



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

- ***Dean Mascarenhas stuns quality field to top timesheets***
- ***Karna Kadur ahead in AVT Gold Cup FIA APRC-Asia Cup***
- ***Anushriya Gulati leads Women's category***

Chennai, March 15: Mangaluru's Dean Mascarenhas and co-driver Konganda Karumbaiah from Ammati, Kodagu, came up with a stunning drive to top the time sheets in the 47<sup>th</sup> MMSC South India Rally, the first round of the Blueband fmsci Indian National Rally Championship 2024, which saw the 51 competitors doing two loops of the 1.55 Kms Super Special Stage at the Madras International Circuit here on Friday.

While 30-year-old Mascarenhas (DB Motorsports) did the star turn in his Volkswagen Polo to emerge provisional leader, Bengaluru's Karna Kadur combining with veteran co-driver Musa Sherif (Kasargod) for the first time, led the field in the AVT Gold Cup FIA APRC Asia Cup, but was only sixth fastest in the combined standings.

Further down the grid, Delhi's Maninder Singh Prince (co-driver Arjun Dheerendra, Bengaluru) of SNAP Racing, topped in the INRC 2 class while Bengaluru's Arjun Rajiv (co-driver Vinay Padmashali, Mysuru) took a slender leader in INRC 3 and Junior INRC, and Anushriya Gulati raced to a comfortable lead in the Women INRC categories.

Meanwhile, the Bengaluru pair of Pragathi Gowda and co-driver Trisha Alonkar, sponsored by SIDVIN and MRF Tyres, in an All-Wheel Drive Subaru Impreza for the first time, struggled a bit and was placed third in the Asia Cup, behind Kadur and Wadia.

Mascarenhas said: "I am driving the same car as last season which was a bit of up-and-down for me. But today, the car was great and we had no issues with it. Happy to finish the day as the Overall leader, though I am aware it's still early days and plenty more Stages to negotiate over the next two days."

The early leaders after Friday's shootout when two cars raced on parallel tracks, face acid test over the next two days when the competitors head out to Special Stages in AAVISA and Kelam besides the Track.

Unaudited classification (after Section-1, Leg-1):

FIA APRC-Asia Rally Cup: 1. Karna Kadur (Bengaluru) / Musa Sherif (Kasargod) (Arka Motorsports) (02mins, 56.8secs); 2. Harkrishan Wadia (Delhi) / Kunal Kashyap

(Himachal) (Arka Motorsports) (02:57.7); 3. Pragathi Gowda / Trisha Alonkar (Both Bengaluru) (Pvt.) (02:58.7).

Blueband Fmsci Indian National Rally Championship:

Overall: Dean Mascarenhas (Mangaluru) / Gagan Karumbaiah (Kodagu) (DB Motorsports) (02:53.8); Maninder Singh Prince (Delhi) / Arjun Dheerendra (Bengaluru) (SNAP Racing) (02:55.3); Younus Ilyas (Kollam) / Chandramouli M (Bengaluru) (SNAP Racing) (02:55.7).

INRC 2: Maninder Singh Prince / Arjun Dheerendra (02:55.3); Philippos Matthai (Delhi) / PV Srinivasa Murthy (Bengaluru) (Arka Motorsports) (02:55.7); 3. Aditya Thakur / Virender Kashyap (both Himachal) (Chettinad Sporting) (02:56.5).

INRC 3: Arjun Rajiv (Bengaluru) / Vinay Padmashali (Mysuru) (Chettinad Sporting) (02:58.6); 2. Sheshank Jamwal (Himachal) / Aseem Sharma (Chandigarh) (Arka Motorsports) (02:58.8); 2. Vishak Balachandran (Thiruvananthapuram) / Anil Abbas (Ernakulam) (Chettinad Sporting) (02:59.3).

