



CHASING STARLIGHT





From the concrete jungles of the city to the blissful yet unforgiving Himalayas of the North. This is an Odyssey you should partake in and allow yourself to ride endlessly towards

[Words Khumail Thakur]



WHAT THE PRO SAYS

Water puddles are far and few in September, but they will definitely put you to test. Cola can-size rocks are usually waiting underwater to push you off balance. The trick is to maintain your center of gravity and try not to brake or stop in the puddle, soldier through lad!



WEAR THE RIGHT GEAR

Street Prime Helmet

Protect your little noggin with a dash of red and yellow. This head-hugger will keep your cranial safe and comfortable.

Explorer V2 jacket

The terrain in Ladakh is unpredictable and that's why the Explorer is ideal for that. Rain? Snow? Jaw-chattering cold? It's got you covered.

Spiti Gloves

Even if you venture out to the mountain side during a supposedly 'summer time', city folks will definitely freeze. The cold liner will lock heat.

Convertible riding trousers

With knee padding and convertible design, these will keep you safe even when you're riding through a puddle.

Explorer Touring Boots

Nothing says safety first like the look of these full length riding boots. Made to withstand water, dust and ugly tumbles.

RE HIMALAYAN

from ₹1.81 lakhs [ex-showroom] / royalenfield.com

The Royal Enfield Himalayan is closing its third birthday this year, but it still remains one of the best bikes to take off the tarmac. The Astral Ride 2019 had only RE Himalayans and God help anyone who wasn't on one of these because this nimble motorcycle tip-toes over almost anything and we're not over stating when we say ANYTHING.

Our journey in search of the most memorable landscapes started from Leh and journeyed towards Pangong Tso. There onwards we hit kilometers of gravel and sand to reach the beautiful sweeping land of Hanle. The road in between would switch from rock-kissing tracks to endless stretches of tarmac between dwarf-sized mountains.

This level of uncertainty is where the Himalayan shines the

best. Absorbing back-breaking gravel tracks and keeping your footing in place with astonishing grip and balance. It's a big bike and quite heavy as well, but it doesn't feel as such when you're taking on the perilous mountain roads. In retrospect, the Classic would probably take longer to reach its destination.

Crossing higher altitude roads was a simple challenge – don't fall off the side! Yup, being overly cautious will keep your limbs

together but that doesn't mean you can't twist the throttle and zip past slow pokes. We chased wild donkeys on the flat plains around Hanle village and the bike responds to the terrain in the most friendly manner. It'll skid past sand, balance over gravel like it isn't even there and even let your knee scrape around beautiful bends. The Himalayan is the love child of adventure junkies and city escapists and it conquers what it's named after.

NOW ADD THIS



Aluminium Pannier

In all likelihood, your best friend is going to be these bad boys. They come in pairs and will not only accommodate most of your camera equipment, but will also keep them squeaky clean from all the dust, snow and rain.

₹23,900 / royalenfield.com

[Photography Lifeworks Studios]

HANLE OBSERVATORY

Dot projection

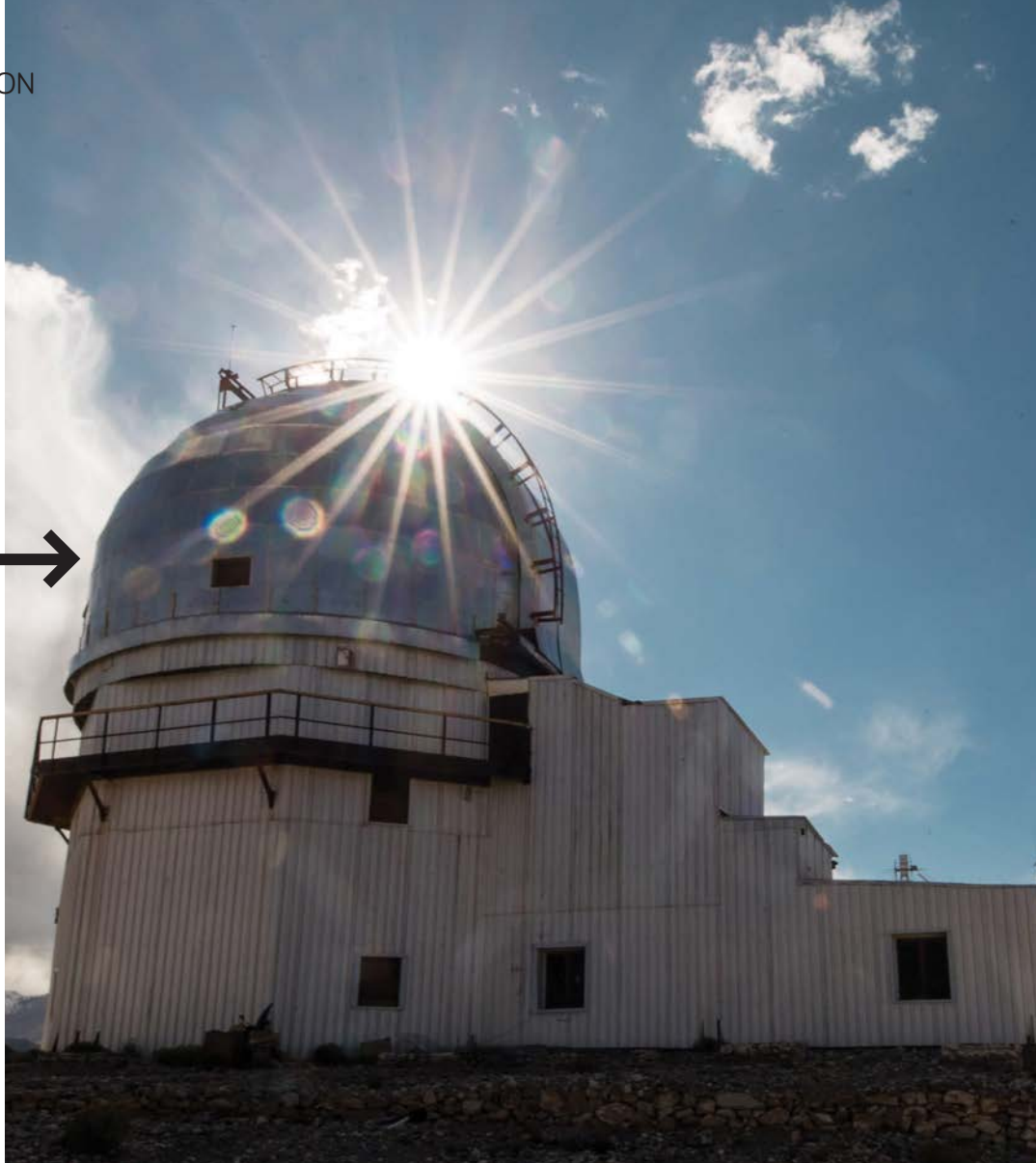
The reason why Hanle was chosen for observing glowing tiny dots in the sky is because you can see those dots very clearly.

