

UNESCO and Royal Enfield flag off 'The Great Himalayan Exploration'

- *UNESCO and Royal Enfield recently forged a unique partnership to identify, document, preserve and promote the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India, beginning with 100 unique practices in the Eastern Himalayas*



[\(Link to more images\)](#)

National, 26 September 2022: UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) and Royal Enfield, the world's oldest motorcycle brand in continuous production since 1901, flagged-off 'The Great Himalayan Exploration' ride at the iconic Victoria Memorial in Kolkata, on September 24. This unique partnership aims to contribute to the documentation, preservation and promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of India.

The ceremonial flag-off was led by **Shri Firhad Hakim, Hon'ble Mayor of Kolkata** and **Eric Falt, Director and UNESCO Representative to Bhutan, India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka**, **Major General Sandeep Singh Kahlon, Vishist Seva Medal, General Officer Commanding Bengal Sub Area** and **Bidisha Dey, Executive Director, Eicher Group Foundation, the CSR arm of Royal Enfield.**

"India possesses a multitude of undiscovered cultural heritage practices that are passed down from generation to generation. With our partnership with Royal Enfield we want to contribute



to the collective knowledge and to the efforts of the Government of India to inventory all these Intangible Cultural Heritage practices,” said Eric Falt, at the flag-off ceremony.

“As part of our social mission, Royal Enfield aims to partner with 100 Himalayan communities to build resilience and drive long lasting change. We also intend to catalyse a global movement of 1 million riders who can actively partner with us in our endeavour. Through this unique partnership with UNESCO, we are connecting our rider community with the Himalayan communities in a bid to actively identify and preserve their living heritage.” said Bidisha Dey.

As part of the capacity building, the riders, including a team of more than 20 rider-researchers, began a first journey to Pattachitra Gram (Village of the Scroll Painters) in Pingla Block - a UNESCO ICH showcase, over 100 kms away in the West Medinipur District. At Pattachitra Gram, the riders were welcomed by the chitrakar community with a richly decorated atmosphere, laden with Pattachitra art and garlanded in the traditional welcome of the Chitrakar community.

As part of the experience, the team were given a tour of the village and the resource centre where the artists showcased the techniques they use to create the dyes and paint, as well as the end purpose of Pattachitra, which is its use as a prop and a backdrop in folk songs. Recognised as one of the oldest art forms in the world, the art of Pattachitra is documented by UNESCO and is handed down through generations.

After the flag-off and the ride to Pattachitra Gram, the rider-researchers will split into four groups and head towards Meghalaya, Assam and Ziro in Arunachal Pradesh. Drawn from all over the Indian motorcycle-riding community, these riders will spend two weeks documenting specific Intangible Cultural Heritage practices that have been identified by a research team in collaboration with UNESCO. This will be followed by a series of research-based rides across the Himalayan region in the next few months to document these practices.

This undertaking, as part of the unique partnership between UNESCO and Royal Enfield, which was announced recently, is an attempt to document the Intangible Cultural Heritage practices of India, beginning with the Himalayas. The goal is to create a digital repository of the wealth of information that the rider-researchers will collect. Additionally, we will also use this activity as a stepping stone to Royal Enfield's larger goal of partnering with 100 communities across the Himalayas to drive one toward a sustainable future.

With several projects focused on sustainable living practices, ongoing in the Himalayas, Royal Enfield is focused on enabling 1 million members of its global motorcycling community to act as agents of change and to take action to help regenerate iconic landscapes like the Himalayas and the communities within them. With a vision to collaborate with Himalayan communities to adopt sustainable living practices by 2030, the brand provides a platform for riders from all



walks of life to unleash their true potential and act as agents of change to help regenerate iconic landscapes like the Himalayas and the communities within them.

UNESCO recently inscribed 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' on its prestigious Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Known for its celebration of feminine divinity, Durga Puja is also an embodiment of inclusive festivity. A consummate expression of dance, music, crafts, rituals, culinary and cultural aspects, the festival transcends social boundaries and brings people together in celebration.

About UNESCO - [Intangible Cultural Heritage](#)

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture. UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. UNESCO established its Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage with the aim of ensuring better protection of important intangible cultural heritages worldwide and the awareness of their significance. This list is published by the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the members of which are elected by State Parties meeting in a General Assembly. Through a compendium of the different oral and intangible treasures of humankind worldwide, the programme aims to draw attention to the importance of safeguarding intangible heritage, which UNESCO has identified as an essential component and as a repository of cultural diversity and of creative expression.

[Web](#) | [Facebook](#) | [INSTAGRAM](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [YOUTUBE](#)

About [Royal Enfield](#)

The oldest motorcycle brand in continuous production, Royal Enfield has created beautifully crafted motorcycles since 1901. From its British roots, a manufacturing plant was established in Madras in 1955, a foothold from which Royal Enfield spearheaded the growth of India's mid-sized two-wheeler segment. Riders and a passionate community are fostered with a rich profusion of events at a local, regional and international level. Most notable are Rider Mania, an annual gathering of thousands of Royal Enfield enthusiasts in Goa, and Himalayan Odyssey, a yearly pilgrimage over some of the toughest terrain and highest mountain passes.

A division of Eicher Motors Limited, Royal Enfield operates through more than 2100 stores across all major cities and towns in India and through nearly 850 stores in more than 65 countries around the globe. Royal Enfield also has two world-class technical centres, in Bruntingthorpe, UK, and in Chennai, India. With more than 37% CAGR for the last 5 years and a 108% growth in international market sales in 2021-22, Royal Enfield is the leader in the global mid-size motorcycle market.

For further information, please contact:

Swati Sundareswaran - swati@royalenfield.com

Rekha Beri - r.beri@unesco.org