Junior INRC: 1. Arjun Rajiv (Bengaluru) / Vinay Padmashali (Mysuru) (02:58.6); 2. Arnav Pratap Singh (Delhi) / Rohit N (Bengaluru) (SNAP Racing) (02:59.8); 3. Nikhil J (Bengaluru) / Raghuram Saminathan (Coimbatore) (Pvt.) (03:04.3);

Women INRC: 1. Anushriya Gulati (Dehradun) / Karan Aukta (Arka Motorsports) (03:06.0); 2. Tarushi Vikram / Sheraz Ahmed (both Chikkamagaluru) (Pvt.) (03:21.9); 3. Harshita Raj Gowda (Bengaluru) / Vignesh Mahalingam (Coimbatore) (Pvt.) (03:27.1);

Fmsci Challenge – Gypsy: 1. Dr Akarsh Sundar (Chikkamagaluru) / Ravikumar Reddy (Bengaluru) (Pvt.) (03:15.4); 2. Sanjay Agarwal / Dheeraj Manae (both Bengaluru) (Pvt.) (03:16.9); 3. Jayanth Somanathan / R Rajashekar (Pvt.) (03:18.8);

====

**For Media queries, please contact:**

Anand Philar - +91 94835 48185

David Bodapati - +91 98455 69496



MARCH 15-17, CHENNAI, INDIA MADRAS INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT



fmsci



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

- **52 entries for 47<sup>th</sup> MMSC South India Rally**
- **10 Indian crews to contest AVT Gold Cup FIA APRC Asia Cup**
- **Stage set for Blueband fmsci Indian National Rally Championship Round-1**

Chennai, March 13: There is heightened expectations and excitement ahead of the 47<sup>th</sup> MMSC South India Rally to be run here from March 15 to 17 and which has attracted 52 entries.

The three-day event, organized by the Madras Motor Sports Club, and promoted by Blueband Sports, doubles up as the first round of AVT Gold Cup FIA APRC South India Rally - Asia Cup which has received 10 entries, all from India, and the Blueband fmsci Indian National Rally Championship (52 entries, including the 10 APRC contenders) to be contested over 137 Kms of 13 Special Stages and covering an overall distance of about 446 Kms.

The Madras International Circuit is the hub of most activity, including the Super Special and Track Stages. It will also house the Service Park, the Rally Headquarters and Media Centre.

The Asia Cup entry list is headlined by Mangalorean Aroor Arjun Rao (co-driver Satish Rajagopal), the 2023 Overall National champion, driving a Maruti Suzuki Baleno and representing Mandovi Racing. Rao also heads the INRC field which includes Delhi's Harkrishan Wadia (co-driver Kunal Kashyap), the 2023 INRC 2 champion, and Chandigarh-based Jahaan Singh Gill (Suraj Keshav Prasad) of SNAP Racing who has moved up to INRC 2 after capturing the INRC 3 and JINRC titles last season.

A notable absentee is multiple APRC and INRC champion Gaurav Gill who had originally entered, but withdrew at the last minute due to delay in getting his Ford Fiesta shipped from Dubai in time for this weekend's event.

The seven-round INRC comprises various classes that include Overall (INRC), INRC 2, INRC 3, Junior INRC (below 26 years of age) and Women, besides the FMSCI Challenge Cup, a non-championship category for Maruti Gypsy vehicles.

The weekend action will witness seven female competitors, including five drivers – Pragathi Gowda (Bengaluru), Harshitha Gowda (Bengaluru), Phoebe Nongrum (Arunachal Pradesh), Anushriya Gulati (Pune, 2023 women's champion) and Tarushi

Vikram (Chikkamagaluru), besides two co-drivers Trisha Alonkar (Bengaluru, 2023 National co-driver champion) and Shivani Parmar (Mumbai).

Pragathi, sponsored by SIDVIN, will be setting a milestone in Indian motorsport. She is poised to become the first female from India to pilot a four-wheel drive car, the 300bhp Subaru Impreza shod with MRF Tyres, with Malaysian Karamjit Singh, the former World Rally champion (Production Cars), tutoring her.

