



## Honda 2Wheelers India announces ambitious 2019 motorsport direction

### Honda's 4 Indian riders to realize dreams of representing India at international motorsport championships

- **'IDEMITSU Honda Racing India' to strengthen India's solo pitch at 2019 Asia Road Racing Championship**
  - 2019 ARRC riders: Experienced Rajiv Sethu and rookie Senthil Kumar in AP250
- **Honda fast-tracks career development of 2018 Honda Talent Hunt riders to Asia level**
  - India's teen power at 2019 Thai Talent Cup: 14 yr Mohamed Mikail & 18 year Kritik Habib
- **Honda 2Wheeler companies in Asia Oceania including India push for Asia Power at top level of world racing**
  - 4 of Asia's most promising riders to compete in Moto2, Moto3 class in 2019 MotoGP season
  - Aiming to develop world-class Race technicians, Indian member now part of Honda Asia-Dream Racing with SHOWA team
  - This team to compete in the prestigious All Japan Road Race Championship, Suzuka 8 Hour Endurance Race and new ASB1000 class of Asia Road Racing Championship in 2019

**Chennai, March 1, 2019:** Challenging itself to strive to develop world class iconic motorsport riders and team mechanics from India, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. today announced its international racing team for 2019 season.

In 2019, Honda reinforces its commitment on its direction which is **'To develop iconic Indian rider for National & International Championships'** with a **more aggressive THREE-PRONGED approach.**

Elaborating on Honda's 2019 plans to discover and nurture riders from India to compete internationally, **Mr. Prabhu Nagaraj, Vice President – Brand and Communications, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd.** said,

*"Honda is driven by a challenging spirit and passion to win. A lot of people have high expectations from us, so we will work hard as a team to get the best possible results. With 2 of India's most promising riders representing the IDEMITSU Honda Racing India at Asia level, we are aiming that our boys climb the top group and make India proud on the international stage in 2019.*

*Last year, we announced our motorsport direction. And now, staying true to our commitment, we are fast-tracking the development of 2 next generation riders to the Asian platform. Starting from identifying high potential riders as young as 13 years through our 'IDEMITSU Honda India Talent Hunt to aiming to develop a top Indian rider for MotoGP, Honda has an aggressive roadmap to support young Indian riders to realize their dreams."*

## **Honda 2Wheelers India's team IDEMITSU Honda Racing India at ARRC & TTC:**

In the 2019 season of Asia Road Racing Championship (ARRC) - Asia's toughest road racing championship since 24 years, the solo Indian team **IDEMITSU Honda Racing India** strives to emerge as a tough challenger to the best Asian riders in the Asia Production 250cc class.

Leading the battle in ARRC battle will be **experienced Rajiv Sethu** for whom this year will be his 3<sup>rd</sup> season in ARRC. Rajiv has shown consistent improvement since his ARRC debut in 2017; climbing from 46<sup>th</sup> spot in his inaugural year to and earning India multiple points and closing 27<sup>th</sup> position in 2018.

Backing Rajiv up as teammate is the 17-year-old **promising rookie rider Senthil Kumar**. In 2018, Senthil showed promising results in his debut year at Thai Talent Cup while grabbing the 3<sup>rd</sup> position in the 2018 INMRC Pro Stock 165cc championship on the domestic front.

Sharing his thoughts, **Rajiv Sethu** shared, *"This is my third year in ARRC, and I'm very thankful to Honda 2Wheelers India for giving me this great platform. I am realizing my dreams to grow my skills and prove myself in international championships. With every season, I am going a step closer to my dreams. For 2019 my preparation has been the toughest with Honda's best in class training facilities. This year I am challenging myself to climb even further and strive to close the season in top 15."*

Making his debut in ARRC, **Senthil Kumar** said, *"I feel very blessed to get international opportunities with Honda in just 2 years since start of my professional racing. ARRC will be my first ever exposure to the Asia's toughest race. I am extremely happy and excited to be a part of the **IDEMITSU Honda Racing team** and representing India on international soil. It is a dream opportunity for me after Thai Talent Cup and I've prepared day and night for to make our country proud. Looking forward for a great learning with team Honda!"*

## **IDEMITSU Honda India Talent Hunt to Thailand Talent Cup (TTC) 2019:**

The biggest hurdle in the development of an INDIAN iconic rider for International Championships has been the late entry point into professional racing. But Honda's is challenging this and fast-tracking the career development of young Indian riders who have high potential.

The unique platform – the **IDEMITSU Honda India Talent Hunt**, introduced in 2018, has become a huge success in the country. Honda's team of experts combed through 132 young riders at the hunt, hailing from 21 cities across 7 states and has identified top 12 with immense potential.

