country, I couldn't attend the competition.

Since last year, when I went to the World Cup in Val di Sole, Italy, I realized my disadvantages and started training more intensively and purposefully to be ready for the 2023 Asian Championship in India. Right now, as I am writing this







text, there are three days left until the mountain national team goes to India, and there is only one male DH athlete in the team.

The reasons given for not sending me to the Asian Championship are very interesting:

1. You are very delicate and weak! (Meaning also I should put more weight on)
2. You have to beat the time of the first Iranian men to take you!

The response to the first point: I next showed my photo to Marine Cabirou, one of my favorite riders and the first podium in the previous two World Cups (American Snowshoe World Cup and French Les Portes du Soleil), which clearly show me being bigger and more muscular! The result is that it has nothing to do with the size and amount of muscles!

The response to the second claim: In the World Cup Italy 2022 in which we participated, the time of the Iranian men was equal to the women on the podium! Well, if I want to beat the men's time, I



will go to the podium in the World Cup, not in the Asian Championship!

Now the question is, how many of the top Downhill women in Asian competitions will be in the podium of the World Cup?

#### Riding and training day:

During the competition season, I train downhill and Cross country every day and as a supplement do cross-fit and slack line. In the off season, I have more opportunities to fix my weaknesses. Focusing more on cross-fit training, I try to strengthen the related muscles and

increase agility.

In addition, I have more opportunities for recreation and entertainment, such as hiking, reading, spending time with friends, focusing on social media and baking.

#### On the bike:

The experience of coming down the mountain, jumping and crossing over obstacles has the most unique feeling for me that my mind is empty of everything and I live in the “Now”. I do not want to exchange this feeling of being in the







moment with anything.

### My goal:

My goal is to participate internationally and in the World cup. Since there are no suitable facilities in my country such as professional bikes, technical tracks and downhill specialist trainers, to achieve this goal I must be able to gain enough experience and skills by cycling on technical tracks. In the first stage, my goal is to participate in Asian competitions and gain prestigious Asian podiums, so that I can reach my bigger goal, which is to pass the Qualifying



stage in the World Cup.

Currently, downhill is less popular among Iranian women due to its risks, so one of my goals in the future is to share my experience with the young generation interested in cycling.









# MOUNT KENYA



PHOTOS: GAETAN RIOU - VARIABLE VISUAL

WORDS: CÉDRIC TASSAN







**Left by trekkers who climb Kilimanjaro, Mount Kenya 4985m.a.s.l. is the 2nd highest peak in Africa. Cédric Tassan takes us to discover one of the last bastions of African glaciers.**

Traveling is still not so simple at the end of 2021. A few days before departure, the discovery of a new variant called Omicron in Southern Africa is panicking the planet. Restrictions are raining down and the risk of being stuck in France is growing. I have spent time preparing for this new adventure, I fear that all this work will collapse in the blink of an eye. In Mount Kenya, a national park, it is not possible

to come without a guide. So first we had to find the right person. On this occasion, I was very lucky when I stumbled upon Michael's phone number while searching a forum on the internet. The current passes immediately. Michaël knows the mountain like the back of his hand, he has been here more than 450 times. However, he never had the opportunity to take a group with mountain bikes. I then know that it will be difficult for me to rely on his experience to establish the perfect mountain bike route. I get closer to my friend Hans Rey who has been here several times. He is even the first to have reached the summit on a mountain bike, it was in 2004. I began to establish a

route and decided to cross the mountain from north to south in order to live the experience to the fullest. And above all, I opt with Michaël for the slowest option. Because here we don't play with the altitude, that would be taking a huge risk for your life.

Because the big problem with Mount Kenya is that it is very high: 5199 m for the summit for mountaineers, 4985 m for trekkers. And since it is an ancient volcano emerging from the plains, it is impossible to acclimatize to the lack of oxygen: from the first night, the camp is established at 3350 m. The body can react very badly to this sudden rise in



altitude, we call this Acute Mountain Sickness, the symptoms of which are headaches, vomiting, fatigue, delirium, etc. In the most serious cases, it can turn into edema. cerebral or pulmonary. And if the person is not evacuated urgently, their life is at stake. This is what Danny MacAskill experienced when he came here in 2016. He had to be evacuated by helicopter at 4200 m. So this is a serious matter.

