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The Slow Road

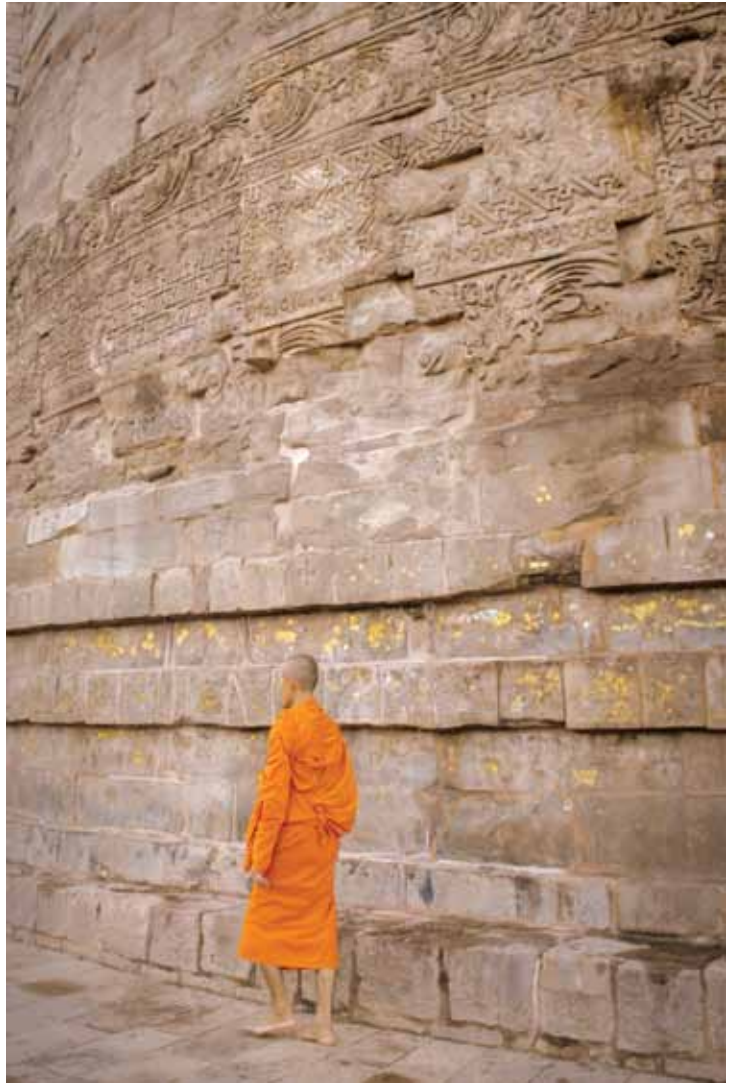
Sophie Ibbotson endures stifling Nepali heat, flooded Pakistani roads, and bad Uzbekistani sushi on the Grand Trunk Road.

By Sophie Ibbotson



The first thing we knew about flattening a police checkpoint was the sight of an understandably irate policeman, chest heaving and jowls flailing, as he attempted to flag us down several blocks further along the road. Entirely oblivious to what had happened, we lumbered along, initially ignoring the waving of arms and the deranged screeching of a whistle, discounting them as no more than the usual precursor to a bribe. If it weren't for the traffic, we may not have stopped at all.

The officer had, by this stage, turned from his usual sweaty tan to a deep and angry red. His furious outburst barely penetrated the Unimog's cab, but a gut hunch said this was something a little out of the ordinary. We lowered the window and peered down, the significantly greater height giving us the same perspective as a mother surveying a toddler in a tantrum. Chastened by his subordinate position, or perhaps surprised by our completely guiltless faces, we were politely (if humourlessly) informed that one of the uncountable number of bangs and thumps in the last half mile was not in fact a speed bump, a super-sized pot hole, or further proof that my joinery skills were not up to scratch. Instead, it was the sound of a (thankfully unmanned) traffic inspection post being knocked off its perch by the corner of our vehicle before being irreparably squashed beneath a tire. Happily ensconced in the cab, miles up in the air and with particularly springy suspension, we hadn't realised a thing.









ROUTE | Grand Trunk Road

Cartography by David Medeiros (mapbliss.com)

