

By Muhammad Haziq Patel

We all know that Pakistan has produced the best sportsmen in the world be it cricket, hockey or any other field sport. But still sports like motor racing remained unattended until Nur Ali stepped up to show the world that Pakistanis are not behind anyone.

Born on October 12, 1974 in Karachi, Nur Ali has a huge passion for motor sports which is something not so common in someone from a third-world country like Pakistan. He was eight years old when his family shifted to Germany and from there Nur went to the US from where he did his B.A from the American University, Washington D.C. acquiring a degree in International Relations.

His father ran a cloth business for which he had to go to other towns to take part in exhibitions and on these visits Nur would guide his dad, "The highways in Germany are very good, in fact they are the best in the world. I remember guiding my father and my father would drive at 160 m/hr."

When asked whether motor racing was just a hobby initially, he says "Motor sports was never a hobby, I always



On the fast track

wanted to take it up as a profession. But my dad wanted me to first complete my education as it should be my top-most priority. When I was 16 years of age I went to my dad and said that I now want to pursue my dream but he insisted that I do my graduation first. I then did my graduation in 1998, but after that my dad said that I should do my Masters as well. This time I resisted and said that it was time that I go forward to pursue

my dream. Then in 1998 I acquired a certificate in racing; I never knew that even a certificate exists in this sport."

His inspirations have come from Michael Schumacher and Juan Pablo Montoya, both well known racers in the international arena of the sport.

About his career he narrates his story in these words: "I started in 1998-9 and was looking for sponsorships but

unfortunately never got any. I then asked my dad to invest in my dream so that I can pursue it. I then started racing in 2000. In 2001, I took part in South West Formula Mazda Regional Circuit and won. This was when sponsorships

began to pour in. In 2002, I again took part in South West Formula Mazda Regional Circuit and retained my title, but unfortunately lost in 2003. Then in June 2003 I received a phone call from the Pakistan Embassy in the US and was informed that the people there had organized a meeting of my family with President Pervez Musharraf." He remembers his excitement being sky high on meeting the President of Pakistan, and recalls the meeting as extremely pleasant and encouraging. "The first question that the president asked me was why not cricket or hockey or any other sport, why something like motor racing; something that no Pakistani has done before? He laughed and then said that it's good to meet a Pakistani with such high ambitions."

In 2004, Nur Ali received a phone call from the A-1 team Pakistan requesting him to be part of the team in Pakistan's first venture in motor sports. Then in

February 2005, the A-1 team of Pakistan was announced and a press conference was held in which President Pervez Musharraf was also present. Nur says, "I was honoured as the President pronounced me as the 'Pioneer of Motor Racing in Pakistan' and then he assured me that I would get all assistance that I require from him. He (the president) has treated me like his own son."

When asked about his thoughts on representing Pakistan in the grand event, he says "Nothing is impossible, the world has seen many impossible things being achieved. But definitely the way should be to first acquire education and then follow your dreams making sure that it contributes in bettering the image of your country. In order to help better the image of Pakistan in motor sports, the corporate sector should step up and sponsor racers because motor racing is nothing without sponsorships. India has a little history in motor racing but Pakistan would begin on September 25, 2005, competing against 24 other nations. A-1 is very much like the Olympics of car racing."

Nur Ali's car has 550 horsepower with a V-8 engine designed by ZYTEK (a British company).

Nur comments on how he realized his passion, "Well, I believe I got the opportunity to study abroad which helped me recognize my passion. Over here, many youngsters have this passion but they don't even think of taking it as a profession since there is no support from the government and there isn't any corporate sponsorship. Once our people begin to back us up our country can out-do any other country."

In his message to his fans, he says "My personal message to my fans would be that I need their prayers and support. Other than that just acquire good quality education, believe in Almighty Allah and follow your dreams." ❀

