

Sustainable travel: Mexican who crossed U.S. on electric bicycle



*“There was a strong wind and **a storm was coming**. A lady stopped her truck and told us, “I’m not going to leave you here. A hurricane is coming,” but we **preferred to keep pedaling so we could meet our goal.**”*

Luis Fourzán was facing *Ida*, the category 4 hurricane that was one of the challenges they faced on a **5-month electric bicycle journey** to raise awareness about **sustainable mobility**.

Luis, [a Tec de Monterrey graduate](#), together with **Sushil Reddy**, who won a [Guinness world record](#) for the longest journey on an electric bicycle in his native India, traveled more than **12,000 kilometers** with zero atmospheric emissions.

The Mexican did it as part of [The SunPedal Ride](#) project, which seeks to raise awareness about the use of **renewable energies**, such as solar power.

The journey **began on August 14, 2021** in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and **ended on January 19, 2022**, in Houston, Texas.

Luis Fourzán from Mexico and Sushil Reddy from India travel across the United States in 5 months to raise awareness about sustainable mobility.

https://twitter.com/SunPedal_Ride/status/1506896418480734208

Pedaling for sustainable mobility

Despite adversities, such as bad weather, Luis was very clear about his goal of showing that **renewable energies**, such as solar power, **can impact mobility**.

The [Tec graduate](#) rode an **electric bicycle with two 500-watt batteries**, while Sushil rode one with two 300-watt batteries and two **solar panels** so as to compare the energy consumption of both.

“Sushil's bike panels had a capacity of 50 watts each, so one of its batteries was charged after 3 hours of riding in the sun and we ended up with almost the same charge.

*“We realized that it would be perfect to cover distances of 5 to 10 kilometers **using electric bicycles in the city**. With **solar panels**, you'd never have to connect to plug in,”* he said.

Luis's bike was made of steel, weighed 40 kilograms, had luggage racks (about 30 kilograms), and **reached 30 kilometers per hour (km/h)** on flat terrain and about 10 km/h going uphill.

*“The **motor** gives you some help, but **you still have to pedal**, and you feel the effort; for example, on the climbs... it's like riding a normal bike but without the weight of the luggage,”* he explained.



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Challenges of the ride: hurricanes, snow, and dog attacks

When they began their journey, Luis and Sushil had no idea that two weeks later they would be dealing with **Hurricane Ida** as they crossed the state of Pennsylvania.

*“(Because of the hurricane) we had to stay about two days in a hotel before getting to Pittsburgh. We arrived before the **flood warnings** began,”* said Fourzán.

This cyclone, which caused damage, flooding, and loss of life on the east coast of the U.S., would not be the only major challenge the cyclists faced, as they also **endured snow, mechanical failures, and even attacks from animals**.

*“Halfway through the journey, **we ran into snowfalls** in (the state of) Montana. One day, we arrived at the hotel around 10 o'clock at night after **cycling all day in minus 10-degree weather** and our bikes even skidded out from under us a couple of times.*

*“**I was attacked by a pit bull in Oregon**. It chased me for about 15 minutes trying to pull me off the bicycle and bite me. I had to use some pepper spray I had with me. You had to be prepared, not just for breakdowns or flat tires,”* he recalled.

Despite the challenges, they had the support of brands and sponsors such as **Oriden, Mitsubishi Power, Radisson Hotels, and Octopus Energy**, among others, who gave them support at different stops to help them achieve their goal.

*“**Anyone can get on a bike (and maintain a healthy lifestyle). I'd never ridden one and yet that's how I traveled across the United States.**”*



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<https://www.instagram.com/p/CUDTvcLLkS0/>

Finding sustainable awareness in hiking

In 2008, Fourzán moved to the city of Monterrey from his native Chihuahua to study a **law degree** at the Tec. There, where he lived for 10 years, **he developed a taste for outdoor activities.**

*"I became very keen on activities such as **hiking and mountaineering**. I think that was one of the catalysts for me to start doing something that had to do with sustainability," he said.*

The 32-year-old Tec graduate recalled that he enjoyed nature while doing these activities, but he also became aware of **pollution problems**, which even **caused him health issues.**

*"**I could see a layer of pollution** from the mountains I climbed. You could hardly ever see the stars and the air from the city made breathing difficult. I also began to have problems with irritated eyes and allergies," Luis recounted.*

In 2017, he traveled as a tourist to **Iceland**. It was a country he'd already had on his radar because of his love for outdoor activities. He also got rid of his allergy problems there.

*"When I arrived in that country, I fell in love with the fact that **100% of the energy they generate comes from renewable sources**. It was one of the reasons I chose to pursue a **master's degree in sustainable energy there**," he said.*



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Iceland: the prelude to the adventure

While doing his master's degree in Iceland in 2018, Luis received a call from a friend in Paris who knew Sushil and who had already completed [The SunPedal Ride](#) project, for which he had won a **Guinness world record** two years earlier.

The Indian activist was now planning to go on an **electric bicycle tour of Iceland** and needed a companion who knew the region and knew about renewable energy.

*“Sushil invited me to do the tour, and I was interested because **it was a sustainability project**. It wasn't just something of an adventure, like climbing a mountain, but it also had an undercurrent of **sustainable awareness**,”* he said.

In the end, Luis and Sushil **did a 2-week tour** of the island, which was the prelude to a longer journey through the United States, which they planned for 2020 but had to delay a year because of the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

Luis considers that journey across the United States **one of the biggest projects of his life** to date.

*“This journey helped me realize that **I can do more things and not give up**. The project isn't over. We want to continue raising awareness of mobility in communities.*

*“We also want to maintain a **healthy lifestyle** with more physical activity. Anyone can get on a bike. I'd never ridden one and yet that's how I traveled across the United States,”* he added.



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A green entrepreneur

Luis acknowledges that studying **at the Tec** since high school sparked his **interest in entrepreneurship**. He complemented his career as a lawyer with a master's degree in renewable energies and, in 2020, together with several friends, he founded his **own business: [Rayema](#)**.

His company is focused on **offering financing** to companies to carry out **renewable energy projects**; for example, in the industrial sector with solar panel installations.

Despite the long journey, Luis never stopped working on his professional project.

“There were days when we were cycling from sunup to sundown, but I took my computer to continue my work in the evenings or when we arrived at a hotel,” Fourzán said.

The **[Tec graduate](#)** does not know if he will go on a journey of this magnitude again, although he does like the idea of making a similar journey across Mexico and sharing his environmental message with more people.

*“I think I got this idea of **discovering and changing the world** from the Tec, which gives you this global image. There's also entrepreneurship and **projects beyond the professional field**, such as*

*this activism that **leaves a mark on the community**,*” he concluded.

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