

# STAGE SET FOR EXCITING START

DC CORRESPONDENT

The 2019 season of the MRF MMSC Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship, commencing at the Kari Motor Speedway on Friday, will move up a couple of notches in quality and competitiveness with country's leading 2-wheeler manufacturers Honda and TVS, playing key roles in the process. With 178 entries and a record 15 teams, the highest-ever in the championship's history, in the fray, the weekend card has 17 races scheduled. The National Championship will be headlined by the Pro-Stock 301-400cc class, besides Pro-Stock 165cc, Pro-Stock 201-300cc and Stock 165cc (Novice and Girls). That apart, the One-Make Championships

by Honda (Idemitsu Honda Talent Cup, CBR 150) and TVS Racing (Apache RTR 310 Open, RTR 200 Novice and Girls), will be run concurrently.

Title sponsors MRF will provide slick tyres for Pro-Stock 165cc and Pro-Stock 301-400cc classes. The slicks were introduced for the 2018 season and met with immediate approval and appreciation from the riders for the better grip, especially through the corners.

MMSC President Ajit Thomas said: "We at the MMSC have been actively working towards our vision of providing a strong platform for young riders to express their talent on the race track before moving on to the next level. In this regard, we acknowledge the active involve-

ment of our long-time partners MRF Tyres who have spared no effort to provide us with high-quality racing tyres. The MMSC also have kept pace with changing times by constantly upgrading equipment and infrastructure to make racing more safer

and competitive."

Over the past couple of seasons, the competition in every category has become sharper and closer, resulting in exciting fare, and there are pointers that it would be even more so in the new season.

The two top manufacturers, Honda and TVS, have also contributed hugely to the National championship with their respective one-make series. This season, in a landmark move, Honda will be introducing FIM Moto3 spec NSF250R that will replace the CBR 250 in their One-Make Championship from the next round. It is part of the Honda India Talent Cup programme designed to unearth young talent that can be groomed for participation in various international events, including the World Championship.

The Honda Novice class (CBR 150) will see a grid of 15 riders, all under 19 years of age, thus emphasising the focus on young talent with a long-term development programme.