



# SILK WAY 2017 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



## Loeb and Kolomy win first stage



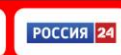
Sébastien Loeb (Peugeot 3008DKR Maxi n°104) in the cars and the Czech driver Martin Kolomy (Tatra n°311), in the trucks, are the first winners of the 2017 Silk Way Rally 2017, at the end of the opening stage between Moscow and Tcheboksary, situated on the banks of the River Volga. Top three for Peugeot and top two for Tatra.

### Key Points

- \*Cars: Loeb sets the pace
- \*T2: Di Lallo opens the score
- \*Camions: Tatra one-two, Kamaz make discreet start



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\*Tomorrow: Grand Kazan Track

## Cars: Loeb sets the pace

Sébastien Loeb and Daniel Elena (Peugeot 3008DKR Maxi n°104) made their intentions clear on the first 61 kilometre special. Over a slippery, WRC type piste, the nine times World Rally World Champion took nearly half a second a kilometre off his team mate Stéphane Peterhansel, second at 29 seconds. Opening the track today, Cyril Despres made sure the Peugeots got the first three places, finishing just over 2 minutes behind Loeb. Credited with exactly the same time, 03:38 behind the day's winner, the John Cooper Works Minis of the Saudian Yazeed Al Rajji and the American Bryce Menzies took fourth and fifth places respectively.

## T2 Class

### Di Lallo opens to score

In T2 category, reserved for production based vehicles, it was the Australian Adrian Di Lallo (Isuzu n°135) who took the first stage victory. He came home ahead of the factory Toyota Land Cruiser (Team Toyota Autobody) of the Japanese driver Akira Miura (n°133) and Frenchman Marco Piana (n°151).

### Trucks: one-two for Tatra, Kamaz make discreet start

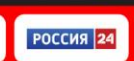
In the truck class the surprise of the day came from the Tatrás of Czech drivers Martin Kolomy (Tatra Phoenix n°311) and Ales Loprais (Tatra 815/2 n°305), first and second respectively on this first special. Clearly more at ease over the slippery tracks, the 'small' Czech vehicles came home ahead of Dutchman Ton Van Genugten Iveco and the MAZ of Belorussia Siarhei Viazovich. Gerard De Rooy and his new Iveco completed the top 5, more than 4 minutes behind Kolomy. Considerably further back, the Kamaz team made a surprisingly discreet debut on what could be considered a warm up special. First of the 'blue armada' trucks in was that of Anton Shibalov (Kamaz 4326 n°312) who this evening is in only 8th place, 4:18 behind the day's winner.

### Tomorrow: "Grand Kazan Track"

The second stage between Tcheboksary and Ufa (785.63 kms, of which 157 kms are special) takes the competitors over a piste that is at times narrow and technical. Other sections are faster, winding between vegetation. Care must be take not to cut corners as there are some big holes hiding in the long grass. Opening the piste won't be easy, with changes in direction sometimes hidden by the greenery.



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## QUOTES

### Stage 1

#### CARS

**Sébastien Loeb (Fra/Peugeot 3008DKR Maxi n°104):** *“Given the lack of grip we drove pretty defensively today. We had one or two ‘straight-ons’. It was particularly narrow and slippery on wet grass with a car that weighs nearly two tonnes. We nearly didn’t cut any corners, taking as few risks as possible. There was no strategy today as opening the piste tomorrow will certainly not be an advantage...”*

**Stéphane Peterhansel (Fra/Peugeot 3008DKR n° 106):** *“The hardest thing today was waking up at 2 in the morning, as yesterday evening, to be sure to fall asleep, I took a sleeping pill... Today we had a lot of lose and not much gain on this special. The ideal starting position tomorrow would be 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>...”*

**Cyril Despres (Fra/Peugeot 3008DKR n°100):** *“When you open the piste on this type of going, similar to what you might find in France, you know that you are going to lose time. We spent the special splashing through puddles and sliding around all over the place. Fortunately our starting position tomorrow should be better, but honestly at this stage of the race it isn’t that important.”*

