

In the heart of Meghalaya's Tura, a small town comes alive each year with the roar of engines and the spirit of competition during the Bilguro Car Rally. The 7th edition of this adrenaline-pumping event, organised by the Tura Motor Sports Club (TMSC), recently concluded, leaving behind a trail of impressive performances, technological advancements, and a sense of community involvement that goes beyond the thrill of the race.

Speaking exclusively with Sunday Shillong, Souvik Sanyal, Secretary of the Tura Motor Sports Club, delved into the intricacies of this exhilarating motorsport event and its profound impact on community unity.

Bilguro, an exhilarating car rally, has gained popularity as a marquee adventure sport in India. Originating from traditional rallies, the sport has evolved to incorporate challenging terrains and advanced technologies. In Meghalaya, Bilguro has become a prominent event, drawing participants not just from the state but also from neighbouring regions.

One of the standout features of this year's Bilguro Car Rally, said Sanyal, was the incorporation of LiDAR-based precision timers, marking a significant leap in timing accuracy. Secretary of Tura Motor Sports Club, Souvik Sanyal, highlighted the impact of this technological upgrade on the overall event experience.

"This improvement has allowed us to achieve more precise results, contributing to the enhancement of our reputation and transparency," he said.

The rally saw remarkable performances from Ronan Bazeley, clinching both the overall champion and Car category titles, and Daniel M Sangma, securing victory in the SUV category. Sanyal praised Bazeley's ability to analyse the track conditions and Sangma's resilience in overcoming penalties, showcasing their driving prowess in the face of unexpected challenges.

"Ronan Bazeley could analyse the track and its slushiness because of the unusual rain. He kept his head clear and drove very steadily. The first day Daniel M Sangma made some mistakes and got a penalty point subsequently he made it up with his timings in the hill climb," he added.

Despite the unusual rain, participants from Tura, Nagaland, and Khasi Hills took to the tracks at Aguragre and Anogre. Sanyal noted that the weather added an extra layer of challenge, making the tracks a bit dicey. Only those who drove safely managed to finish the race, emphasising the importance of skill and caution on the challenging terrains.

"Bilguro had seen participants from as far as Delhi. Our event this time had less diverse participation comparatively," said Sanyal.

The 'Hill Climb' at Aguragre and the



Souvik Sanyal

, allowing them to offset the costs associated with travel, vehicle preparation, and other expenses." The use of



'Sprint' at Anogre provided a spectacular showcase of speed and skill. The participants were amazed at the track's speed, though a few incidents occurred.

Sanyal reassured that, fortunately, there were no casualties, and the emergency services provided by the local authorities were on standby.

The substantial cash prizes and trophies awarded to winners in both the Car and SUV categories reflect the club's commitment to supporting participants.

Sanyal explained, "Offering substantial cash prizes proves beneficial for participants

LiDAR technology not only enhanced timing accuracy but also contributed to the confidence of participants. Sanyal hinted at TMSC's consistent efforts to advance technological integration, stating,

"In the previous event, we engaged professionals from Mumbai with RFID tags for the vehicles. This time, we took an additional step forward by acquiring two LiDAR-based Control Marshals for event timing."

The Tura Motor Sports Club sees itself as an active contributor to the local community. Sanyal highlighted their involvement in rural track preparation, contributing to the creation or repair of roads. Additionally, the anticipation and participation of motor sports enthusiasts from all walks of life underscore the event's impact on the region.

"In our track preparation efforts, we actively involve rural communities, contributing

**Monojit Mandal** captures the spirit of car rallying in the state's recently concluded event discussing hot wheels - thrill, competition, and performance along with facets of the lesser known sport



government bodies aim to spread awareness and make a lasting impact on both the rally and the community it serves.

Many participants in Bilguro aspire to compete at the national level. The event serves as a platform for emerging talents, and the success achieved at the regional level often inspires participants to pursue opportunities at the national stage.

While the sport historically attracted more male participants, there has been a



## LESSER KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THE SPORT:

- Bilguro, known for its challenging tracks, features events like the 'Hill Climb Rally' and the 'Sprint Rally.'
- The introduction of technologies like LiDAR for precise timing calculations has added a new dimension to the sport.
- The event actively engages with rural communities, contributing to road repairs and development.
- Ecological Sustainability: Bilguro emphasises responsible event management, and efforts are made to minimise the environmental impact. However, the transition to electric cars may present challenges. The organisers are exploring sustainable options, including potential collaborations with electric vehicle initiatives to maintain the sport's eco-friendly ethos.



to the creation or repair of their roads. While these roads serve our purpose for a day during our events, they remain available for the villages to utilise for as long as they last. That apart people look forward to our 2W and 4W events and we have active participation from all motor sports enthusiasts," said Sanyal.

Looking ahead, the TMSC has ambitious plans for the future. The TSD (Time-Speed-Distance) rally scheduled for January 26, 2023, will be themed around Road Safety. A series of events and collaborations with local businesses and

noticeable increase in the participation of women in recent editions of Bilguro. The exact percentage varies from year to year, reflecting the growing inclusivity of the sport.

The Bilguro Car Rally of 2022 wasn't just a race; it was a testament to the intersection of technology, skill, and community spirit, solidifying its place as a premier event on the motorsports calendar. As the engines quiet down, the echoes of this year's triumphs and challenges reverberate, setting the stage for an even more exhilarating Bilguro Car Rally in the years to come.

