



CHANDAN LAHIRI
Professional Adventurer

This image on the right was meant to capture the challenge between the man, machine and the mountain. I halted and took this picture on a bright afternoon with a Nikon F65. There was no thought of brightness and shadow, it was a naturally perfect moment to capture the essence of how we felt - humbled! This is my friend, Burgess Cooper; at 16,000 feet on our way to Baralacha, Leh in 2004, setting our second world record for riding at the highest altitude in the world! This place was hit by a storm and the tarmac road in the background on your right became useless. We followed natural water routes, checked the depth, flow and direction we needed to ride through the river. It wasn't easy because the 25 meter stretch had to be crossed in a couple of seconds. We couldn't take our time, Burgess was careful of the current that could skid the bike, the boulders in the path could rip the tires and the water splashing could shootout the spark plug.

The terrain is incredible, it can't be created or explained - this picture can't do justice to the real thing, as you can't gauge the flow of water, smell of the valley or the intricacy of the path. So this picture becomes a trailer that can evoke two responses, either of awe and enthusiasm or of *deja vu* for people who have been there. For me, it envelopes a hint of what is possible and inspires others to make the same trip only to experience the ecstasy we felt!

☐ As told to Kavita Dadhe

'If you are not living on the edge, you are taking up too much space' and only adventurers understand the true meaning underlining these words. Chandan Lahiri is one such oddball who, quit being a chief manager at the Times of India to become a double world record holder and the grit behind 'Out There Adventures'. A man who lives by the mantra, 'choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life!'

It's a concious choice that Chandan made - to venture into the unknown, amidst nature, doing things that ordinarily one wouldn't get a chance to do. Being outdoors with gear, bikes, jeeps or whether climbing, swimming, riding - is a calming, cleansing experience. When Chandan takes his bike, he leaves behind all tracking devices, cellphone or even his watch - to respect the spirit of adventure. He explains the varied terrains of mountains: Uttaranchal being lush green, Ladakh a barren brown, Arunachal green and stone. Chandan's favourite is the rugged Leh - Ladakh and this photograph is an echo personified!

The Cliff Rider

