

Mean machines to hit F1 track on Sunday

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NOIDA: Some mean machines will be raging against each other at the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida this Sunday at the fourth season of T1 Prima Truck Racing, being hosted by Tata Motors.

India's only truck racing championship, it is organised by Madras Motor Sports Club (MMSC), with safety and performance standards as per the guidelines of the British Truck Racing Association (BTRA).

The season started on Saturday with the qualifying rounds, in which a final line up of 12 international and 20 Indian truck racers was selected to compete.

The championship, divided into three categories - Pro Class, Super Class and Champion Class - will start on Sunday afternoon and continue till evening. The race will feature a range of Tata Prima trucks.

In the Pro Class, 12 International racers from Britain and other European nations will compete against each other in eight-lap and 15-lap races.

In the Super Class, 10 Indian truck racers who were shortlisted from over 3,300 nominations received from across the country, will be competing. The 10 racers were selected after a strict mental and physical evaluation process over a two-month period.

The Champion Class will give participants of Season 3 a chance to rewrite the equations of speed and skills and rearrange the ranking charts drawn in the previous season. Season 3 champions Jagat Singh of Haryana and Nagarjuna A of Andhra Pradesh are also participating to defend their titles.

The Indian truck drivers had undergone the T1 Racer Programme (TRP), a comprehensive motorsports driver training and selection programme, conceptualised and conducted by Tata Motors.

T1 this year will also have accomplished racers from FIA's European Truck Racing Championship (ETRC) competing in the championship for the first time. The ETRC will be represented by six racers from the rest of Europe who will compete in the Pro class category alongside six British drivers from the British Truck Racing Association (BTRA), who have raced in T1 since the sporting event was first introduced in 2014.

Ravi Pisharody, executive

While brand promotion is one aspect of racing, the sport is actually helping us make use of the best technology, coming up with innovative designs, and promoting trucking as an aspirational profession.

KT WASAN, vice-president, sales and marketing (commercial vehicles), Tata Motors



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VIRENDRA SINGH GOSAIN/HIT PHOTOS

director (commercial vehicles), Tata Motors, expressed joy over the success of all previous seasons and congratulated this season's participants.

"After hosting three seasons of truck races, the Buddh International Circuit is now being called a T1 circuit instead of F1 circuit," he said.

KT Wasan, vice-president, sales and marketing (commercial vehicles), Tata Motors, said, "While brand promotion is one aspect of racing, the sport is actually helping us make use of the best technology, coming up with innovative designs, and promoting trucking as an aspirational profession."

In Season 4, Tata Motors has partnered with leading automotive brands such as WABCO, JK Tyre, Castrol, Cummins and Tata Technologies.

On Saturday, Tata unveiled the most powerful truck in the country, containing 1040 British Horsepower (BHP), on the tracks. However, these machines will not be put to race on Sunday. It will be the Tata Prima that will be roughing up the circuit.

Only woman in race says it's all about your skills

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NOIDA: When the trucks hit the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida on Sunday at the fourth season of T1 Prima truck racing, Stephanie Halm would be the only female professional truck racer competing in the race.

A native of Germany, the 32-year-old also known as Steffi has been racing trucks across European nations since 2012. However, she started her racing journey way back, when she was 15.

"Trucking started in 2012, before that I used to do karting," she said, standing alongside the muscular, green Tata Prima that she will be racing on Sunday.

However, racing trucks was never something she planned to do. "In 2012, a technical crew living near my house approached me with the idea of competing in a truck race. And I gave it a try," she said.

"This is the first time that I'm participating in a truck racing event in India. I like the driving conditions here. It should be fine," she said on Saturday.



■ Stephanie Halm from Germany during the first round of the T1 Prima truck racing championship on Saturday.

VIRENDRA SINGH GOSAIN

When asked what made her enter the mostly male-dominated sport, she said, "If you are interested in something, you should go and explore. Being a woman should not be a limiting point for anything."

While it is a rare sight to see a woman on the driver's seat of a truck in India, Stephanie said the scenario is no different in other parts of the world.

"Women truck racers are very few and sparsely distributed," she said.

However, physical strength has no role in racing. It's all about your skills, she added.

This is also the first time that she is working with an Indian crew and had never met them before. But she is confident of her team, and says trust in the crew is very crucial.

"I have been working with the crew for the race for the past 24 hours. I had understood the conditions and I trust my crew,"

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