**Yazeed AL Rajhi (Sau/Mini John Cooper Works n°101):** *“We had a few big slides today. It was the first time I have driven with Tom (Colsoul) and so we had to get used to each other. His English accent is more French than Timo’s (Gottschalk). We weren’t expecting to lose 3 minutes 30 to Peugeot over just 60 kilometres. It is a lot, but tyre width played a part in the grip and tomorrow we will start in a better position.”*

**Bryce Menzies (USA/Mini John Cooper Works n°105):** *“It was really slippery and we ran very wide (smiles). I have to get used to driving in conditions I don’t know. I think I will be able to pick up the pace on the faster tracks in Kazakhstan.”*

#### TRUCKS

**Martin Kolomy (CZE/Tatra Phoenix n°311):** *“We are used to driving in these conditions, at home in the Czech Republic. Of course it means opening the piste tomorrow. It won’t be a problem for me, but more for my co-driver, who comes from WRC and hasn’t raced in rally-raid before...”*

**Ton Van Genugten (NLD/Iveco 4X4 DML n°306):** *“We drove in the torque to stay on the track. In one way I am disappointed to have messed up a few corners, because without that*



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we could have posted a good result today. On the other hand starting 3rd tomorrow we won't have to wait too long for Gerard De Rooy, for whom I am water carrier..."

**Siarhei Viazovich (BLR/MAZ 5309 RR n°304):** "You need to be a bit fearless and a good driver to post a good time on this first special. We made a navigation mistake which costs us nearly 3 minutes. If you look at the times we could have won today..."

**Gerard De Rooy (NLD/Iveco 4x4 DML n°302):** "My truck went perfectly today. I saw van den Brink stopped and passed Mardeev, who obviously was struggling to find grip on the slippery ground. When I saw a Renault Sherpa coming up behind me I let him pass. I would have been better off keeping him behind me, as I didn't have any water left in my windscreen wipers and finished the special without much visibility. I could have done a better time today but I didn't want to take any risks."

**Anton Shibalov (RUS/Kamaz 4326 n°312):** "Starting behind most of the other trucks the track was really cut up. It was really hard to keep your line. So we took it very carefully. You needed to be a WRC driver today. It was like driving on soft snow."

**Martin van den Brink (NLD/Renault Sherpa n°301):** "I caught up Mardeev's Kamaz, who started ahead of me, really quickly. On coming up behind a stopped car I tried to avoid it by going right but I got stuck for several minutes, which allowed De Rooy to get past. Fortunately I restarted just behind him and he let me by. After that I didn't see anyone, but there was really no grip."

**Ayrat Mardeev (RUS/Kamaz 4326 n°300):** "Starting first truck in these conditions was a big handicap. We had to drive very carefully so as not to damage our Kamaz. When De Rooy and van den Brink passed me I could see that it was much easier to stay in their wake."



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## FAITHFUL PARTNERS

### GAZPROM, the rally's main partner

Sponsor since the first edition of the Silk Way Rally in 2009, the Russian company PJSC Gazprom is engaged on the event as a main partner for a minimum of two years.

### TOYOTA, « official vehicles » of the organization

Because of their unique design and capabilities, TOYOTA all-terrain vehicles have proved their extraordinary resistance in Russian, Kazakh and Chinese during the various reconnaissance and on the rally. TOYOTA, which symbolizes technical and technological confidence, has been the official supplier of Silk Way Rally cars since 2016, accompanying the rally on both road and track.

### SIBUR, technical partner

SIBUR is the technical partner for innovative materials and is sponsoring a special award "For impressive vehicle reliability and excellent skills demonstrated under extreme circumstances".

### GAZPROM NEFT, official fuel partner

Gazprom will be filling up the Silk Way Rally's vehicles along the route with the company's newly launched branded diesel fuel, Diesel Opti.

Diesel Opti reduces overall fuel consumption and optimizes performance, enabling Rally drivers to enjoy the full potential of their engines and concentrate on driving in extreme conditions.



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