

Wheels Unplugged

Ambassadors in a 2000-km charity car rally launched from Goa, Wheels Unplugged, November 02

Over two dozen Ambassador cars will be roaring across the Western Ghats mountain range crossing tough and diverse terrain of Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala during the next 10 days as part of Karma Enduro Charity Challenge Rally 2011 which was flagged off from Colva on Wednesday.

UK-based social enterprise Global Enduro, which runs many spectacular adventure fund-raising events across the globe, once again chose only Hindustan Motors' Ambassador for the arduous rally. The Ambassador Grand (2.0 litre diesel DSZ) with air-conditioning, power steering and other features will be driven across 2000 kms through high mountains, wildlife sanctuaries, tiger reserves, remote tribal areas and hectic urban traffic zones.



Ambassadors in 2000-km charity rally from Goa - Alessandro Vigilante

Karma Enduro rally will be held in two spells in both of which only the iconic Ambassadors will be used. The first phase, which began from Goa on Wednesday will end at Kumarakom in Kerala on November 11. The second phase, sporting the same Ambassadors, will start again from Colva, Goa, on November 23 and culminate at Kumarakom on December 2.

Having started from Goa, the rally will pass through Karwar, Murdeshwar, Kalasa, Madikeri and Mysore in Karnataka, Masinagudi and Kodai in Tamil Nadu, and Munnar and Kumarakom in Kerala. Karma Enduro rally is not a car rally in the conventional sense of the term. It is not a race and there are no prizes for coming first or last. By signing up for Karma Enduro, participants are able to generate significant funding for two charities - the Rainbow Trust Children's Charity, UK, and Adventure Ashram, India. While Rainbow Trust helps families that have a child with life threatening or terminal illness, Adventure Ashram helps the poorest of the poor people, on or near the routes Karma Enduro rally takes through South India, to achieve higher standards of living through better health and education.

This time, the 50+ participants, majority of whom are from the UK with a sprinkling from Italy, Germany, Ireland, Switzerland, Philippines and Australia, have so far raised Rs. 2 (two) crore to be split largely between the two charities. A similar amount is expected to be raised by November 23 when the second spell of the rally will be launched again from Goa with a new set of foreign participants. Last year, part of the funds raised by the rally participants was donated also to Unicef and Pain & Palliative Care, Kozhikode.

In a statement issued on the launch of the Karma Enduro rally, Managing Director of Hindustan Motors Limited, Manoj Jha, observed, "The repeated selection of our Ambassador for the tough rally is a global endorsement of its reliability, sturdiness and suitability for all kinds of Indian roads and terrains. The roominess the car provides is unparalleled in its segment. Maintenance costs too are the lowest. I can say without hesitation that the iconic Ambassador understands India the best."

No wonder then that Patrick Head, who owns the renowned Formula One team Williams, participated in the charity rally last year (2010). Another wonder: though the participation fee is 3750 British Pounds per person, one of the participants chose to donate 70,000 (seventy thousand) pounds last year.

"Formula One racing is as much about champagne spraying as it is about risking one's life. However, a charity car rally is all about giving people a better life," commented Alessandro Vigilante as he inspected India's iconic car Ambassador which he and his father will be driving for 10 days in the Karma Enduro Charity Rally 2011 which was launched from Colva, Goa. The 37-year-old Alessandro is an Italian working as a telecom marketing executive in London. But age is no bar to wisdom. And that is what has prompted him and 50 other foreigners to participate in the first phase of Karma Enduro charity car rally which will witness only Ambassadors roaring across the toughest of terrains.

Management consultant Mark Wilcox and his wife Kath, who is a teacher, have joined the rally because the funds generated will help provide education to those who are not fortunate enough to finance their schooling. "We have three grown up and well educated children. Education means a lot to us. Why should it not be available to others?" quizzes Mark who has sponsorship stickers from UK football clubs Newcastle and Watford pasted across the Ambassador he will be driving. The car makes him nostalgic about the British Morris Oxford car which had inspired the design of Ambassador which, he asserts, "is virtually timeless like India."

However, expert opinion emanates from Englishman Mike Slattery, who has worked in the quality department of companies manufacturing legendary vehicles Ferrari and Land Rover. "Ambassador is a classic Indian car. It is simple and has no complications. Anybody can maintain it easily," he says as his friend and co-driver Cyprus-based John Raine nods in assent. Though the owner of a company called Lighting for Gardens, John is no novice when it comes to cars - he drives a Jaguar.

<http://wheelsunplugged.co.in/ViewNews.aspx?newsid=11752>