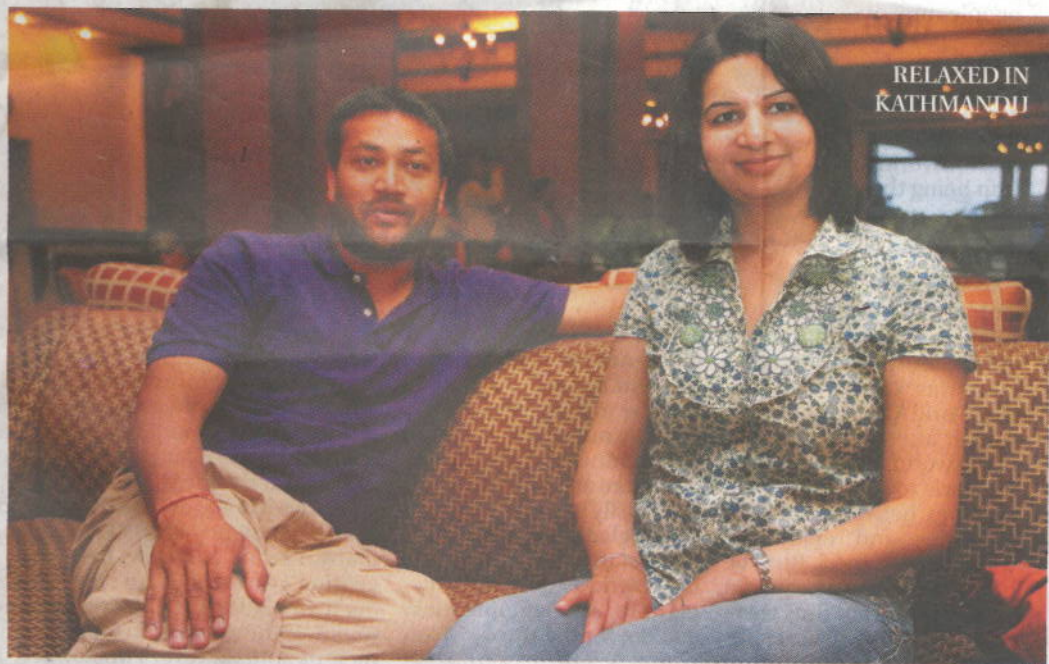


The Himalayan

ON SUNDAY

From London, to Delhi... with love



RELAXED IN KATHMANDU

A young couple make the husband's adventurous dream come true as they tackle unknown terrain, unpredictable weather, strange languages on a trip across continents spreading the message of love for our four-legged friends

Abhilasha Subba
Kathmandu

They smile an infectious smile. Tired but content, the excitement and thrill sparkle in their eyes. Married for the last two years, Tushar and Pooja Agrawal in their late twenties had covered 8,400 miles in their jeep when they landed here, travelling across different countries in seven weeks.

Seeking some adventure and thrill, it was Tushar who came up with the idea of travelling from London, where they both live and work, to their hometown Delhi.

"I always had a dream to travel and go on road trips. When the idea of travelling from London to Delhi struck me, I knew I had to do it," gushed Tushar, a software developer.

Though Pooja was equally excited by the idea and very supportive, she wanted to make the journey not only memorable but also wanted a reason to make it more worthwhile. Pooja supports a UK animal charity for dogs called Dog Trust and felt this trip would help her spread awareness on a bigger scale.

"So, we decided to use this trip to raise awareness against animal cruelty and collect funds for a Delhi-based organisation, Friendicoes SECA (Society for the Eradication of Cruelty to Animals)," she said.

Into the wild

The first thing they faced after deciding on the trip was the financial aspect. Though they had been saving since January 2009, the journey burnt a hole in their savings. "There were some organisations sponsoring us but it was more like jerry cans and maps. The rest was managed by us," said Pooja, who quit her job as insurance policy broker.

"We will be paying our bills for a long time but that's okay," she added.

On April 17, they were flagged off from an animal home in London — Mayhew Animal Shelter. Travelling from London to Paris via the ferry, they travelled across romantic Europe crossing Frankfurt, Prague, Poland, Ukraine, entered the exotic Central Asia making their way through Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and closer to home China and into the Indian border via Nepal.

Making miracles

Pooja did not miss a chance to raise awareness against cruelty to animals in every city they entered, the most heart wrenching experience she

ferences and languages they had to struggle with, but they also had to tackle nature. Scorching heat, getting stuck in the snow, wet mud land, driving through gravel and sandstorm, but nothing stopped them.