In this adventure, I am taking 3 friends, JP, Arnaud and Gilou, who are used to coming with me on trips. On the other hand, they have never climbed this high and do not know the reaction of their

body. I am betting on a group human adventure where everyone will have to surpass themselves while remaining attentive to others so that everyone can reach the summit.

We land in Nairobi. It takes us a long time to get out of the airport, between visa checks and baggage scans, it takes us almost 2 hours. It's 5:30 a.m., Michael is waiting for us with a driver and his van, unfortunately too small to load all our luggage and passengers. Then a game of Tetris begins... Packed like sardines, suitcases almost on our legs, the African landscape passes before our eyes. The road traffic is already very chaotic, the

road goes from smooth black tar to a rutted track. We take turns dozing. After a first breakfast in the noisy town of Naniuki where we are the center of interest of the locals, we head into the countryside at the foot of Mount Kenya. We find a corner out of sight to unload our equipment, prepare our bikes and our backpacks. Because it's quite an expedition. We will spend 6 days in the mountains, without any possible supplies. You have to transport everything: tents, sleeping bags, mattresses, fuel, stoves, dishes, food... In addition to Michael, there are 8 porters and a cook from the Kikuyu tribe. We get on our bikes, it is already 2 p.m. We have 18 km ahead of







us and 1200 m of elevation gain. Up to the Sirimon entrance to Mount Kenya National Park, it is a dirt track where people look at us and greet us warmly. Once the formalities are done, we pass through the huge wooden gate of the Park, the die is cast, heading towards the mountain. The track has been paved and some sections are very steep. We arrive at the camp, everything is already ready. The sun begins to set, I don't wait long to go take a shower in the nearby river. The water temperature is very cool but it's impossible for me to stay like that, dirty and sweaty with the trip on my feet. The clouds disperse to give way to a beautiful Milky Way. Our Kenyan friends prepare

a big bonfire where everyone sits around to warm up. Before going to bed, I take the oxygen saturation in my team's blood using a small electronic device to monitor the sneaky onset of possible altitude sickness. For the moment, there is nothing to complain about, everyone is able to continue.

The sun catches us when we wake up. I slept like a log, it's 7:10 a.m., that's unusual for me. After a good breakfast, we establish a small council. JP, Arnaud and Gilou had opted for a bicycle carrier. This means that they will have someone available to carry their bike during the climb. It's always a sensitive, ethical

subject. However, we are already helped to set up our camp and our food, why not get help with your bike? Not to mention that the locals here need to work. And with COVID, tourism has collapsed. For my part, I have always been clear on this subject. Even if for me, I don't want to be helped, I have no problem if others are. Gilou wants to try the adventure on his own, his wearer will stay in his footsteps if necessary. For Arnaud and JP, they will make their ascent by entrusting their bike to their carrier. The troop sets off as the fog envelops the mountain. I manage to pedal a good part then it becomes very stiff, short of breath, I have to push. We climb in a moorland landscape. After a





crossing, we reach a high point. From there, we have a view of this magnificent and wild valley of Tiki North hut, where we will spend the night. After a technical and not always smooth descent, I head through the middle of the valley to the tents. Between the videos and photos, our porters passed us and when we arrived the meal was already ready. We spend the afternoon strolling, the sun is playing hide and seek and it ends up getting cold. The porters bring back roots from the mountain and light a big fire. This evening we asked Michaël that we all eat together. We love sharing moments with our Kenyan friends. We dine on local specialties based on white

polenta, meat and small vegetables. To end the evening, we pile around the fire, smoking our lungs while learning Swahili, the language here. We are well aware that without this team, the adventure would simply be impossible.

The night is cool. In the early morning, while we are still in the tents, we hear footsteps near the camp, a frightening noise also tears through the dawn. Michael tells us during breakfast that they are hyenas! While going to brush my teeth at the river 20 m from the camp, I came across impressive footprints on the ground, they are a leopard who came to drink last night! So many people here!

