An ode to BRO (Border Roads Organisation)

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“Life is a Journey. Complete it” – read, one of the captions of a yellow Milestone on the roads of Ladakh.

I was besotted by this profound line that so simply, yet emphatically cautioned travellers to drive carefully in this region of the Greater Himalayas. It was during my first trip to Ladakh in 2011. I have visited this land, gridlocked amidst the gigantic mountains, three times since and my admiration for the men behind the roads of Ladakh have scaled enormously. The road makers of Ladakh : **“Border Roads Organisation (BRO)”**.

Let me substantiate why. Traveling in a comfortable 4WD vehicle, listening to peppy music, one can sometime take the roads here for granted – the roads, in this hostile and treacherous region. Ladakh is a Heaven on Earth but comes with challenges of sorts – very high altitude, low oxygen, massive mountains, frequent landslides, unannounced flash floods, unpredictable weather changes, melting glaciers, maddening streams and extreme temperatures, to name a few. It therefore implies that, the men of the BRO (the Indian Army) have to withstand all of these, to cut through the mountains firstly and then lay a road. And then comes the effort of maintaining them, each time, Mother Nature damages it with her fury – an effort and sacrifice of behemoth magnitude.

My regard for BRO led me to learn more about them. Border Roads Organisation, builds and maintains arterial roads on the borders of India, in and around the Himalayan terrain. They have eighteen projects across the various border regions of India, such as, Arunank, Becon, Chetak, Deepak, Dantak, Hirak, Pushpak, Sampark, Himank, Rohtang Tunnel and many more. HIMANK maintains the roads in the harsh and hostile Ladakh region. They are the complete caretakers of anything and everything that happens on Ladakh roads.

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Ever since, I have been on a look-out for the catchy liners that adorn the Milestones ladled all along the routes – captions, which would give the best of the marketing and advertising guys a run for their money.

An ode to BRO – to the HIMANK – in the form of the images of captions seen on milestones that I have photographed from a moving vehicle, during my journeys.

Life-is-a-journey-complete-it

A Drive Thru Ladakh

Typical Transforming Terrains of Ladakh

Himank border roads

BRO at 15000-feet

Men working in hostile environments…

Landslides are common here in Ladakh

Even vehicles find the roads hard to tread upon (at the highest motorable pass in the world – Khardungla)

Officers of BRO taking a break

Road builders of Ladakh (enroute Nubra Valley)

Caption: “Speed is a Knife, that cuts Life”

Caption: “After Whisky, driving is risky”

Caption: “BRO works Today, for your Better Tomorrow”

Caption: “Border Road – In the service of Nation”

Caption: “Ladakh – Mountains in the sky”

Patrol Officers of BRO…

Walking past treacherous edges

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We cut Mountains, but connect Hearts!

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Undoubtedly they connect hearts, at times, steal even. To the men of the BRO. To the soldiers of the Indian Army my salutations.

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