"I remember we were driving to the Chinese border and we came to this area covered with snow and suddenly the sun rose and the whole surrounding was engulfed by the warming hue of morning reflecting on the snow," said Tushar.

It was Tei longtan also known as 'death valley' where Pooja suffered from altitude sickness. "It was very scary. She complained about being out of breath and I felt so helpless watching her condition worsen by the minute. But thankfully the lodge owner had an oxygen mask which was given to her and we drove immediately to lower altitude," shared Tushar.

Entering Nepal

They entered Nepal on May 30 and home — Delhi — seemed just a stone's throw away. As soon as they entered Nepal they did what every Hindu does, visited the Pashupatinath temple. They also visited the animal shelter Animal Nepal.

After travelling through the difficult Chinese border, Kathmandu felt luxurious in every sense. The couple were in a relaxed mood before they made their way to the Nepal-India border and end their journey in Delhi.

"Tushar's parents along with mine and a few close relatives and friends will be waiting for us at Agra from

the list as it was very different from what we were expecting it to be. The place is beautiful, and all those who have been holding back thinking the place is not safe or whatever, should pack their bags as the place is very beautiful and have the most helpful people," said Tushar.

Out of breath

While passing through different borders it was not just the authorities, cultural dif-



Photos: Courtesy Tushar and Pooja Agrawal

where we all will travel together to Delhi and end our journey at Qutub Minar in Delhi," said Pooja.

They reached Delhi on June 6.

Growing together

Though you can't call them high school sweethearts, their story goes back to the time when they were in junior high.

"I studied in an all girls' school and he was from all boys' school and I remember first seeing him during the socials," shared Pooja.

And they did not fall for each other instantly. During college days they hung out as a group with other friends but still the sparks did not fly. Soon Pooja left for London for further studies and Tushar got busy with his studies and work. While travelling to different countries, Tushar decided to settle in London and they met again. And this time the magic worked.

"Though we have known each other for years and have been married for over two years, this trip did teach us more about each other and showed the different traits of our personality," said Pooja.

"This trip has taught me to

respect her even more. I have always considered her delicate and ladylike, but being on the road for weeks, tackling every problem, her zest for life and the way she did not complain was beautiful. There were times when I complained, but she took everything with a smile," said Tushar.

Turning to Pooja and he added, "Now you better say something nice about me," to which Pooja said, "I have not come across anyone who is very passionate about anything they believe in and making a dream come true takes courage, and he showed and proved it. The whole trip was his baby. Yes, I supported it but for me it was smooth sailing. He was the one taking care of everything, including me and I am very glad to be with him."

So, what's their next big dream together?

A trip around the world in their Jeep. *Bon voyage.*

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3.	Mr. Yogesh Agrawal	CA Foundation	23rd AIMR	Nov., 2001	15.	Mr. Rupesh Goemka	PE-I	19th AIMR	Nov., 2006
4.	Mr. Ravi Acharya	PE-I	All India Top in Math	Nov., 2001	16.	Mr. Jiban Shakya	PE-I	29th AIMR	Nov., 2006
5.	Mr. Yaroshal shrestha	CA Foundation	All India Top in Economics	Nov., 2001	17.	Mr. Prabin Raj Kafle	PE-I	30th AIMR	Nov., 2006
6.	Mr. Manish Thapa	CA Foundation	16th AIMR	May, 2002	18.	Ms. Parul Kedia	CPT	10th AIMR	May, 2007
7.	Mr. Brigyan shrestha	PE-I	13th AIMR	Nov., 2002	19.	Mr. Dipendra Subedi	PE-I	17th AIMR	May, 2007
8.	Mr. Ritambha Singh thapa	PE-I	24th AIMR	Nov., 2002	20.	Mr. Binod Pant	PE-I	30th AIMR	May, 2007
9.	Mr. Uddhab Ram Rijal	PE-I	28th AIMR	Nov., 2002	21.	Mr. Prasanna Hari Panta	CPT	10th AIMR/	Dec., 2009
10.	Mr. James Sapkota	CA Foundation	3rd AIMR	May, 2003				Nepal Center I (92%marks)	
11.	Ms. Silky Kedia	PE-I	20th AIMR	May, 2004	22.	Ms. Nigista Shrestha	CPT	Nepal Center II (81%marks)	Dec., 2009
12.	Mr. Gaurav Rijal	PE-I	4th AIMR	Nov., 2005					

ICAN Rank Holders Name

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3.	Mr. Indra Bahadur Gurung	CA Foundation	Topper	Nov., 2001	16.	Mr. Deepak Shrestha	CA Foundation	2nd Topper	Dec., 2006
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