Let's go for a new day in Africa. I don't go 20 m on the bike as I have to carry it on my back and climb a slope full of giant ragworts, these trees so typical of Mount Kenya and which flower once every 10 years. We reach a pass where we discover the magnificent Mackinder valley and the famous Sirimon trek. The descent is infamous: the narrow path, between rocks and clumps of grass, is far from being a pleasure. When we arrive at the junction with the trek, I can cycle for very long sections. But the weather has decided to take a turn for the worse, it starts to rain... A final grueling portage in the fog brings us to our evening camp, Shipton hut at 4250 m. We are at the







foot of the north face of Mount Kenya. The summit is blocked, the atmosphere freezing. We have lunch in the dilapidated barracks. Right after, I decide not to hang around and head to the shower in the nearby river. The water temperature is freezing, I can no longer feel my hands after a few minutes. We rest in our tents, we can see the summit a few times, it is very impressive. During the evening meal, I decide to resume the oxygen saturation of the group. For JP, the figures are clear, his acclimatization is going poorly. With a saturation hovering around 70% of oxygen in the blood, this is a sign that the danger is great for this night. His headaches no longer leave him despite

taking aspirin regularly. I warn the guide of this information. We all agree that if it gets worse during the night, he will have to come down urgently. As I am his tent companion, I watch over him like milk on the fire.

JP has a calm night, at 4 a.m., I take his oxygen saturation, it is 64. This is a sign that it is getting worse, he makes the decision to go back down as soon as he wakes up. We wake up a little gloomy, knowing that this adventure will not end at the summit all together. JP leaves us with his carrier. In 3 hours, he should have descended to an altitude where he will be safe.

For our part, we leave for the route which goes around Mount Kenya. The day is busy, I am the only one with my bike. The first pass, at 4560 m, is reached after a lot of physical effort. The landscape is simply splendid, the imposing north face of Mount Kenya crushes us. On the other, it's a very beautiful scree that you have to go down. In total euphoria, while surfing, I arrive at his foot. We will continue along 2 magnificent lakes then attack a new very steep portage in the gravelette. The fog envelops us at the summit. The rest of the crossing is magnificent but grueling. When we arrive at the edge of the Teleki valley, the clouds disappear and we can admire a new side of the



mountain, just as impressive! A piece of suspended glacier tries to resist global warming. Within 30 years everything will have disappeared here, creating a real water supply problem in Kenya. The descent that takes us into the valley is rotten: steep, boulders, sand... I did not do too badly, just before tackling the last portage of 450 m of altitude difference which should take us to our camp, the highest of our stay at 4780 m. My pace quickly slowed down. The path that goes straight up exhausts me. Having carried my bike since this morning, my shoulders are sheared. My lighter friends are ahead, I won't catch up with them. I arrive at the end of the afternoon exhausted, a

grueling day. Austrian hut is the highest camp on Mount Kenya, we are very close to Pointe Lenana, our objective. The two main peaks, Batian and Lenion, on the other hand, seem inaccessible because they are so well defended by their rock shields. We find refuge in the cabin heated by the evening meal that is being prepared. I have drawn so much from my reserves that the evening meal does not satisfy me. When we return to our tents, it is already freezing, the sky is absolutely clear, we seem to be able to touch the stars. I go to sleep hungry as hell. The sun licks my tent, I get out, walk a little around the camp, the light is

splendid. After a hearty breakfast of French toast and pancakes, we begin the climb. The ridge at the beginning is easy, only the altitude crushes us. I feel in good shape but I maintain a slow pace. In its 2nd part, the ridge straightens out, it's brutal, the path gets lost in the snow and ice. Cables help with progression. Some rocky passages require climbing. With the bike on your back, this is no easy feat. In one of the passages, Arnaud almost falls while sliding backwards. I then descend in a hurry along the cables, while trying not to trigger a volley of stones at him. I get my hands on his machine, he can finally recover. The weather is magnificent, we can see as far as the eye can see.







