

LOVING LIFE

The big granny of cycling

With a twinkle in her blue eyes, she is all set to go places – quite literally! Brigitte Kleine, a German lady, who is on a trip to India for “half a year”, plans to cycle to various Southern cities here. Lovingly known as a “granny who bikes around the world”, Brigitte was hosted by the Max Mueller Bhavan during her stay in the City. Though she doesn’t speak English, the energy she exudes as she speaks flawless German (which is interpreted by a translator) is infectious and you can’t help but smile along.

It was a holiday trip on a TV station that helped her discover her love for cycling. “Then I bought my first bike and my neighbour asked me, ‘Mrs Klein, are you going to ride the bike?’” she laughs. “I thought what a stupid question and gave her a stupid answer saying, ‘Yes, I will be going around the world on it.’” Brigitte then did a lot of research on people who have gone on similar journeys, and started cycling in 2007.

As time went by, Brigitte went to various places in Latin America, Asia, North and South America. “It’s my first trip to India and I find India quite similar to Columbia. I like the Indian mentality,” she says. Though she hasn’t etched out an itinerary of her tour, she plans to visit various places. “I would have loved to see Kolkata but I don’t think that’s possible this time.

Maybe it can happen when I come here on a North India tour,” she laughs. “In fact, if someone comes to me now and says, ‘Let’s go North’, I will willingly go,” she laughs.

Most of her trips are unplanned as she doesn’t speak English. “So I need to be at a place where German speaking people are present.” So before going to a place, she finds out whether that place has a German institute or company. She adds, “It’s almost impossible to learn English now as I can’t hear anymore.”

Hailing from Bielefeld, Germany, the 63-year-old lady is retired and finances her trips out of her pension. “You don’t need much if you save wisely,” she reveals. Brigitte feels her trips can be called as an “adventure, not holiday”. “I have a deep hunger for adventure. I want to experience every place by myself, not just through books. I want to meet people and pedal for peace.”

Even when she is not cycling, the lady, who has two daughters and three grandchildren, is busy reading up and researching on various destinations. “I would love to go to Tibet, Nepal and Africa. I actually want to travel continuously for the next ten years but it depends on whether I’ll be fit.” Well, looking at her zest for life, we wouldn’t be surprised Brigitte continues cycling for the next 100 years!

Deepa Natarajan



ENERGETIC Brigitte Kleine DH PHOTO BY JANARDHAN B K