

Commander Mahesh sustains winning momentum

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WITH three matches left to be raced by each team, the tension is heating up at the ISS Mumbai International Match Race '09. On Tuesday, India's top seeded sailor, Commander Mahesh proved his and his team's mettle on the water after winning eight straight matches of the eight matches raced.

Following close on their heels is Nitin Mongia's team, who, yesterday had a dramatic win despite a gash in his boat after the opposition rammed into him. But on the national and international front the French

team, led by Skipper Francois Morvan is all set to give this year's host country of the international match races a good chase.

With 42 hard fought matches raced today off the waters of H2O Chowpatty, this time India really has outdone itself. Racing for the top four seats that would ultimately qualify for the semi-finals being held tomorrow, the teams are already dashing and gashing each others' boats out of the arena. So far, the top four appear to be three Arjuna awardees, Commander Mahesh, Nitin Mongia and Farokh Tarapore's teams, and the French team Skippered by Francois Morvan.

After a few bad starts and surprise de-

feats, the French are clearly getting used to the shifty and low winds off Mumbai's waters. "It is a lot easier for us now as we have been sailing in these wind conditions for four days, so we are more confident for the coming races as we have understood some of the wind shifts and patterns," says Jeremie Raymond from the team. Crewed by Jeremie, Rodrigue Cabaz, and Nicolas Dore, the French are currently the strongest international candidate for the semi finals.

Nitin Mongia managed to get himself strapped in another head to head match today, but this time around, it was against Farokh Tarapore.