The ascent ends with a flight of bars, it is symbolically the highest via ferrata in the world! The 3 of us climb onto Lenana Point at an altitude of 4985 m! We are so happy, but also have a thought for our friend JP. Our Kenyan friends are there too, we all congratulate each other at the summit. After the traditional photo break, it's time to go back down. The first 100 meters of elevation are very steep, almost unrollable. I try a few passages but the still snow doesn't make things easier either. At the foot of the face, we can finally get on our bikes. The descent remains technical and sustained, you have to play between the rocks, the grip is very uneven. At this altitude, remaining

very mobile on the bike requires a large amount of energy. A few more kicks and we reach Mintos Hut, our last camp in the mountain at 4200 m. And it's the most beautiful thing we've done. Mintos is a constellation of small lakes formed with rainwater and without any overflow. We are located on the left bank of the Gorges Valley, the depth of which is impressive. Below, a river flows, transforms into waterfalls with the relief to finally feed an immense lake. The landlocked and inaccessible valley is a melting pot of the world. I have the impression that life on Earth started at the very bottom.

The next day, the weather is still good.

We continue our descent. After a roller coaster start, the path begins to descend but you have to be tricky, the terrain is mined, dug, broken. You have to get off the bike regularly. After a final difficult crossing, the path becomes better. But you must always remain on your guard. The upright volcanic rocks are all obstacles that block the wheels. There are multiple trajectories, you have to look far and wide to find the best one and not find yourself in a rocky impasse. The further down you go, the hotter it gets. After a final part on the crest where we have to jostle with the bush, we finally reach a river. We fill up with water and continue on a 4x4 path that winds up the mountain. In mountain





biking, it goes very quickly. That's it, the exit door from the National Park is there. Guarded by a soldier, we passed it with flying colors thanks to the formalities already completed by our guide. Ahead of us, there are still 25 km of forest road to go down to the village of Chogoria, a wonderful way to let the images pass through our heads and replay the film of this unforgettable adventure.

But our stay is not completely over. To end this great sporting and human adventure, Michael organized a giant barbecue with the entire team. We also find JP in great shape after losing 2000 m in altitude. We are regaining strength

after these days spent in the mountains. Trays overloaded with meats rotate. We take the food with both hands and devour it. It's a great way to conclude this discovery of Kenya. Because beyond the physical and sporting adventure, travel is above all about meeting others, mixing cultures, learning the language, and exchanging ideas. And in this sense, this trip will remain as a highlight of my life as a mountain bike adventurer.







iCS

# TRAIL EVO HELMET

#LIVETRAILLIFE



Trail ready, super ventilated,  
pedal-friendly all-day helmet.





PHOTOS: BARTEK WOLINSKI, COLIN  
KERRIGAN, PARIS GORE, CHRISTIAN  
PONDELLA, LONG NGUYEN

WORDS: MESUM VERMA

# REDBULL RAMPAGE - OR HOW NOT TO JUDGE AN EVENT





Redbull Rampage has been going on since 2001 and will surely go on some more years. In recent years, before and after the event, it's been common to hear lots of comments about how the Judges are doing their job! Mostly, words like, this and that rider got robbed, should be the winner, how can this be, etc. etc!

Different opinions are normal, and we cannot take everything in to account. It is too easy to write a quick comment on the internet to support your favourite rider.

With all respect, I will not comment on the riders' performance and say who I would like to see have a winning run.

Again, big congrats to all riders, riding those insane lines. I would not be able to ride even a single part before the finish gate, never mind starting from the starting gate.

I just want to understand also a bit myself, why after years and years and years, there is always a big difference between what the judges see, and what people not even at the event see. But also, there are people who have been to the event, and they know how the terrain looks there. And certainly those people are also divided, both claiming to be on side but both still



taking differing opinions.

You may say, the judges are professional and trained for their duties, but like when you vote for something new in your country (politician, law, petition) there will be professional people to tell you, it should be like this, but you can't then call the voters „idiots“ if they vote differently, right? So I say, also the judges on Redbull are not like gods, and not everyone with an opinion on that matter is unprofessional and shouldn't say anything.

