

Publication	Morning India		Page 1 of 1
Edition:	Kolkata		
Date:	14/10/2018		
Page:	12		
Headline:			

Arindam inches closer to Raid de Himalaya crown

KARGIL: Arindam Saikia of Team Polaris was within striking distance of the 20th Raid de Himalaya crown, building up a substantial 15-minute lead by the end of Day 3 here on Friday.

Captain A.V.S. Gill, driving a Grand Vitara, was valiantly chasing the leader but he literally has a mountain to climb as the Raid veered towards an exciting finish. Himashu Arora of Harjee Rallying was right on Gill's tail though, just 53 seconds behind him.

The third day of the iconic rally featured its longest stage, sailing past snow-covered tracks. The competitors started from Sankoo in Kargil valley and raced towards Umba La, a mountain pass at an elevation of 4,496 meter.

"Over the last 20 years, we have cancelled many competitive stages due to heavy snowfall. In fact, a couple of times the entire Raid was called off," Vijay Parmar, president of Himalayan Motorsports, the organisers, said.

"On Friday, too, it snowed heavily. But we discovered that we could still run the stage. We couldn't complete it but we managed 30 out of the 54 kilometers that were scheduled. The rallyists had to contend



THE THIRD DAY OF THE ICONIC RALLY FEATURED ITS LONGEST STAGE, SAILING PAST SNOW-COVERED TRACKS. THE COMPETITORS STARTED FROM SANKOO IN KARGIL VALLEY AND RACED TOWARDS UMB LA, A MOUNTAIN PASS AT AN ELEVATION OF 4,496 METER.

with -11 degrees celsius temperature," Parmar added. Giving first-hand account of the

day, Parmar said Saikia was in his elements.

"His Polaris ran flawlessly

over the snow, allowing him to dominate the day. He has a huge lead now and if his car holds on and he can hang on to the lead, he is sure win the 2018 Raid," he predicted.

Team Mahindra had another bad day though, with both Amitrajit Ghosh and Phillipos Matthai losing valuable time due to punctures.

The duo were in the lead after Day 1, but since then luck has not been on their side, all but pushing them out of contention.

In the Xtreme Moto category, R. Nataraj of Team TVS continued to lead by 13.05 minute over team-mate Imran Pasha. S.D. Vishwas, too, held on to his overnight third position, another 9.15 minute behind.

"Nataraj has been a class apart in this Raid. His control over the bike on ice, snow and dirt tracks has been impeccable," Parmar explained.

Meanwhile, Abrar bin Ayub of Kashmir won the Alpine category, finishing the competition with a slender lead of 4.49 minute over his closest competitor.

Ayub was riding a Hero Impulse. Syed Asif All of Team TVS, driving an N-Torq scooter, took the second place.