

Gear up for return of Shinozuka

Safari Rally veteran will compete in the third round of 2015 KNRC in Kajiado this weekend

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Japan's Kenjiro Shinozuka will feature in this weekend's third round of the 2015 KCB Kenya National Rally Championship.

The announcement was made during media briefing for the KCB Kajiado Rally yesterday in Nairobi where the legendary Japanese driver was present.

However, the former Mitsubishi Ralliart Team driver, who tackled several editions of the Safari Rally in addition to winning the Paris-Dakar Marathon Raid Rally at the helm of his career, will only participate in the event as member of the Zero car, which is assigned the duties of opening the route for the rest of the competitors.

"It is nice to be on Kenyan soil. I was last here in 1996 when I finished the Safari Rally eighth. I'm looking forward to a good stay and fun in the rally where we will be visiting the famous Kajiado stages we used to tackle in those olden days," said Shinozuka, former winner of the 10,000km Paris-Dakar Marathon rally.

Legendary driver

Shinozuka is in Kenya at the invitation of the Delights Motors in conjunction with the Rallies Commission of the Kenya Motor Sports Federation. Delights Motors supports a team of drivers in the KCB KNRC series, among them Raaji Bharij, Alex Lairangi and Alfir Khan. The latter's Subaru Impreza N10 will be used for Zero car duties.

"We are more than privileged to have a rally legend in our rally. Our intention is also to get more drivers



ANWAR SIDI | NATION

Dennis Mewnda and Job Njiru drive through a muddy patch during the KCB Safari Rally. The KCB Kajiado Rally will be held this weekend.

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Kenjiro Shinozuka, rally driver

from Japan for the next Safari Rally with the help of Shinozuka," said Supi Soin, chairman of the Rallies Commission. The event to be organized by the Kenya Motor Sports Club, is set to have an international flavour. Apart from Shinozuka, Tapio Laukkanen of Finland and Germany's Mathias Kahle

will also be joining the frame.

The Finn, in his familiar Subaru Impreza, will be itching to bounce back after retiring from the KCB Safari Rally. Kahle will test his Nissan 240Z for the forthcoming Kenya Airways East African Safari Classic Rally to be run in November this year. The third of the eight-round KCB-sponsored series, has attracted over fifty entries with all the big guns expected back in action after a tough Safari Rally.

Pressure will no doubt be on the Safari Rally winner and current leader of the overall standings of the Kenya National Rally Championship, Jaspreet Chatthe to produce the great form that also saw him finish sixth overall and first in the South African round of the 2015 African Rally Championship.

Out of the total 320km, 161km will be competitive. It will be divided into three competitive stages to be repeated twice. The stage between Andy's Corner and Isinya (50km) will be the longest followed by Portland Cement to Rifle Range (28km) and Quarry Stage of seven kilometers. The rally will start on Saturday morning at 7am from the KCB branch in Kitengela.

The first part of the programme will start on Friday with the official reconnaissance of the stages.

With the current weather conditions getting worse with heavy rains in most areas of the country, drivers are bound to face some of the most slippery and wet stages, considering most of the stages are known to be covered with black cotton soil.

CRICKET

England will send out an inexperienced one-day side to take on Ireland next month with five uncapped players named yesterday in a squad led by new captain James Taylor.

SHINOZUKA IS BACK TO RACE

1996

Year Japanese Kenjiro Shinozuka finished second in the Safari Rally

TENNIS

Gasquet makes winning return

Fifth seed Richard Gasquet made a winning return after nearly six weeks out with a back injury as the Frenchman beat Marinko Matosevic of Australia 7-6 (9/7), 6-1 at the Estoril Open yesterday. The former ATP number seven currently ranked 28th took less than 90 minutes to dispatch the 82nd-ranked Matosevic in the opening round. Gasquet was one of two French winners as qualifier Kenny De Schepper put out Portugal's Gastao Elias 6-2, 2-6, 6-3 to move into a second-round meeting with Gasquet.

MOTORCYCLING

Pedrosa to miss out again in Spain

Honda MotoGP rider Dani Pedrosa will miss a third consecutive Grand Prix in Jerez this weekend as he continues to recover from surgery on a forearm injury.

The Spaniard missed the Grand Prix of the Americas and the Argentine Grand Prix after suffering discomfort in his right forearm in finishing sixth in the opening race of the season in Qatar.