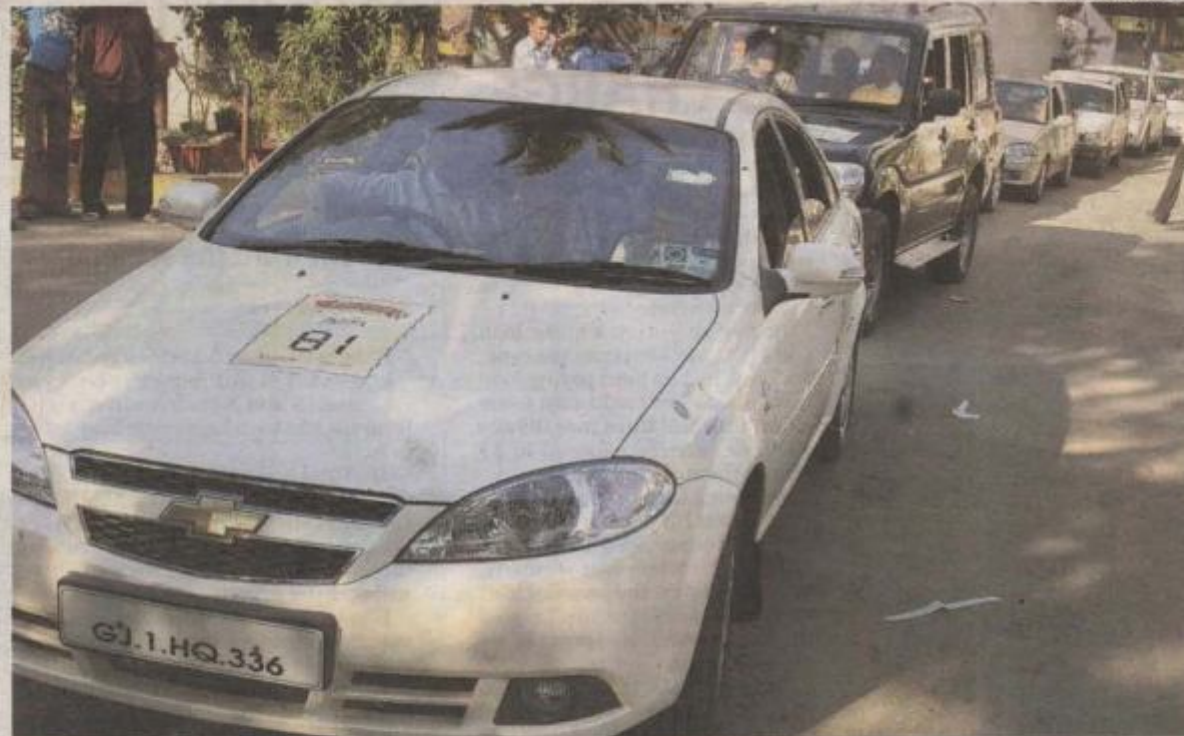


VISUALLY-CHALLENGED SHOW THE WAY AHEAD

ROUND TABLE CAR RALLY
FOR THE VISUALLY-
CHALLENGED BRINGS TO
FORE HOW TEAMWORK
CAN TAKE YOU PLACES

PICS: JIGNESH VORA



The car rally featured racing teams consisting of a driver with vision and a navigator who is visually-challenged

AHMEDABAD MIRROR BUREAU

It was a display of how synergy and tuning can help two differently talented individuals working together achieve their goal with felicity. The event on Sunday was the Annual Car Rally held by Blind Persons' Association and the Ahmedabad Round Table where 110 driver-navigator duos demonstrated how teamwork and trust can take you places.

The car rally, being held in the city for a decade now on Louis Braille's birthday, features racing teams consisting of a driver with vision and a navigator who is visually-challenged. Each team is given the route and instructions just before the flag-off.

The instructions are written in Braille which have to be interpreted and read out to his partner by the visually-challenged navigator.

So, right from when they set off till the end of the route, it's all about working in close co-ordination. Along the way, the duo often develop a bonhomie that reflects in their perform-

ance. Those with the best bonding come up trumps.

Our correspondent talked to the participants as the cars were being flagged off. Some said they were taking part for the first time, while their partners were veterans of five-six events. Many a driver-navigator duo were unknown to each other. Yet the willingness to work together and the mutual trust had to be seen to be believed.

In the end, almost all the individual said the interaction helped them understand their partners better. For, not everyday do you get to see somebody read Braille with such ease, neither do you get to show the way to somebody who has the ability to find his way.

Blind People's Association executive director Dr Bhushan Punani said, "We want people to know that a visually-challenged person can also help someone with sight reach his destination. The participation in this year's event in Ahmedabad was the biggest. But managing such a lot of cars is tough."



VINAY JAIN (DRIVER): I am a member of Lions Club, and that is why I'm here. But this is the first time I am participating in such an event. I am here to enjoy. My family also supports this cause and that's why they are with me.

RANJAN (NAVIGATOR): My rider is a first-time participant, but not me. This is the seventh time I am navigating a rider, and I am quite confident that we will win.



JASPAL SINGH SAINI (DRIVER): I have been coming to this rally for the last three years. This is a race where you have to discuss and plan your moves. But we are prepared.

BHAVESH (NAVIGATOR): This is my fifth rally, and we are sure to win it. I want to show that a visually-challenged man can do everything that others do. We have our own set of abilities.



WINNING TEAM: Driver Chetan Joshi and navigator Mukesh Solanki bagged the first prize at the rally



KUNAL SHAH (DRIVER): This is my eighth year at the rally. I have been winning it for the last three years. But the best part which brings me here again and again is the excitement and energy levels at the event. It's like a new adventure everytime.

JAYANTI (NAVIGATOR): I have a very experienced partner and so I don't have to worry too much. I'll just to read the Braille instruction carefully and tell him where to go.



GEORGE MATHEN (DRIVER): Such interaction brings us closer to people with disabilities and challenges. I am here for the first time. I have complete faith in my navigator and that is what is essential to win.

ASHOK CHAVADA (NAVIGATOR): I am participating for the third time. I will give my best to ensure that my team wins. Co-ordination is the key to victory.



SACHIN TRIVEDI (DRIVER): This sport unites people. It gives an opportunity to understand people, and to learn how to communicate with people with disabilities.

DARSHAN PATEL (NAVIGATOR): I have participated in the event thrice in Surat and twice in Ahmedabad. We want to prove that we can also help others if given a chance.