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raid de himalaya

Saikia takes lead on Day 2

AGE CORRESPONDENT

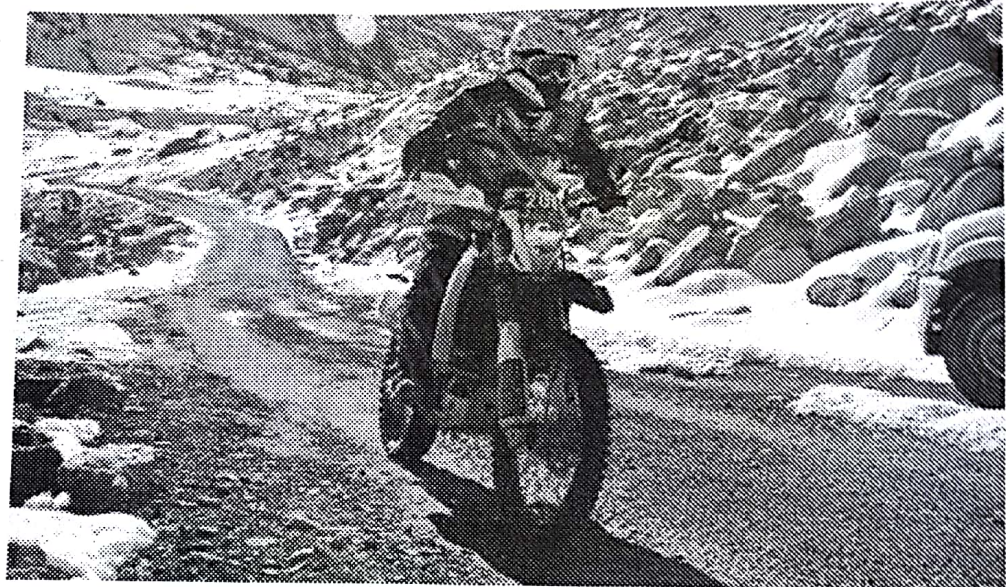
Team Polaris' Arindam Saikia shot into the lead after a snow-hit Day 2 in the 20th Raid de Himalaya in Kargil on Thursday.

Arindam, who was trailing in the 14th place after Day 1, jumped to the top position by showing his skill and courage on the highly challenging climb to Penzi La, where the temperature hovered around -16 degree Celsius.

Himanshu Arora of Harjee Rallying, a Delhi-based rallying club, moved to second place in his Maruti Gypsy. Col. Shakti Bajaj of Team Army was behind him in the third place, followed by 2014 Raid winner Captain A.V.S. Gill.

Harpreet Bawa, also of Harjee Rallying, was in the fifth spot. The Raid will draw to a close on October 14.

Amitrajit Ghosh of Team Mahindra, who was leading after the first day, suffered two flats during the day's demanding



stages and lost several minutes. His team mate Philippos Mathai too slipped from his overnight second position to fall behind the lead pack.

Clerk of the Course Manjeev Bhalla said that the rallyists had to contend with snow, ice and slippery conditions all through the day. They endured their most harrowing moments at Penzi La

in the Ladakh region, at a height of 4,400 meters, known as the gateway to Zaskar.

Indeed, the competitors woke up to snow and ice in the morning. On the route from Panikhar to Penzi La, almost every single biker suffered at least one fall.

Fortunately, all the bikers finished the day without any serious injury.