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**Kenenisa Bekele and Florence Kiplagat to compete in TSK25K**

**Kolkata, 10 November 2017:** Distance running legend Kenenisa Bekele and Kenyan long distance star Florence Kiplagat have been signed up to compete in the Tata Steel Kolkata 25K on Sunday 17 December, the race promoters Procam International announced on Friday.

It will be the first race ever in India for Bekele, a three-time Olympic gold medallist and 18-time world champion on the track and cross country, and the first time he has ever raced over the distance.

The big question that will inevitably accompany the announcement of Bekele’s presence at the TSK25K will be, can he challenge the world record of 1:11:18, set by Kenya’s Dennis Kimetto in 2012?

Bekele’s 25km best is 1:12:47, an intermediate time when he ran in the Berlin Marathon last year, which he went on to win in 2:03:03 and go second on the all-time list for the classic distance.

Motivating Bekele in Kolkata will also be the fact that he failed to finish on his return to the German capital for this year’s marathon two months ago, his last race, and he will be out to prove he is back to his best.

"After my first visit to India a few years ago, as an ambassador for the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon, I have always been wanting to run here. The TSK25K seems to be the perfect opportunity: the route is historic, the weather expected to be cool and I am hoping to set a new course record, at the very least. I look forward to running in Kolkata and hope my presence motivates people to come and run,” commented Bekele.

The course goes along the historic Red Road that runs through the heart of Kolkata, as well as many other familiar sights of the city including Victoria Memorial and the Eden Gardens.

The long-range weather forecast suggests the temperatures should be around 12 degrees Celsius on the morning of the race.

With the race celebrating its fourth edition this year, the course record for the TSK25K stands at 1:17:16 from 2016 by the Indian international distance runner Govindan Lakshaman, which is also the Indian national record.

However, a runner of Bekele’s calibre and pedigree will be setting his sights higher and no doubt aware that the Asian all-comers record is 1:12:46 while the Ethiopian national record and former 25km world record is 1:11:37, held by the equally legendary Haile Gebrselassie.

Heading the women’s field at the TSK25K will be Kenya’s Florence Kiplagat.

She is also world champion on multiple surfaces, having won at the 2009 IAAF World Cross Country Championships and the 2010 IAAF World Half Marathon Championships and she is a former half marathon world record holder.

The women’s course record and Indian national 25km record is 1:27:31 set by Sudha Singh in 2015, a time which should be well within Kiplagat’s capabilities as she can boast of a personal best over the distance of 1:22:17, set during the Chicago Marathon last month.

“Procam International is committed to bring the best names in running to India. We have done that successfully in Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi and with Kolkata going international we will leave no stones unturned to make this event truly spectacular,” said Vivek Singh, Joint Managing Director, Procam International.

He added, " Having running legends like Bekele and Kiplagat as part of the elite line-up is an absolute honour for us and we are sure their presence will inspire and motivate runners to come and be a part of the TSK25K."

**One thing looks certain, 17 December will be a Sunday of superlatives in Kolkata.**

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**For more information about the Tata Steel Kolkata 25K, the event website is:** [**http://tsk25.procamrunning.in**](http://tsk25.procamrunning.in/)

**Other links:**

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/TSKolkata25/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/TSK25K>

Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/tskolkata25>

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**The attached images of Kenenisa Bekele and Florence Kiplagat are free-to-use for editorial purposes and have unrestricted media rights but please credit Procam International.**