

60 bikers rev off on Himalayan expedition

Sixty bikers, a 2,500-km ride through the Himalayas and 15 days to complete it in. The bikers were Saturday flagged off from here as part of the Royal Enfield Himalayan Odyssey 2009.

They will ride up to Khardungla in Ladakh, the highest motorable road in the world, and come back.

'Biking to me is a breaking away from all bondages and taking on the road. We are going to cover a distance of 2,500 km. People often say that the destination should be beautiful, but we bike lovers believe that both journey and destination should be exotic,' said Kawardeep, one of the lead bikers with the Himalayan Odyssey and assistant manager with Royal Enfield, Chennai.

The odyssey was first organised in 2004 and since then groups of bike lovers take the road to the Himalayas every year.

'Continuous medical help enroute as well as a specialized quick repair mechanics will be available to ensure that the Himalayan Odyssey men and machines are fighting fit at all the times,' said Royal Enfield's head of sales and marketing Shaji Koshy.

Each biker was selected after a gruelling drill to ensure that the riders understand the perils of rough weather and rugged terrain full of boulders.

The rider must also possess a Royal Enfield motorcycle to become eligible for this expedition.

The chief guest at the ceremonial flag-off, Major general R.K. Sanan, commander Technical group, EME, said: 'This odyssey has always been known for promoting the spirit of endurance and adventure. I am thrilled to see the passion for riding in these bikers. But mind, it won't be an easy journey ahead.'

Leading the group along with Kanwardeep is Sachin Chavan, senior manager for marketing, Royal Enfield.

'For humans, riding a bike is akin to tasting blood for a tiger. You just can't get rid of the passion, it's so addictive. One of the most interesting things about this odyssey is the volatile and changing conditions, nothing is predictable,' said Chavan, who has been leading the Odyssey for the past five years.

But not everybody is a veteran as many have joined the expedition for the first time.

'I have been riding my Enfield for the past four years now. I am very excited to get this opportunity and I am going to make the most of it,' said 22-year-old Shanky Sadana, a B-school student and the youngest member of the group.

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