

CHOLA'S GOT T★ALENT



Cycling is more than just an activity. It is a way of life, a passion, and an escape.



VENKATESH SRINIVASAN

AN EPIC CYCLIST FROM CHOLA

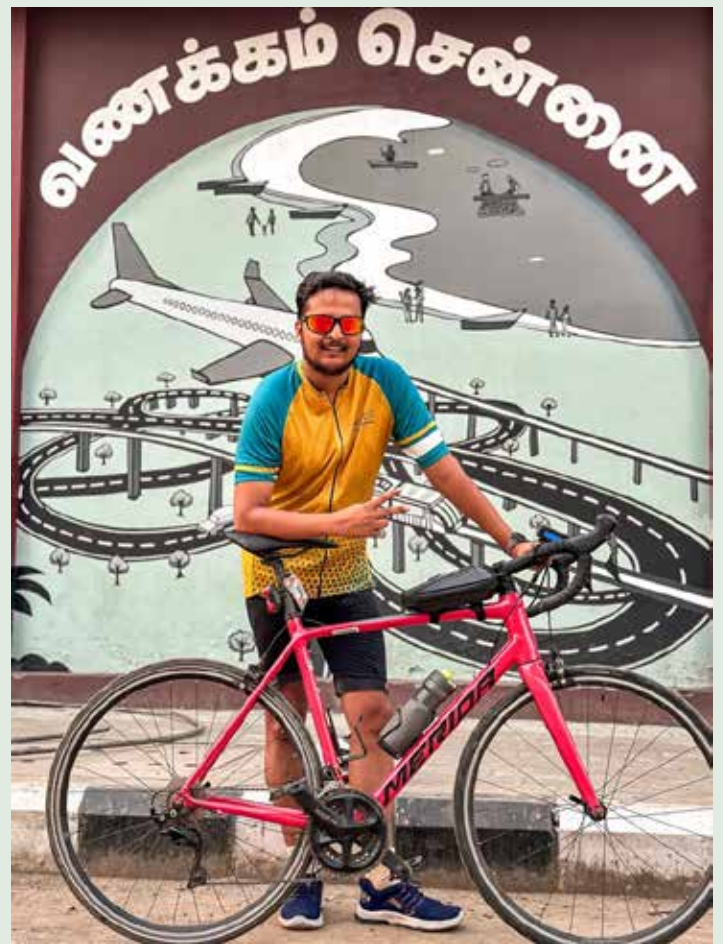
Introducing **Venkatesh Srinivasan**, an extraordinary cyclist and a Randonneur from Chola. He is an Assistant General Manager at the Salesforce Centre of Excellence team in Chennai. Venkatesh's remarkable ability to conquer vast distances on his bicycle captivated our attention and we decided to sit with him to get a peek into his world.

Join us as we uncover the exhilarating facets of his cycling odyssey.

How did you enter the world of cycling?

Before the onset of the pandemic, my life revolved around sports like Cricket and Basketball. However, as the pandemic unfolded, my physical activities came to a sudden halt. It was during this idle period, my wife suggested me to take up cycling. Fortunately, there was a cycling group that existed within my apartment complex. After being persuaded by my wife, I joined them. Initially, I went on for 20 to 25 km rides early in the morning. Within a week, I found myself utterly captivated by this newfound passion, and from that moment onward, there was no looking back.

After taking up Cycling only a couple of years ago, you upgraded yourself to long-distance riding. How did this Novice to Challenger transition happen?



As I said, I really got hooked into Cycling and I became really passionate about it. So, I decided to test my horizons. I started to push my limits after joining WCCG (We are Chennai Cycling Group). With each ride, I extended my limits, eventually achieving the feat of crossing the 100-kilometer mark during the 'Mass 100' event. It was a big boost for me. I literally started from nowhere and I was able to reach this mark in just about 3 months.

What is Randonneuring and how did you become a Randonneur?

Randonneuring is a long-distance cycling sport where riders attempt courses of 200 km or more, passing through predetermined checkpoints every few tens of kilometres. When you cover 200 km within a given period, you will be given the title of 'Randonneur'. The title will be given by Audax Club based out of Paris, France. I did my 200 km ride from Chennai to Pondicherry and back, thus achieving the Randonneur title.

What do you carry during these long journeys?



As a cyclist, some mandatory things need to be carried without fail like spare tubes, a puncture kit, first aid supplies, and vital fluids. Balancing the need to travel light while ensuring these essentials are on hand remains crucial during the journeys. I have my breakfast and lunch at roadside restaurants.

Can you recall any memorable moment in your Cycling journey?



Ironically, my most memorable moment is also my most painful moment. It was during my 333 km ride in which I had to ride from Chennai to Senji Fort in Villupuram and back. My journey started on a positive note. I reached Senji without much hassles. On my way back, my tyre burst in a

remote village. Since there were no repair shops nearby, I had to patch it with a small rubber material and start riding. To my misfortune, my tyre gave up again putting an end signal to my dream 333 km ride. I thought I would give up cycling after this heartbreak. But my love for Cycling is crazy enough that I went and bought a Mirada bicycle which costed me a fortune. That day, I told myself my equipment shouldn't be a barrier to expressing the best version of myself.

What is something that not many know about Cycling?

One thing many don't know about the sport is that it is a very costly sport. Initially, you start with what you have and with enough time in the saddle, your skills improve and that requires sophisticated equipment. Bicycles can cost lakhs and the gear can cost tens of thousands of rupees which not many know about.

How do you recover after your long journeys?

Recovery is as important as the journey itself. The journey can be hard on your body at times. During those times, I have to give my body enough time to recover itself. I prioritize protein-rich foods and electrolytes to facilitate my body's rejuvenation after these demanding journeys.

Apart from Cycling, what are your other hobbies?

I actually tried my hand in writing and fortunately, it turned out well. I have already published 3 books namely The Business Analyst Playbook, A Quite Daft Story, and Bedtime Stories with a Rhyme. Thanks to my publisher 'Notion Press'. Right now, I'm working on my fourth which will be released in a while.

Who is your greatest inspiration?

In terms of cycling, my wife was my biggest supporter. Be it pursuing me to take up the sport or to encourage me along the way, she was always there. Additionally, Jonas Vingegaard who is a Danish Cyclist is also a big inspiration for me. I think he sets a perfect example for everyone who wants to achieve big in sports regardless of their physique. It's relentless determination and hard work that matters.

What are your future goals and aspirations?

My aim is to get the title of 'Super Randonneur'. It is a special medal awarded to those who successfully complete a challenging series of rides (200, 300, 400, and 600 kilometers) in a calendar year.

As Venkatesh continues on this remarkable journey, Chola stands proudly behind him, celebrating his accomplishments and eagerly anticipating the thrilling journey that lies ahead.



Best wishes, Venkatesh, for the adventures that await!

Chola is proud of you!