“I am very excited and looking forward to the South India Rally. I am even more grateful that a legend like Karamjit Singh has taken time out to train me to drive this powerful car and SIDVIN for supporting me. I haven’t had any seat time in this car, and it will be a learning curve for me,” said Pragathi who will be partnered by co-driver Trisha Alonkar.

FIA Observer, Dale Moscott from Australia, was all praise for the organisers and the Special Stages. “I did a recce of the Kelam Stage yesterday. The organisers have done a great job in putting together so many kilometres into such a small place. It is fully fenced off area and so security and everything is fantastic in the Stage. It will be challenging to all competitors. Today, we went on the other Stages (Aavisa and Track) which are the same as last year. Lots of turns and bumps, and so, very challenging. The facility here at the race track (Madras International Circuit) is great.”

Taking an overview of the event, Clerk-of-the-Course (CoC) Manoj Dalal, who is also the secretary of MMSC, said: “You can expect an action-packed weekend as the field, rich in youth and experience, is extremely competitive. There are many familiar faces and a few relatively new entrants. As organisers, MMSC has taken every precaution and all permissions to ensure a safe and successful event which is a showpiece in the INRC calendar. We extend our thanks to all the sponsors, the promoters, the Media and, of course, the competitors, for their whole-hearted support and involvement.”

The competitors are scheduled to do a reconnaissance of all the Special Stages on Thursday and Friday morning. The competition will commence on Friday afternoon with the Spectator Special Stage at the Madras International Circuit. The following two days will witness the competitors negotiating the other Special Stages (Track, AAVISA and Kelam). The Rally will conclude on Sunday afternoon with prize-distribution ceremony at the MIC.

=====

**For Media queries, please contact:**

Anand Philar: +91 94835 48185 / David Bodapati: +91 98455 69496



## INVITATION

The Madras Motor Sports Club invites to the pre-event Press Conference at **12.30 pm on Friday, March 15**, followed by lunch at the Madras International Circuit ahead of the 47th MMSC South India Rally which is also the first round of Blueband fmsci Indian National Rally Championship 2024 and a round of the AVT Gold Cup FIA APRC-Asia Cup, to be held on March 15-17.

We request you to please stay back and attend the **ceremonial flag-off at 2.30 pm** by Thiru K Shanmugam, SP, Kanchipuram, at the Madras International Circuit.

We look forward to having you with us this weekend.

==

**For Media queries, please contact:**

Anand Philar - +91 94835 48185

David Bodapati - +91 98455 69496



## MEDIA RELEASE

- ***Aroor Arjun Rao ahead in FIA APRC-Asia Cup***
- ***Aditya Thakur seizes Overall lead in MMSC South India Rally***
- ***Arjun Rajiv, Anushriya Gulati surge ahead***

Chennai, March 16: The Himachal pair of Aditya Thakur and co-driver Virender Kashyap gave themselves the best possible start for the 2024 season with a near-flawless drive to lead the timesheets in the 47<sup>th</sup> MMSC South India Rally, a round of the AVT Gold Cup FIA APRC-Asia Cup and the Blueband Fmsci Indian National Rally Championship near here on Saturday.

Meanwhile, in the Asia Cup, Mangaluru's Aroor Arjun Rao along with Bengaluru-based co-driver Satish Rajagopal shrugged off a launch control issue with their Mandovi Racing's Maruti Baleno to snatch a four-second lead over Delhi's Harkrishan Wadia (co-driver Kunal Kashyap, Himachal) while the Bengaluru tandem of Pragathi Gowda and co-driver Trisha Alonkar, in a 4-wheel Drive Subaru Impreza were placed third.

The South India Rally concludes on Sunday when five more Stages will be run.