And yes, that's maybe why there are the people's choice award and other awards (best style, best trick, toughness, McGazza Spirit, and Digger awards) which is funny, because as I mentioned before these are really different than how the judges award the podium winners! And yes, the categories must not reflect on a whole run, but there is the people's choice award for the best rider of the whole line, and if you win the people's choice award it says pretty much something. For many years, that winner was not the Redbull winner at all, not on podium even.

Almost every year, the judges also say the same things, they have criteria to follow and then they explain why the judging was right. This year again, before and also after the event, also to





highlight, you people in front of the TV can't say anything (only for voting the awards) as you don't know how steep, how gnarly the lines are. We Judges go out, measure the drops and all features and check the lines. Fair enough, that's one criterion out of four.

Criteria for Judging:

- difficulty of line
- air amplitude
- control and fluidity
- tricks and style

Something I don't understand is, how much the criteria adds to the final decision? What gives you most points? Difficulty of line, because they always say it's a Freeride event? But riding down a line, which has takeoffs and big landings like a slopestyle course? Or tricks and style, but you are not allowed to do slopestyle tricks? How long are you hanging in the air, are you counting the seconds? If you stop while riding your line to have a small party, do you get a penalty because the fluidity is not there anymore? If you have totally control of your bike on a line down, which could be a Slopestyle course, do you get more points, than if you ride maybe a bit sketchy an exposed





line? Sometimes they even talk about creativity, but how do you rate that? A new line (or some sections at least) will give you more points than a line which was ridden like 10 years ago? Yes the line was sure a bit different, more loose 10 years ago, but it's not a new line down the mountain.

It's a Freeride / Freestyle event, they say it many times, but for me the judging is also freestyle! A lot of, „you don't know“ thrown in if you critique the format and the judging.

Let the people vote, perhaps. I think it is good to have the people's choice awards, sure. But how about make a format, where riders who ride the event at that time, and also finish, vote for the best rider? You could use the same criteria. Use the whole week, so riders can see each other's lines and how they tackle them (as you can see it before the main event, everywhere on social media). Make the pre-final and then the final. Riders will then watch the videos later on (and I am pretty sure they know how it looks on side and award their points.

A format which probably won't work out, as you need to spend more time to watch other riders, and if you do live tv, there will be no winner right away. It will not create any money. I







understand.

But still, I think, and many others also think the same, it has to stop, this wild speculation about who is going win, and how?

After all it's a freestyle / Freeride event, maybe it should be handled like this! So you can even still have judges to follow criteria then tell us, exactly, what the criteria are, what earns points and what doesn't. But since nobody really knows, it's freestyle made-up criteria, and the judges do not really follow the criteria which they set out.

Let's see. I am pretty sure next year we will have another Redbull Rampage, and mostly, there will be no change! So the comments of: got robbed, got not enough points, should be the winner, will continue.

See you next year, the riders are insane, and everybody is a winner for me anyway! Big hats off to the riders! Healing vibes sending to Gee Atherton, Szymon Godziek and Clemens Kaudela!





PREVIEW

PHOTOS: MESUM VERMA

WORDS: MESUM VERMA

FEREI DISC BRAKE XII







The brand Ferei from Shenzhen in China is well known for manufacturing lights for biking or running. They started also making other bicycle parts such as hubs, rims and complete wheels. The newest part they just released in October is this brake for mountain bikes. I got one to try it out. I've tried the brakes 3 times already. So this preview is only a first impression. We will do a review later, to tell you all about this brake from China.





#### First look

The brake comes in a nice box! The finishing of the brakes looks good and there is nothing that would make you say, it's strange.

When you assemble the brake you will notice the cable goes left, while on all other brakes it will go on the right side of the brake shoe. That means, for bleeding, the valve is on the right side.







This screw is for the reach of the brake lever

This screw is for how much the brake pads are in or out







Front brake:  
cable length: 860mm / weight: 281 gramm

Back brake:  
cable length: 1505mm / weight: 306 gramm



First ride:

The brakes work very good! As usual when the pads are fresh the “biting” isn’t great!

But if we don’t have much to say yet, we’re going now for long-term testing in all weather conditions for the next two months!

The price tag is for the pair: RMB 4799.00 / EURO 620.00





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