The new riders for 2019 season of Thai Talent Cup are **14-year-old Chennai boy Mohamed Mikail & 18-year-old Kritik Habib** from Gadag, Karnataka. From bagging top positions in IDEMITSU Honda India Talent Cup last year to fast-tracked career development through Honda's key Asian rider development program, these talent hunt stars have come a long way.

Giving priority to developing not just world level rider but also technician, Mr. P Prabhakaran will join **"Honda Asia-Dream Racing Team with SHOWA"** competing in new category Superbike1000cc class (ASB1000) as a part of HADR technical team

**About 2019 FIM Asia Road Racing Championship:** The 24<sup>th</sup> edition of FIM Asia Road Racing Championship is Asia's most competitive motorcycle road racing championship, held since 1996. The 2019 season will have a total of seven rounds across 5 countries (Malaysia\* 2, Australia, Thailand \* 2, Japan & South Korea) starting from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019 with the battle going all the way to the last round December 2019. ARRC is part of the production-based category of racing, similar to the Supersport World Championship. This year the Championship will feature four main classes. This includes the newly introduced premier class of Asia Super Bike 1000 over and above the existing three classes SuperSports 600cc, Asia Production 250cc, and the Underbone 150cc.

**< REFERENCE 1: Overview of Honda's road racing teams and riders in 2019 >**

▪ **IDEMITSU Honda Racing India team from INDIA for international racing**

Championship (class)	Machine	Rider	Age	Nationality	Career Highlights
<b>FIM Asia Road Racing Championship (AP 250)</b>	CBR250 RR	<b>Rajiv Sethu</b>	Nov, 1997 <b>(21 yr)</b>	India	<b>2018:</b> - ARRC, AP 250 (27 <sup>th</sup> ) - Thai Talent Cup (12 <sup>th</sup> ) - INMRC Super Sport 165 (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) <b>2017:</b> - ARRC, AP 250 (46 <sup>th</sup> ) - Thai Talent Cup (16 <sup>th</sup> ) - INMRC Super Sport 165 (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) - CBR 250R One Make Race (1 <sup>st</sup> ) <b>2016:</b> - Honda Asia Dream Cup (12 <sup>th</sup> ) - INMRC Pro Stock 165 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) - CBR 250R One Make Race (1 <sup>st</sup> )
		<b>Senthil Kumar</b>	Feb, 2001 <b>(18 yr)</b>	India	<b>2018:</b> - Thai Talent Cup (20 <sup>th</sup> ) - INMRC Pro Stock 165 (3 <sup>rd</sup> ) - IDEMITSU Honda Talent Cup CBR 250R (3 <sup>rd</sup> ) <b>2017:</b> - CBR 150R One Make Championship - <b>Debut in racing with Honda</b>
<b>Thai Talent Cup (NSF 250)</b>	NSF250 R	<b>Mohamed Mikail</b>	March, 2004 <b>(14 yr)</b>	India	<b>2018:</b> - Debut in racing with Honda - IDEMITSU Honda Talent Hunt prodigy - IDEMITSU Honda Talent Cup CBR 150R (1 <sup>st</sup> )
		<b>Kritik Habib</b>	March, 2000 <b>(18 yr)</b>	India	2018: - Debut in racing with Honda - IDEMITSU Honda Talent Hunt prodigy - IDEMITSU Honda Talent Cup CBR 150R (3 <sup>rd</sup> )

▪ **Exclusive teams for top Asian riders by Honda\* including India**

Championship (class)	Team	Machine	Rider	Age	Nationality	2018 result
<b>FIM Grand Prix World Championship (Moto2)</b>	<b>IDEMITSU Honda Team Asia</b>	KALEX	Dimas Ekky Pratama	26	Indonesia	CEV Moto2 (5 <sup>th</sup> )
			Somkiat Chantra	20	Thailand	CEV Moto3 (9 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>FIM Grand Prix World Championship (Moto3)</b>	<b>Honda Team Asia</b>	NSF250RW	Kaito Toba	18	Japan	Moto 3 (22 <sup>nd</sup> )
			Ai Ogura	17	Japan	CEVMoto3 (5 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>All Japan Road Race Championship (JSB 1000)</b>	<b>Honda Asia-Dream Racing Team with SHOWA *</b>	CBR1000RR SP	Zaghwan Zaidi	23	Malaysia	JSB 1000 (17 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>Suzuka 8 Hour Endurance Race</b>		CBR1000RR SP				Suzuka 8 hr (7 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>FIM Asia Road Racing Championship / ARRC (ASB 1000)</b>		CBR1000RR SP				-

\* Collectively by all Honda 2Wheeler companies in Asia and Oceania region including India (HMSI)