Winning four of the day's six Stages, Thakur piloted his Chettinad Sporting-prepared Volkswagen Polo with aplomb to take a handy 9.2 seconds lead over overnight leader Dean Mascarenhas (co-driver Gagan Karumbaiah) who had to deal with a misfiring engine through the day. Incidentally, Thakur also leads in the INRC 2 category.

Bengaluru's Arjun Rajiv (co-driver Vinay Padmashali, Mysuru) of Chettinad Sporting consolidated his overnight lead in the INRC and Junior INRC categories, as did Dehradun's Anushriya Gulati (co-driver Karan Aukta) of Arka Motorsports in the Women INRC class.

"I had issues with the launch control and was losing precious seconds at the start itself. Not much we can do about it right now since it is an electrical issue. I guess, I have to push really hard tomorrow to make up for the time lost at the start," said Aroor.

A beaming Thakur said: "After winning the National title in 2022, I had a very bad 2023 season when I was struggling to even finish a Rally. But I put in lot of hard work during the pre-season to get to where I am today. I think, the tyre choice really helped me today, opting for the correct compound. The MRF tyres worked really well and overall, I barely made a mistake today." said Thakur.

For Karna Kadur (Arka Motorsports) who was among the title favourites, it was yet another disappointing run leading to retirement due to gearbox issues. A puncture in the day's second Stage, besides gear stuck in fourth, cost him more time. "I am not sure if I can rejoin the Rally tomorrow since it depends on whether we will be able to fix the issue tonight," said Kadur.

Pragathi Gowda, sponsored by SIDVIN and MRF Tyres, survived a close call on the day's last Stage when she ignored a call by her co-driver Trisha Alonkar just after the start and slammed into a gate. "I made a mistake in not listening to Trisha's call. I reversed and continued, but it cost me time. But otherwise, I am getting comfortable with the Subaru and improving my pace with each outing. Yes, I made 28 seconds on my own time during the second run of the AAVISA Stage. My learning continues."

#### **Partial classification (after Leg-1):**

**FIA APRC-Asia Rally Cup:** 1. Aroor Arjun Rao (Mangaluru) / Satish Rajagopal (Bengaluru) (Mandovi Racing) (01hr, 09mins, 39.8secs); 2. Harkrishan Wadia (Delhi) / Kunal Kashyap (Himachal) (Arka Motorsports) (01:09:53.5); 3. Pragathi Gowda / Trisha Alonkar (Both Bengaluru) (Pvt.) (01:10:01.2).

#### **Blueband Indian National Rally Championship:**

**Overall:** 1. Aditya Thakur / Virender Kashyap (both Himachal) (Chettinad Sporting) (01:08:46.0); 2. Dean Mascarenhas (Mangaluru) / Gagan Karumbaiah (Kodagu) (DB Motorsports) (01:09:24.5); 3. Aroor Arjun Rao / Satish Rajagopal (01:09:39.8);

**INRC 2:** 1. Aditya Thakur / Virender Kashyap (01:08:46.0); 2. Philippos Matthai (Delhi) / PV Srinivasa Murthy (Bengaluru) (Arka Motorsports) (01:09:49.0); 3. Aroor Vikram Rao (Mangaluru) / AG Somayya (Kodagu) (Pvt.) (01:09:52.8).

**INRC 3:** 1. Arjun Rajiv (Bengaluru) / Vinay Padmashali (Mysuru) (Chettinad Sporting) (01:10:41.2); 2. Vishak Balachandran (Thiruvananthapuram) / Anil Abbas (Ernakulam) (Chettinad Sporting) (01:11:36.8); 3. Arnav Pratap Singh (Delhi) / Rohit N (Bengaluru) (SNAP Racing) (01:12:03.5).

**Junior INRC:** 1. Arjun Rajiv (Bengaluru) / Vinay Padmashali (Mysuru) (Chettinad Sporting) (01:10:41.2); 2. Arnav Pratap Singh (Delhi) / Rohit N (Bengaluru) (SNAP Racing) (01:12:03.5); 3. Ajay Shankar (Kollam) / S Nitharshan (Kallakurichi) (Mandovi Racing) (01:13:45.9).

