



PEDAL POWER

Deepak Shirke cycles across India

The 65-year old Deepak Shirke from Nashik is an adventurous cyclist, a trekker, a true environmentalist and also a poet. His long list of rides across India shows his passion for cycling and other social activities. He is an inspiration to today's youngsters. Even at his age, he keeps himself physically fit with activities like trekking in and around Sahyadri Hills of Nashik, Maharashtra. The best part is that he uses a gearless cycle for all his rides.

While on the rides, he spends the nights in temples, gurudwaras or any other shelter available and get ready for the next day's ride.

Many of us are not aware of the benefits of cycling. The current pandemic has afforded us an opportunity to maintain good health. Cycling is one of the best cardio exercises for all age groups and all body types. It not only helps burn calories but also keeps weight under control. A study by Purdue

University in the US concluded that regular cycling can cut your risk of heart disease by a whopping 50 per cent. The World Health Organisation (WHO) also recommends that adults should indulge in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity throughout the week. A daily cycle ride of just 20 minutes is sufficient to achieve this target.

So far, Deepak Shirke has completed a number of cycle

rides across India. He has completed the Ashtavinayak tour covering more than 900 km in ten days. Another ride was of Shakti Peeth (important Devi Shrines in Maharashtra) covering 2300 km in 28 days. His unique style is to start and finish the ride at Nashik (both ways). He recently completed Narmada Parikrama by covering 3200 km in 40 days. He also traveled from Kashmir to Kanyakumari in two phases covering 8000 km. "This was one of my



unique and record rides. I am thankful to God Almighty for giving me strength and support from family members and friends to achieve these feats", says Shirke. He also rode to Amarnath. Apart from road and mountain rides, Shirke also did a coastal ride covering Goa, Karnataka and Pondicherry. He has been interviewed by Akashvani for his cycling and other social activities. He has also been covered extensively by newspapers on his achievements.

In spite of all these record rides, Shirke is still raring to go and chart out plans for his upcoming ride. The pandemic has put a break on his plans. He plans to start from October 2021 and has started work on the route. His tentative schedule of a long list includes visiting Somanath, Dwarka, Nageshwar Mahadeo, Omkareshwar, Ujjain, Agra, Mathura, Haridwar, Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Haridwar, Bareilly, Kanpur, Varanashi, Baidyanath,

Jagannath Puri, Ganganagar, Rameshwaram, Madurai, Srisailam, Balaji, Nanded, Aundh Nagnath, Parali Baijnath, Ghrushneshwar, Bhimashankar, and Trimbakeshwar. "India is a great country and exploring many places is a wonderful experience", concludes Shirke.

Looking at his record rides, we have no doubt that Mr Deepak Shirke can accomplish his mission in the coming years. We wish him good luck.