

Girl scales Khardung La on moped

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Pune: Scaling the 18,380-foot highest motorable peak while battling rough terrain, sub-zero temperature and nerve-racking pathways is no mean feat. One of the youngest female stunt biker, 20-year-old Anam Hashim's story of conquering the Khardung La on her scooterette is awe-inspiring.

Describing her life-changing journey, Hashim said, "I love taking up challenges and it was a last moment decision to ride on the toughest terrain on my four-stroke gearless moped. I had never gone higher than Manali before. The journey from Jammu, via Kargil, Leh to Khardung La was arduous, but I finished it in 18 days. It took less time than what was planned. She is now also the first woman rider to have reached Khardung La on a scooterette, 110 cc – 2015 model.

A fitness enthusiast, her love for bikes and stunts started when she was a teenager in her hometown Lucknow. Her regular fitness and yoga routine helped her in dealing with the high-velocity chilly winds hitting her during the uphill journey.

"My hands had started paining from continuously managing both bra-



ON TOP OF THE WORLD: Anam Hashim at Khardung La

kes and accelerators. At Chang La, which is the world's second highest pass at a height of 17,590 ft in Ladakh, my feet got wet in a water stream. I had to stop but went on the road again after some breathing exercises and drinking a lot of water," said Hashim.

"At many places, there were no roads, only rocky pathways. Even a 50km stretch would take almost two and half hours. Sometimes, the road would be very narrow with a steep drop on one

side," she said. She admitted that there were times when she was scared but dedication and determination helped her gather her nerves.

"Once it was really dark and I saw a landslide in front of me. To battle winds, at some places, I had to ride like a drag racer, with my back bent. But I kept going – as I was told by experienced riders that one should not stop for longer periods at high altitudes," she said.

The toughest ride of her life taught this youngster to appreciate the world in the absence of internet and connectivity to social media. "I also learnt a lot of things about me, like I am really good at turning corners."

A fussy eater, the Khardung La trip taught Hashim to appreciate food and survive with limited supplies.

She followed her elders advice of eating garlic at regular intervals to keep herself warm but mainly survived on instant noodles.

Hashim now plans to take stunt riding ahead in India and work towards helping it acquire recognition as a sport. She also plans to participate in international competitions as completing the Khardung La has given her new confidence in

