Creating history, Honda riders Rajiv & Senthil make India proud in the inaugural race of 2019 ARRC!

- **IDEMITSU Honda Racing India team wins HIGHEST EVER 7 points in single race in inaugural race of 2019 ARRC season**
- **Honda's Indian duo of Rajiv & Senthil overtake 3 riders each to finish in Top 14 in AP250 Race 1**
- **Rajiv Sethu records new BEST FINISH BY INDIAN RIDER in ARRC, wins 5 points with 11th finish**
- **Senthil Kumar becomes the FIRST Indian rookie and YOUNGEST Indian rider to win points in maiden ARRC race with strong top 14 finish**

Sepang International Circuit (Malaysia), 9 March 2019: After the solid practice yesterday where Rajiv closed at ever highest position of 7th and the 18-year old rookie Senthil too zoomed to 17th position in the AP250 class, the solo Indian team **IDEMITSU Honda Racing India** today celebrated its best ever performance in **FIM Asia Road Racing Championship (ARRC).**

Today's race made India proud and recorded many firsts. It is the first time that both riders of India's solo team scored points at Asia's toughest road race championship in same race.

Rajiv recorded the best ever finish by Indian rider in AP250 class of ARRC at 11th spot (earlier highest 13th). The teen rider Senthil too showed the power of Young India and became the first Indian rookie to win 2 points with 14th finish in his debut ARRC race itself! With this, Honda's Indian team has made its best ever season start with tally of 7 points in the first race itself.

Sharing an overview on the solo Indian team's performance today, **Mr. Prabhu Nagaraj, Vice President – Brand and Communications, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd.** said*, "2019 is the year when Indian motorsport is coming of age. Technically, our CBR250RR bikes are tweaked to be more competitive with improved cowl giving added advantage to our boys. Additionally, our boys have the strength of entire team and coach behind them. Right from the first race of the 2019 ARRC season, our solo Indian team is emerging as a serious challenger. Making India proud, Rajiv gave his best ever ARRC performance and added 5 points for Indian team. Senthil the face of new, confident and aggressive young Indian riders finished in top 14 and added another 2 points to IDEMITSU Honda Racing India kitty. Charged with today's results and learnings, we are challenging ourselves to better our results ever more in tomorrow's race 2."*

Indian team gives best ever performance in AP 250 (race 1) class of ARRC:
In lap 1 itself, Rajiv made a good start from his 14th position. While climbed to top bunch but had to drop back due to other rider crash. But his perseverance paid off mid-race. **Overtaking 2 riders in lap 4 and maintaining this till the last 8th lap, the 21-year old recorded his best ever finish in AP250 class at 11th position. With this strong finish, Rajiv swooped his highest single race haul of 5 points in race 1 of 2019 ARRC season itself.**

Senthil showed the might of confident young Indian riders in his debut race itself. Starting 17th on the grid of 25 riders, Senthil made a good start and overtook 3 riders in lap 1 itself. From there till the end of race, Senthil was battling it out with Taipei rider Chiou Ke-Lung and closed at 14th position with total lap time of 20:17:513. With this, Senthil is now **the youngest Indian rider and the first ever Indian rookie to score a point in Asia Road Racing Championship.**

With 2 crashes in lap 1 itself, the afternoon AP 250 Race 1 saw battle start from the word go. The fight went on till the chequered flag of 8 lap race with Indonesian riders wrapping up the first 6 positions finish. Overtaking to win race 1 just 100 meters short of the finish line was Lucky Hendriansya of Astra Honda (19:34:655), with Andy coming 2nd (19:34:839) and Irfan Ardiansyah also from Astra Honda completing the podium (19:38:376).

Satisfied with his performance today and charged up for tomorrow, Honda's front-runner rider **Rajiv Sethu** said, *"After my best ever qualifier finish at 14th earlier today, I was charged up even more. I made a great start and overtook 9 riders to reach 5th spot in first lap itself. But just then the 2 riders before me crashed and I had to go back to save myself. Yet I could gain 3 spots and finish 11th which is the best ever for me in my 3 years of ARRC. Today, I feel great but tomorrow I will fight to finish in top 10."*

Taking on his debut season with fresh energy and confidence, the 18 year rookie rider **Senthil Kumar** said, *"Its been a fantastic day of learning for me. The competition is very tough here. I started strong and overtook 3 riders in first lap itself. Thereafter the battle was to hold my front and I could successfully do that. Personally, I am both humbled to earn points for the only Indian team in my debut ARRC race itself and am excited to do even better in race 2 tomorrow."*

REFERENCE ANNEXURE:

IDEMITSU Honda Racing India team – Rider Profile

Championship	Machine	Rider	Age	Nationality	Career Highlights
FIM Asia Road Racing Championship 2019 (Asia Production 250 class)	CBR250RR	**Rajiv Sethu**	Nov, 1997 **(21 yr)**	India	**2018:** - ARRC, AP 250 (27th) - Thai Talent Cup (12th) - INMRC Super Sport 165 (2nd) **2017:** - ARRC, AP 250 (46th) - Thai Talent Cup (16th) - INMRC Super Sport 165 (2nd) - CBR 250R One Make Race (1st) **2016:** - Honda Asia Dream Cup (12th) - INMRC Pro Stock 165 (1st) - CBR 250R One Make Race (1st)
		Senthil Kumar	Feb, 2001 **(18 yr)**	India	**2018:** - Thai Talent Cup (20th) - INMRC Pro Stock 165 (3rd) - IDEMITSU Honda Talent Cup CBR 250R (3rd) **2017:** - CBR 150R One Make Championship - **Debut in racing with Honda**

About 2019 FIM Asia Road Racing Championship:
FIM Asia Road Racing Championship (ARRC) is Asia's most competitive motorcycle road racing championship in its 24th year. The 2019 season has 7 rounds across 5 countries (Malaysia* 2, Australia, Thailand * 2, Japan & South Korea). The battle for 2019 championship starts this weekend (8-10 March) at Sepang International Circuit, Malaysia.

In 2019 ARRC features four classes - the newly introduced premier class of Asia Superbike 1000 (ASB1000), SuperSports 600 (SS600), Asia Production 250 (AP250) and Underbone class (UB150).

Representing the solo Indian team at the event - IDEMITSU Honda Racing India are two riders – Rajiv Sethu and the rookie Senthil Kumar who fight on the CBR250RR.

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