

ASIAN ENDURO Event SERIES IS BACK!

Spring of 2016 saw more than 50 enduro riders from all over the world compete in the first Asian Enduro Series, in Nagarkot, east of Kathmandu. Gnarly now brings the second edition of the edition of AES, and it's already looking bigger, faster, and fiercer.

WORDS AND PHOTO ANUJ D. ADHIKARY

Enduro evolves from cross-country and downhill, with the stamina required for the former, and technical skills for the latter. The hype hit mountain bikers hard, and Nepal was no exception. Asian Enduro Series took off last year in Nagarkot, the first-ever enduro race in Nepal. Fifty racers showed up, and the event was a huge success.

The sport, simply put, is a mix of cross-country and downhill mountain biking, with neither the stamina required for the former, and technical skills of latter. It's a cross between the two disciplines of mountain biking, but definitely does require speed and quite a bit of agile maneuvering. A full-suspension bike with solid performance is required. Besides, the terrain in Nepal fits the profile perfectly, some gradual climbs, and a bunch of steep descents.

As enduro biking grew in popularity, so did the prospect of having races that catered to the sport. Along came Asian Enduro Series, an Asian-level race, and also the first enduro race of the country. More than 50 participants showed up, and despite the challenges the race concluded successfully. The demand for the race grew, and this year, it's geared to be even bigger, faster, and fiercer. Scheduled from April 6 to 9 in Nagarkot of eastern Kathmandu Valley, the



first two days will be practice, and second two, final races.

“The thing about enduro is that all levels of riders can take it up,” says the race director and co-director of Gnarly. “From school kids to working professionals, people interested in the sport come from different walks of life. Further, we are eager to add more riders on the trails, and have been actively organizing free group rides through Gnarly’s open community called Squadron.” Besides group rides, Gnarly has also been conducting training programs in schools to encourage more children into mountain biking. “It’s amazing to see high school kids who can comfortably ride on tough trails. Last year, we had several teens in Asian Enduro Series, a couple of whom even took podium positions. And, the number of enduro riders across all ages is increasing by the day. We are hopeful to have around 80 participants in this year’s AES.”

In fact, by popular demand, Gnarly is expanding enduro racing in the country through a whole new series, Nepal Enduro. Though smaller in scale, the main objective of the series will be to prepare not only the riders, but also the organizing crew, for Asian Enduro Series. In addition, the Nepal Enduro will also be held in other parts of the country to scout possible trails for future international racing events, including for Asian Enduro Series. Limbu adds, “We are exploring possibilities in Jomsom and Pokhara next, and hope to establish these locations as prime racing destinations, too.”



Asian Enduro Series this year in Nagarkot will see seven stages, each with distinct challenges. Designed for more advanced riders, the trails were identified by experienced riders frequenting the route on weekends. A mix of single tracks and jeep tracks, along with rocky and technical bits strewn in between. All trails start at different points on Nagarkot’s ridge, and flow down. Once at each finish line, racers will pedal up on the connecting trails, called liaisons, to the next starting point. By no means a walk in the park, the trails are meant for serious riders with enough experience and skills.

In plain sight of the high Himalayas on one side, and the vast Kathmandu valley to the next, April this year will see some serious mountain biking



action in the second Asian Enduro Series. Whether or not you feel like participating, flock to the mid-hills of Kathmandu to witness what is poised to be a sensational mountain biking race. This race by Gnarly is one you cannot afford to miss!

Event details:

Event Name	Asian Enduro Series - Nepal 2017
Organizer	Gnarly
Venue	Nagarkot, Kathmandu Valley, Nepal
Race dates	April 6 to 9, 2017
Stages	7 in total
Website	www.enduro.asia
Facebook Page	www.gnarlymtb.com/aes2017