Weather or not?

Hanle is mostly dry with clear skies throughout the year. It's sparsely populated and pollution is as alien to this land as the ones they're searching for.

There's scope

Ok, they're not looking for aliens here, but Area 51 might be jealous to know that there's a 2-meter telescope in the world's 9th highest observatory.



FOLLOW THE LEADER

GUN-WAGON

Nourishment

You're no stranger to Royal Enfield's Rides which happen all over India, even abroad. But what you don't know is how much preparation goes into it. The RE Gunwagon, a doctor and a truck with your belongings is always on your tail.

₹20,000 [Astral Ride] / royalenfield.com

Unlike the Himalayan Odyssey, Astral Ride is Royal Enfield's way of organising a riding experience infused with life-changing

photography destinations and a classroom full of throttle junkies learning how to capture it.

That's primarily the focus point of Astral

Ride. It's to collaborate two different sets of situations where you'll not only enjoy riding from one place to another, but also learn how to take amazing photos of the places you visit.

We had a seasoned ace photographer,

Navaneeth Unnikrishnan, teaching us how to capture the Milky Way and even how to edit the RAW files in post. Have you ever learned how to do astro-photography next to Pangong Tso lake in the middle of the night? Ya, it's pretty adventurous.

At all times you'll be riding between the Lead and the Sweeper. As the name suggests, you don't get ahead of the Lead and the Sweeper will make sure you don't get left behind. Royal Enfield will take care of fuel and flats and any problems you face, rest assured your only focus will be on enjoying the ride.



WHAT THE PRO SAYS

Always beware of the sand and gravel lined up in the center of the road. Sticking close to the herd will keep you on the right track but even if you lose sight of the biker ahead, don't panic, the roads in Ladakh barely diverge and there's always the Sweeper at the back to cattle you back.



LANDSCAPE PHOTO TIPS

Get your priorities right

Shooting landscapes in Aperture Priority mode controls the depth of field while the camera takes care of getting a suitable shutter speed.

Enter the twilight zone

Just because it's getting dark, don't go home – check the sunset time. Twilight can bathe the land in blue and violet light to awesome effect.

Go wide

Your location and subject will dictate focal length and technique, but always pack a wide, ultra-wide or telephoto lens in your kit.



N I K O N D 8 5 0

NOW ADD THIS

**Nikon 24mm f/1.4G Lens**

Considered one of the sharpest lenses Nikon has ever produced: the wide aperture is great for landscapes and shooting in low light, and a nano crystal coating will eliminate all unwanted lens distortion for a flawless optical performance.

₹1.85 lakhs / nikon.co.in

₹2.35 lakhs (body only) / stuff.tv/in/nikon

Consider for a moment James Milner. Not the flashiest footballer, nor the most charismatic character, but on the pitch he's priceless.

The D850 is arguably the best all-around performer money can buy – and the most accomplished landscape camera Nikon has to offer. What you're looking at is a true workhorse. What you're looking at is James Milner.

Workhorses fare best out in the field, so it makes sense that the D850 should be capable of capturing the great outdoors in thrilling detail, especially given the 45MP sensor, all-purpose metering system and superb dynamic range, making RAW files a dream to deal with.

The weather-sealed construction virtually insures you against the elements, and features like 4K video recording

and a high-magnification optical viewfinder provide a feast for full-framers. In a first for this camera series, the D850 sports a 3.2in, tilting, touch-sensitive screen untroubled by bright conditions.

Unearthing desktop-worthy vista images can take some trekking into the wilderness, so a claimed 1840 shots per charge will come in handy if you've taken a right turn at civilisation, while SnapBridge wireless connectivity uses Bluetooth LE tech for your image

transfers. If you've invested in CF cards, being limited to XQD and SD only may present a costly annoyance, but they're so fast it's worth it... especially after realising you're dressed in crimson and missed the 'Beware of the bull' sign.

Tech specs

- 45.7MP sensor
- ISO 64–25,600
- 4K video @ 30fps
- 3.2in 2359k-dot LCD touchscreen
- USB 3.0, type-C HDMI, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
- 146x124x79mm, 915g

STUFF SAYS Moves like James Milner, captures landscapes like Peter Lik – this is Nikon's greatest for gloriously detailed panoramic photography ★★★★★

WHAT THE PRO SAYS

Pangong Tso offers the closest snow capped peaks to photograph. Try to get a kilometer or two away from the tent area and visit a flat ground between 9PM and 12AM. You will be greeted with the most glorious view of the Milky Way.