



Gulf Monsoon Scooter Rally 2017 on 2nd July, 2017

Rank outsider Venkatesh Shetty wins Gulf Monsoon Scooter Rally

Favourites took a beating in the 28th Gulf Oil Lubricants Monsoon Scooter Rally, organised by Sportscraft, on Sunday.

Rank outsider Venkatesh Shetty of Lorraine's Racing, riding an Aprilia SR 150, overcame a strong field that included a host of former champions and tough conditions to emerge triumphant in the popular two-wheeler time trial, run over the backwoods of Navi Mumbai.

In a field of 54 riders, the Mumbai rider, rode judiciously over the dirt tracts to win the grueling 35-km rally in a timing of 25 minutes and 15 seconds in penalties.

In the process he left former champions Syed Asif Ali, Shamim Khan, Rustom Patel, Manjeet Singh Bassan and Avtar Singh in the cold.

Pune's Pinkesh Thakkar of Team Ceat, also riding an Aprilia SR 150, was second in 00:25:43 seconds and defending champion Syed Asif Ali of TVS Racing, astride a TVS 4SXR 150, third in 00:25:44 seconds.

Nashik's Shamim Khan, who was looking to win the event for the fourth time, finished fourth astride an Aprilia SR 150 in 00:25:55 seconds, while Erimal Shekharan of Team Ceat, astride an Aprilia SR 150, placed fifth in 00:25:56 seconds.

The rally was flagged off by from Hotel K Star in Belapur CBD by popular Radio Jockeys Rohit and Harshit.

Heavy rain over the last few days made riding on the gravel-laden, winding course dicey. Under the circumstances, riders had to exercise extreme caution and control while negotiating the steep inclines, hairpin bends and water-logged stretches they encountered along the course. Some of them took a tumble or two and some even damaged their scooters in their bid to clock good timings in the competitive sectors.

For the record, only 49 of the 54 riders completed the race. Among them were 22 first timers, of which 18 completed the course.

There were two women who braved the challenge admirably. Mumbai's Nidhi Shukla of Team Ceat, riding a Honda Activa, completed the course in 00:37:13 seconds, while Priya Gala, astride a Suzuki Access, was home in 00:42:19 seconds.

Special mention must be made about the first-timers who went through the motions with equal élan. The best of them was Kolhapur's Aniket Korgaonkar, astride a TVS Jupiter. He completed the course in 00:32:27 seconds and was deservedly awarded the late Firdosh Vajifdar trophy and adjudged the best Kolhapur rider for his spirited effort.

Former champion Rustom Patel of TVS Racing, astride a TVS Wego, was adjudged the best Mumbai riders, having finished sixth in 00:26.44 seconds.

Speaking during lunch later, the riders applauded the challenge Sportscraft had plotted. They asked how they were to able to chalk out such a challenging course, which even utility vehicles would have found difficult to negotiate.

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