

Spain's Martin the Sprint king

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Bezzecchi On Pole For Sunday's MotoGP; Martin & Leader Bagnaia Complete The First Row

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Greater Noida: Jorge Martin continued his rich vein of form to clinch the Sprint Race of the Grand Prix of India ahead of reigning MotoGP champion Francesco Bagnaia at the Buddh International Circuit (BIC), here on Saturday. Six-time MotoGP premier class champion Marc Marquez came third.

Martin, on a Prima Pramac Ducati, managed to build up a considerable gap between him and Bagnaia before settling for a 1.389-second lead at the chequered flag. Martin clinched 12 points for the Sprint win. Bagnaia got nine points, while Marquez got only his second podium of the season.

Earlier in the day, Mooney VR46 Racing rider Marco Bezzecchi grabbed pole position for Sunday's main race. Bezzecchi was the favourite to win the Sprint too, but torrential rain changed the conditions of the BIC track.

After winning the sprint, Martin spoke about the race and the prevailing conditions. "It was a nice race. The moments before the race were difficult with a lot of time in the box (due to rain). It was difficult to concentrate, but everything went well," the Spaniard said. "The condition of the track were also good. With lesser temperatures, it was nice to ride and everything was working a bit better."

"At present, I'm in the best form of my career and I hope to keep getting better," Mar-



WHEELING AWAY: Prima Pramac Racing's Spanish rider Jorge Martin (89) steers his bike during the Sprint Race of the MotoGP Bharat at the Buddh International Circuit

tin, who is a contender for the championship, added.

Mooney VR46 Racing team had a disastrous sprint. Its two riders, Bezzecchi and Luca Marini, collided at Turn 1. Marini missed his braking point and rammed into the back of pole-sitter Bezzecchi, thereby crashing out of the race at the first corner itself.

Bezzecchi recovered brilliantly to finish fifth. The Italian also clocked the fastest lap of the race with a time of 1:44.556. "I was quite strong in braking compared

to the riders in front, so I was able to pass as much as I could. I tried my best. Maybe with the normal length of the sprint, I would have managed to do a bit more," Bezzecchi said.

"I hope to pass the first corner in the main race without any damage. If I am not safe in the first row, then where do I start? It is the third time I have been crashed into by someone this season," Bezzecchi added.

In the morning session, Bezzecchi had set the qualifying time at 1 minute,

43.9470, registering the third pole of the season.

Martin claimed the second spot on the grid finishing 0.043 seconds slower than Bezzecchi. Martin, who has five podium finishes in the last eight main races, will look to keep his consistency intact on Sunday.

Championship leader Bagnaia ended third on the grid after clocking 1 minute, 44.2030 seconds. Bezzecchi's teammate Marini placed himself fourth on the starting grid after timing 1 minute, 44.2150 seconds.

The Repsol Honda pair of Joan Mir and Marc Marquez settled themselves at fifth and sixth on the grid.

Marc's younger brother Alex Marquez, representing the Gresini Racing team, crashed out on Turn 6 during qualification leaving him with injuries to his right hand and ribs. He was taken to the medical centre for a check-up.



ONE, TWO, THREE: Sprint race winner Jorge Martin (C), second-placed Francesco Bagnaia (L) and third-placed Marc Marquez