

# TATAS ADD SPICE INTO TRUCK DRIVERS' ROUTINE LIFE

Indian truck drivers, who carry essentials across country and are still unappreciated to be part of T1 Prima Track GP for the first time

KIRTI PATIL

sp@rt@tataadtimes.com

**Sriperumbudur:** Trucking essential commodities from vegetables and milk to household goods, and heavy materials of all types, truck drivers have been one of the important cogs in the wheel in maintaining the lifeline of a nation.

Still, truck drivers have been the most abused lot by the transport authorities to traffic police—something that most of the drivers unfortunately consider it as part of their job profile.

## T1 PRIMA TRUCK RACING C'SHIP

Nothing could be changed overnight, but to give the truck drivers a sense of belonging, that they could do something more than just driving trucks and be feel wanted, Tata Motors have put them on racing tracks and have actually transformed them into thinking and sensible drivers.

"When we launched T1 Prima Truck Racing championship two years ago, questions were raised as to whether India was ready for truck racing. Trucks on racing tracks was unheard



**GEARING UP:** Indian drivers during T1 Prima Truck Racing drivers selections programme at MMRT in Sriperumbudur on Wednesday

of, but we sailed through the first season in 2024," said R Ramakrishnan, Senior Vice President, Product Strategy and Planning, Tata Motors.

"Second year people asked us why only European professional truck drivers were being the part of the championship. Why no Indian drivers?" Ramki as Ramakrishnan is better known as, explained the doubts raised about whether Truck Racing would sustain itself in India.

As Tata Motors gears up for the

third edition of T1 Prima Truck Racing, the auto major took a plunge in reshaping career truck drivers into racing truck drivers.

"Think of it from truck drivers' perspective. They are out of highways for most of their working life, they eat out, sleep out, and when we decided to start Truck Racing we took a conscious decision to give them some space in the whole gamut of racing," Ramki juxtaposed.

Last year Tata Motors expressed their intent of introducing truck rac-

ing for Indian drivers too, but the auto giant wasn't sure they would be able to make it possible within a year.

Once the idea caught on, 900-odd truck drivers registered for the driver selection programme, which was to be conducted in three legs. The first shortlist saw the number reduced to 300-odd and then 50 after they went through various levels of tests—physical, mental and even medical.

The final leg of selection at the Madras Motorsports Race Track in Sriper-



**“** We wanted to make the profession of truck driving aspirational. There wasn't anything really aspirational about driving a commercial vehicle any more, given multiple options for livelihood that have come up in last few years, harsh working conditions, along with constant pressure to deliver on time.

**— R Ramakrishnan,**

Senior VP, Product Strategy and Planning, Tata Motors.

umbudur here saw 24 truck drivers going through their paces to find place in the final 14, who would race at the T1 Prima Truck Racing championship at the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida, on March 20.

It didn't matter that only 12 will race finally, but for those 900-odd truck drivers going through the learning sessions, visiting places, flying for the first time, staying in star-rated hotels and being trained by FIA-accredited trainers was an out of the world experience.

## Truck Racing programme

T1 Prima Truck Racing program was launched in 2024, to add an exciting dimension of truck racing to one of the largest trucking markets in the world, India. Over the last 2 years, the event showcased the best talent in international truck racing, as well as the latest advancements in trucking technologies by Tata Motors.

While season I received participation from over 25,000 spectators, Season II witnessed over 50,000, at India's globally renowned F1 race track. In Season III, Tata Motors kicked-off India's first Indian Truck Driver Race training and selection program.

Featuring an Indian truck driver's race for the first time, like in the earlier seasons, the championship will continue to host experienced international drivers representing six teams, featuring 12 Tata PRIMA race trucks, built for the purpose.

## What awaits truckers?

Hope for a Better Life - Relief from the abuse, distress and turmoil they experience in their daily lives while driving on tough terrains.

Make their family and community proud - Many of them suffer from a low self-esteem and look at this event as an opportunity to make their family and company proud of their achievements.