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Automobile News : India

**Toyota's Land Cruiser Prado wins Desert Dash 2009**

Editor Posted on 12/5/2009 2:12:28 AM

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The Desert Dash 09, featuring premium street legal SUVs and sedans exclusively in a rally format for the first time, was won by the team comprising of L. Khosla and Mr. A. Sharma, both first time rallyists, driving a Toyota Land Cruiser Prado. The rally officially began last Sunday and was run over four legs across the deserts of Rajasthan, combining both on and off-road routes, thereby testing the resilience of both the car and the competitors. The experienced Thunderbolt team, comprising of Anil Wadia and A. Naik in their Nissan X-Trail, claimed the first runner spot while the second runner up place was sealed by another rookie team, consisting of P.R. Sinha, V. Tuli and G. Varma driving a Porsche Cayenne. 15 out of the 16 starters completed the event.

A Mercedes E240 driven by R. Verma and K. Ratra also completed the drive across the Sambhar Lake bed, being perhaps the first time ever for a luxury sedan of its pedigree. The Porsche Cayenne, driven by the second runner team clocked the fastest time across the 21km stretch across the Sambhar Lake bed. S. Bansal and V. Bansal drove all the way from Kolkata in their Mitsubishi Outlander to participate in the thrill-with-luxury event. Other highlights included the wonderful welcome extended by Sh Gajendra Singh, Raja of Khimsar during the stay at Khimsar Fort.

Visibly pleased on the successful outcome of their first venture, Ashish Gupta, director of Cougar Motorsport said, "We are extremely satisfied and the success of Desert Dash 09 has been way beyond our imagination. We are grateful to all our participants for the enthusiasm and competitiveness shown and to the whole team at Cougar, who have taken time out from their busy schedules to work tirelessly towards making this event a success. We have already started to plan our next rally and strongly believe that it will be even more successful"

The Desert Dash 09, organized as a maiden venture of North India based motorsports club Cougar Motorsport, was a Closed Invitational Event, approved by FMSCI and with limited participation. The four-wheeled beauties on display in the inaugural event included cars like the BMW X5, Porsche Cayenne, Volkswagen Touareg, Mercedes M Class, Mercedes E Class, Mitsubishi Montero, Pajero & Outlander, Toyota Prado & Land Cruiser, Honda CRV and Ford Endeavour among others. The participants, all motor sports enthusiasts, included CEOs, senior executives, business owners and golf club members.

It is to be mentioned that Cougar Motorsport is a motorsport club in North India that brings together the experience of motor sport competitors, officials and event management specialists. All founders are professionals with large organizations who have experienced firsthand the added dimension that motorsport can bring to executive life. The Desert Dash 09 is their first of many such exciting ventures already planned.

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