

ROYAL ENFIELD

CRUISER CHRONICLES



METEOR
350

IN THIS EDITION WE CRUISE ACROSS NORTHEAST INDIA TO EXPLORE
THE MAGICAL WORLD OF THE ZIRO FESTIVAL OF MUSIC IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

AUGUST
2024

The poster features a central black area with a red-outlined rectangular box containing the event title. Above the box, a yellow semi-circular band contains silhouettes of motorcyclists. Below the box, the dates '26 SEP - 03 OCT' are displayed in large white font, with a red wavy line underneath. At the bottom, two large yellow arches frame illustrations of a motorcyclist in full gear. The background is dark with yellow and red abstract shapes.

ROYAL ENFIELD
UNCOVER
2023 | NORTHEAST

26 SEP - 03 OCT

4 DAYS OF CRUISING AND 4 DAYS OF GROOVING

ZIRO

Festival

There is a world of sights, sounds and experiences waiting to be discovered. Royal Enfield Meteor 350 lets you ride out and explore them all.

To enable a rider's pursuit of exploration and discovery, in 2021, we introduced Royal Enfield Uncover. These are a series of specially curated rides for Meteor 350 riders to reach out to places and experiences seldom explored.

In this edition of Uncover 2023, we cruised beyond our horizons across the surreal landscapes of the Northeast to experience one of the most iconic music festivals of India, The Ziro Festival of Music.

An eclectic bunch of riders and media coalesced as music aficionados riding from Guwahati, Assam to Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh to celebrate this relatively less explored region of India and experience their culture, food, lifestyle, and people - all of us unified by our singular love for music.

Ziro Festival, founded in 2012, celebrates passion, sustainability, community, and cultural diversity. The festival promotes indigenous tribes and artists from Northeast India while showcasing Indian and global independent music scene. Set against the picturesque Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh, the festival uses locally-sourced materials like bamboo and employs local community members to host attendees, prioritizing sustainability practices. The festival's skills training programs have empowered community members to be actively involved in producing the festival and employing local artisans to build the bamboo infrastructure. Through community outreach programs, the festival engages artists, artisans, and local youth groups.



On day 0, the day before the ride, we arrived at Guwahati, Assam. There was a session organized in the evening where all participants were briefed about the ride and safety followed by riding gear scrutiny.

The remainder of the evening was spent in getting to know each other better who were to be our family for the next week, and mentally preparing for one of the journeys of a lifetime.





The next day, the ride flagged off from Guwahati and over the next 450 kilometres, we cruised through lush green landscapes and impeccable highways. We took a pitstop for lunch close to Tezpur where we savoured some authentic assamese cuisine. As the day came to a close we stopped over at the transit town of Biswanath Chariali

On the following day was the ride from Biswanath Chariali to our final destination, Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh.

After some quick breaks to soak in the landscapes there was the mandatory stop at the Arunachal border to procure the inner line permits that everyone needs to enter the state. The landscapes transitioned from plains to mountains and the rest of the ride was through some beautiful ghat sections with twists and turns and the occasional "mithuns" (Northeastern bison) on the roads.

By evening, we reached Ziro Valley and the official Royal Enfield Campsite.



Over the next 3 days were a journey of pure musical magic.

The venue was a short way down from our campsite and we would venture out early after breakfast.

On entering the festival grounds, the first thing to welcome you was the Royal Enfield installation made of bamboo with a motorcycle placed in the centre made of single-use plastic.

The Royal Enfield stall, Aligned to the theme of sustainability of the festival and the motto of "Leave Every Place Better", showcased the cultures of the Northeast through pictures. There was also a portrait that everyone at the festival could contribute to by adding their own unique paint strokes.



The Beats:

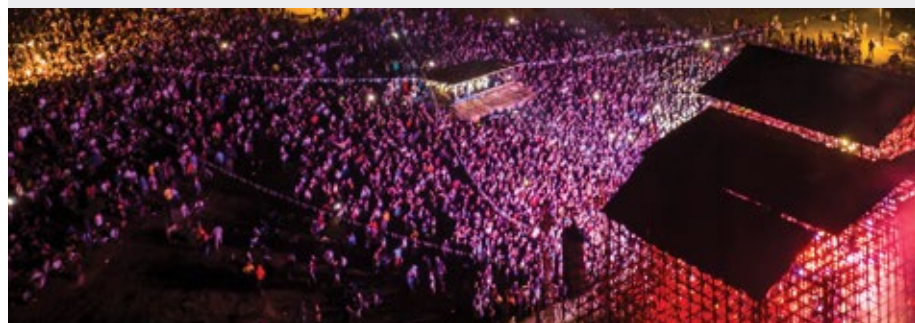
The performers and audiences had travelled across the country and the world to be at this festival. The grounds were divided into 2 stages, the day and the night stage, each with its own appeal to different genres of music.

It was a mix of independent artists from the region such as "SoulGroove" from Meghalaya, Arunachal sensation "Taba Chake" to artists from Ladakh in the Himalayas, "Dashugs", and "Jatayu" from Chennai.

International acts included "Mannequin Death Squad" from Australia, "The Boo Boo Bama Orchestra" from Sweden, "Leon Somov" from Lithuania, and "Puuluup" from Estonia to name a few

For the first time, there was an EDM (Electronic Dance Music Stage) which was in the middle of a jungle at a hilltop where people were grooving to the beats into the morning. Surrounded by the trees, electric beats, amazing lighting, and a light drizzle to top it off was a unique experience rarely found anywhere else. Some of these artists included "Deep Brown" and "Kissnuka" from Goa.

The main acts of each night came in the form of showstoppers such as "Farhan Akhtar" and "Mohit Chauhan".



Apart from the stage performances, there were workshops in the morning such as doodling, origami and a performance of "Daminda" the traditional dance of the Apatani tribe.

The Food:

Apart from the usual fares such as momos, noodles, thalis etc, we also explored the rustic cuisines of the region including some, not for the faint-hearted, delicacies such as frogs, grasshoppers, and silkworms. There were also local brews which are usually made at home in small batches such as "apong" and "poka" apart from other varieties of rice, miller, kiwi and pineapple wines.

The People and Culture:

The region comprises communities who find their roots in tribes such as the "Apatani", "Galo", "Monpa", "Nyishi" etc. Each with a unique take on life in Arunachal Pradesh including food, dance, music and customs.







On day 6, with loads of memories, and a slightly heavy heart, we rode back to Guwahati with a stopover at Tezpur Assam.

The ride back was equally mesmerizing as we descended from the mountains back into the plains. After a long ride, the riders unwound over dinner and indulged in some local delicacies such as mishti doi and sondesh.

The next day was the last leg of the ride and we set off early in the morning. The route was relatively short and there was a short pitstop for sweet tender coconut water on a hot summer day. The rain gods answered and a light drizzle accompanied us for the last couple of hours of the journey and while it made riders more cautious, it was a welcome respite from the heat.

Everyone reached Guwahati safely and after a quick lunch everybody rested for a couple of hours till the evening.

It was now time for the bittersweet for the journey, the closing ceremony. Everyone gathered around for one last time with new bonds that had been forged chatted over experience over the last few days

And thus concluded this edition of Uncover Northeast.



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UNCOVER

NORTH EAST

2023



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