

Amputees Rawat, Munne to take part in Raid for first time

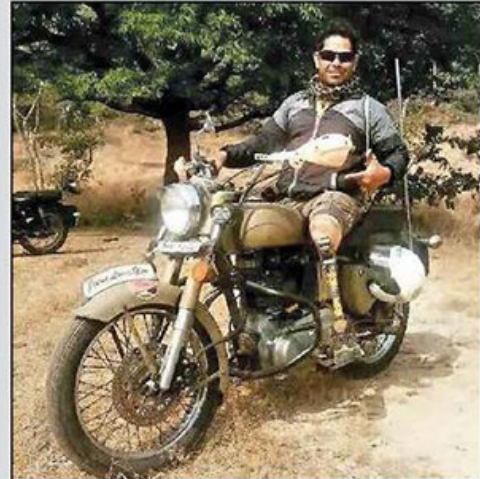
Shimla (Sakal Times): In a global first, two amputees Vinod Rawat of Mumbai and Ashok Munne of Nagpur are going to compete on motor-bikes in the world's highest cross-country rally raid, the Raid de Himalaya.

The Raid is considered among the top ten toughest rallies of the world. It will take off from Leh on October 8 this year, and finish on October 14. Over 200 competitors participating in Raid de Himalaya 2018 will race over some of the most challenging roads in the Kargil, Zaskar and Ladakh sectors, speeding over rocks, gravel and dust.

RAID DE HIMALAYA

The amputees, Vinod Rawat and Ashok Munne are competing in the toughest category at the Raid - Xtreme Moto. Racing motorcycles at high-altitude roads and mountain passes is a task few can accomplish.

Munne is a Nagpur man, and nobody who knows him is surprised that he is going to compete at the Raid de Himalaya. Munne is a para-athlete whose achievements can dazzle any able-bodied individual. The 34-year-old is a mountaineer, an expert para glider, a scuba diver, a marathon runner, a black belt in martial arts, a skilled gymnast and kayaker, yoga expert and



DAREDEVILS: Ashok Munne (left) and Vinod Rawat took part in the Raid De Himalaya from October 8-14, in the Kargil, Zaskar and Ladakh sectors.

ace swimmer.

Ashok Munne climbed the Everest in 2016, and is planning to repeat the feat in 2019. He lost his leg in a train accident in 2008 but didn't let the handicap limit his life. His current passion is finishing the Raid de Himalaya. "I was 24 when I lost my leg in a train mishap. People said my life was over: I proved to people that I can and will do everything in life. There is no physical limitation. I will live my life the way I want to."

Munne, who uses a blade leg, is the brand ambassador for two multi-national artificial limbs companies. He climbed the Mera Peak in Nepal, at a height of 6476 meters, without oxygen. In 2013, he drove 3,000 kilometers through Ladakh on his motorcycle. He is ecstatic, he says, to be fulfilling his dream of participating in the Raid de Himalaya.

"Now everything is a surprise in life. Everything is a new joy. It feels so wonderful that I am competing in the

Raid this year. I had never thought I would live such an exciting life," said Munne.

Rawat, who lives in Mumbai, has lived the Raid dream in his head for nine years. His leg was amputated when he was child. He got his driving license in the year 2000, and has been an avid motor-cyclist since. "I came to know about the Raid in 2010. Since then, it has been my most cherished dream to compete at the Raid and finish it," he said.