**Women INRC:** 1. Anushriya Gulati (Dehradun) / Karan Aukta (Shimla) (Arka Motorsports) (01:02:36.1); 2. Phoebe Nongrum (Shillong) / Ross Nash (Hyderabad) (SNAP Racing) (01:07:42.7).

**Fmsci Gypsy Challenge:** 1. Sanjay Agarwal / Dheeraj Manae (both Bengaluru) (Pvt.) (01:05:44.5); 2. Baljinder Singh Dhillon (Delhi) / Goutham CP (Chikkamgaluru) (Pvt.) (01:06:10.4); 3. Jayanth Somanathan / R Rajashekar (both Bengaluru) (Pvt.) (01:06:49.8).

====

**For Media queries, please contact:**

Anand Philar - +91 94835 48185

David Bodapati - +91 98455 69496





## **MEDIA RELEASE**

- ***Triple delight for Harkrishan Wadia and Kunal Kashyap***
- ***Shillong's Phoebe Nongrum clinches Women INRC crown***

Chennai, March 17: On a day of drama, Delhi's Harkrishan Wadia (co-driver Kunal Kashyap, Himachal) of Arka Motorsports emerged champion in the 47<sup>th</sup> MMSC South India Rally, here on Sunday even as several leading title contenders retired due to various issues with their vehicles.

Wadia not only topped the round of AVT Gold Cup FIA APRC-Asia Cup but also the season-opener of the Blueband Fmsci Indian National Rally Championship 2024 besides taking the P1 spot in the INRC 2 category for a triple crown.

His main rivals in Asia Cup, SIDVIN-MRF Tyres sponsored Bengaluru pair of Pragathi Gowda and co-driver Trisha Alonkar, in a Subaru Impreza 4-wheel drive car whose windshield was shattered when hit by a stone thrown by a miscreant in the penultimate Stage, failed to finish as they ran out of fuel two Kms from the finish of the three-day event's last stage.

Consequently, second spot went to Hyderabad pair of Naveen Puligilla and co-driver Santosh Thomas with Coimbatore's Ramcharan C (co-driver Jeevarathinam, Bengaluru) of Arka Motorsports completing the podium. Only three of the nine starters in the Asia Cup completed the event.

Former World Rally champion (Production Cars), Karamjit Singh from Malaysia who is training Pragathi, was a shattered man. "We lost P2 in Asia Cup. We are still figuring out how they ran out of fuel, but on the positive side, I am happy at the progress Pragathi made in the past one week. She was stepping up the pace Stage by Stage and getting comfortable with the car. She has a lot of talent and potential," said Karamjit.

In the National Championship, Wadia won the Overall and INRC 2 titles with overnight leader Himachal's Aditya Thakur and co-driver Virender Kashyap (Chettinad Sporting) were docked a 30-second penalty for late check-in as they stopped to repair a damaged exhaust pipe after completing a Stage, and had to be content finishing second in INRC Overall and INRC 2 categories.

Earlier, overnight leader in the Asia Cup, Aroor Arjun Rao (co-driver Satish Rajagopal) of Mandovi Racing, packed up after the day's first Stage when he lost power steering.

Also retiring was Day-1 leader Dean Mascarenhas (co-driver Gagan Karumbaiah) of DB Motorsport due to a fuel pump issue in the day's penultimate Stage.

Harkrishan, son of former Rally ace Anil Wadia, could barely stop smiling. "I pushed hard today as I had to make some time. The car was great and I am thankful to MRF Tyres for all the support. I made just one mistake when I overran a corner, but fortunately, it did not impact my position on the leaderboard. Overall, a good start to the season."

