

[Grand Prix of India MotoGP event gets FIM's final approval \(moneycontrol.com\)](http://moneycontrol.com)

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The Buddh International Circuit (BIC) racetrack in Greater Noida has got the all-clear from the international motorsports body for two-wheelers, FIM, to host the country's first MotoGP race — the Grand Prix of India — on September 24.

The 13th leg of the prestigious MotoGP event will be the next big motorsports event to be organised at BIC after the three Formula 1 races held at the venue between 2011 and 2013.

Rohit Sharma, the chief marketing officer (CMO) of FairStreet Sports (MotoGP Bharat), the organisers of the event, said on September 15 that all the formalities were completed on Thursday and about 3,000 'race management crew' would be working to make the event a success.

"The FIM (Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme) officials were there yesterday and they have approved the track. The homologation, resurfacing, crash zones, grid zones, gravel, everything is done. It just got approved yesterday by the authorities," said Sharma.

Homologation is the process a racetrack is required to undergo for certification to organise an event.

"We have close to 500 personnel on the track in various functions (right now). We are expecting about 3,000 personnel (as the race weekend approaches), which are the race officials and back-end staff. We call them the race management crew." Sharma added that it wasn't easy bringing the BIC to the current shape given that the F1 race was held a decade ago.

"I wouldn't want to put a number (on the spending). This track was designed for F1. But ever since, its been over a decade and there's been no race. And when you talk about MotoGP and F1, they are like chalk and cheese; the dynamic are very different... tarmac quality, turf, the kerbs, crash zones are completely different. Especially, when you are doing bike race, which is especially a rigid frame.

"I mean there are no shockers (shock absorbers) in the bike and you are doing speeds upwards of 300km on average. The world record is 366kmph," he said.

"To do so (bring the track to MotoGP standards), there was a technical team from FIM which came in four months ago and did a recce." He said the actual work started after that and 100 days of backbreaking efforts went into preparing the track.

"We got into work around 100 days ago." He added that more than Rs 120 crore had been spent so far with a "significant amount coming from the government".

"I'm afraid I can't disclose that (money spent by government); it's significant. The cost of the race is upwards of Rs 120 crore," he said.

He added that the best riders in the business were looking forward to the experience and breaking the MotoGP speed record.

"(The riders) have only experienced the BIC in a virtual...simulator. And what excited them the most is that this track is above 5km. This is the only track that has the longest straight, which is 1.1 km. Like I said, 366 (kmph) is the world record...370 is a no-brainer (here). 370 they will clock." On the kind of revenue the event was looking at generating, he said, "I can't put a fiscal number but our broadcast partners are Jio Cinema and Viacom. We'll broadcast this race across 195 countries." He also added that the Rs 800 tickets had been sold out.

"Rs 800 slots are sold out, the Rs 2500 slot is (also) mostly sold out. The corporate box at Rs 1.8 lakh is committed by corporates mostly and the Rs 5,000 and Rs 20,000 (tickets), it usually happens in the last 10-odd days," added Sharma.

Hotel tariffs have skyrocketed following the announcement of the dates for MotoGP but Sharma said there was nothing much the event organisers could do about it.

"Frankly, we are not a governing body (for hotels) that we can tell them. It's like surge pricing. Hailing brands, aviation brands, etc (do it). Prices cannot be controlled," said Sharma.

He felt there was huge potential to build a brand and groom talented riders in the country, given that BIC had got the hosting rights for seven years.

"There is great potential in building talent. Several companies in India are making a lot of investments not only from a fiscal point of view but also from a long-term roadmap perspective. In the next couple of years, I am very hopeful, that maybe by next year, we possibly can have an Indian face in Moto3 (there are three tiers in the sport). There is a lot of talent brewing in India. They are unsung heroes right now."