A dejected Thakur rued that he slipped to second after looking primed to win. "We had an exhaust issue. So, after SS-11, we stopped on the transport section to carry out some running repairs. It cost us time and we had to take a 30-second penalty for late reporting at the next Time Control. We are extremely disappointed but hope to do better in the next round," said Thakur.

Kerala's Vishak Balachandran (co-driver Anil Abbas), supported by MRF Tyres, took the honours in the INRC 3 while Shillong's Phoebe Nongrum (co-driver Nash Ross, Hyderabad) of SNAP Racing, topped the Women INRC category with two front runners, Anushriya Gulati and Tarushi Vikram retired with mechanical problems. MRF Tyres-backed Arjun Rajiv from Bengaluru (co-driver Vinay Padmashali, Mysuru) of Chettinad Sporting drove well to clinch the title in the Junior INRC category.

Delhi's Baljinder Singh Dhillon (co-driver CP Gautam, Chikkamagaluru) emerged on top in the Fmsci Challenge Gypsy Cup.

Of the 51 crews who started the Rally, 23 retired. The second round of the INRC is scheduled to be held in Nashik from May 31 to June 2.

### **Provisional classification (after Leg-2):**

#### **FIA APRC-Asia Rally Cup:**

1. Harkrishan Wadia (Delhi) / Kunal Kashyap (Himachal) (Arka Motorsports) (02Hrs, 04mins, 59.8secs); 2. Naveen Puligilla / Santosh Thomas (both Hyderabad) (Pvt.) (02:15:22.0); 3. Ramcharan C (Coimbatore) / Jeevarathinam (Bengaluru) (Arka Motorsports) (02:17:24.1).

#### **Blueband Indian National Rally Championship:**

**INRC Overall:** 1. Harkrishan Wadia (Delhi) / Kunal Kashyap (Himachal) (Arka Motorsports) (02:04:59.8); 2. Aditya Thakur / Virender Kashyap (both Himachal) (Chettinad Sporting) (02:05:05.0); 3. Vishak Balachandran (Thiruvananthapuram) / Anil Abbas (Ernakulam) (Chettinad Sporting) (02:10:02.6).

**INRC 2:** 1. Harkrishan Wadia / Kunal Kashyap (02:04:49.8); 2. Aditya Thakur / Virender Kashyap (02:05:05.0); 3. Naveen Puligilla / Santosh Thomas (02:15:22.0).

**INRC 3:** 1. Vishak Balachandran / Anil Abbas (02:10:02.6); 2. Daraious Shroff (Mumbai) / Srikanth Gowda (Chikkamagaluru) (Chettinad Sporting) (02:10:48.1); 3. Samrat Yadav (Chandigarh) / Arvind Dheerendra (Bengaluru) (Pvt.) (02:11:48.2).

**Junior INRC (2 finishers):** 1. Arjun Rajiv (Bengaluru) / Vinay Padmashali (Mysuru) (Chettinad Sporting) (02:13:47.9); 2. Ajay Shankar (Kollam)/ S Nitharshan (Kallakurichi) (Mandovi Racing) (02:14:00.0).

**Women INRC (2 finishers):** 1. Phoebe Nongrum (Shillong) / Nash Ross (Hyderabad) (Snap Racing) (02:28:27.4); 2. Harshitha Gowda (Bengaluru)/ Vignesh Mahalingam (Coimbatore) (Pvt.) (02:45:42.8).

**Fmsci Gypsy Challenge:** 1. Baljinder Singh Dhillon (Delhi) / Goutham CP (Chikkamagaluru) (Pvt.) (02:21:51.9); 2. Dr Akarsh Sundar (Chikkamagaluru)/ Ravi Kumar (Bengaluru) (Pvt.) (02:24:45.7); 3. Jayanth Somanathan / R Rajashekar (Both Bengaluru) (Pvt.) (02:24:51.9).

====

**For Media queries, please contact:**

Anand Philar - +91 94835 48185

David Bodapati - +91 98455 69496