



# SILK WAY 2019 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



## PRESS RELEASE

Baikalsk, July 7th 2019

GMT +8

### S.1 – IRKUTSK-BAIKALSK

Distance: 254,90KM - Selective section: 50,87KM

#### IRKUTSK-BAIKALSK - Siberian "taiga" forest

51 kilometers along the narrow roads in Siberian taiga. On the first kilometers the track was hard and stony, not easy to find an opportunity to overcome. Forest roads, river beds and dusty Siberian hills were the first steps into an amazing racing journey. All those that had meet all the challenges of the day will get some rest at an enjoyable rally bivouac, situated right on the Baikal lake shores.

#### @ OF NOTE

# Bikes: Nenavides family fiesta

# Cars: Al-Attiyah and buggy woogie

# Trucks: Viazovich and his MAZ nose ahead

# Tomorrow: Bye bye taiga, hello the Bouriatie





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## S.1 – The race



Credit MCH Photo/Marian Chytka



Credit DPPI Photo/Eric Vargiolu



Credit Photo/Lastochkin

### Bikes: Benavides family fiesta

The technical nature of the track, through the Siberian forests from Irkutsk to Baykalsk, was made even trickier by the heavy overnight rain. It might have only been 51 kilometres long but all the riders were clearly relieved to make it through their first ever SILK WAY RALLY special unscathed. And clearly the mud and water suited the riders coming from an enduro background, with three ex-enduro riders taking the first three places. The variety up at the front of the rankings came not from the background of the riders but their machines, with Honda, KTM and Yamaha all getting onto today's podium.

Fastest was the Argentinian Kevin Benavides (Monster Energy Honda Team), beating his younger brother Luciano (Red Bull KTM Factory) by just 36 seconds. It was the first time they have ever managed a 'one-two' on an FIM rally stage and both were clearly proud of their 'family performance'. A few seconds behind them was the Frenchman Xavier de Soultrait





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(Yamaha Rally Team), despite having to slow down after his radiator became full of mud, causing the engine to show signs of overheating.

The top five was rounded out by Joan Barreda (Monster Energy Honda Team) at 1'06, with British rider and current championship leader Sam Sunderland (Red Bull KTM Factory) in 5th at 1'15. In the quads the day's special was won by the Polish rider Linder 4'37 ahead of the Russian Maksimov.

### Cars: Al-Attiyah and buggy woogie

Second away on this first selective section, Nasser Al-Attiyah and Mathieu Baumel (Toyota Gazoo Racing Overdrive) had just one strategy: post the fastest time. Taking advantage of the slow puncture of their teammate Yazeed Al Rajhi (Toyota Gazoo Racing), who started three minutes ahead of them, the Dakar title holders set a blistering pace to take the early lead on this 2019 SILK WAY RALLY. A victory and a smart strategic move, which should see them ideally placed, in two day's time, for the first long stage to Oulan Bator.

The surprise today came from Jérôme Pélichet and Pascal Larroque (Optimus) who got their two-wheel drive buggy between the favourites' Toyota Hilux, 2'32 behind the leader. Further proof that slippery terrain can also suit buggies: the Chinese Wang Xian (Dunbee) and his countryman Gang Zi Yun (Hanwei SMG) complete the day's top 5. Even better: this evening in Baykalsk, on the shores of the famous lake, there are no less than eight buggies in the top 10 overall.

In the SSV class, Titiana Sycheva (BRP Can-AM) took advantage of her countryman Kariakin's (Can Am Maverick) electrical problems to post exactly the same time as the Franco-Swiss duo of Vincent Gonzalez and Steven Griener (Polaris). The British pairing Knight / Watson (Polaris) round out the day's podium.

### Trucks: Viazovich and his MAZ nose ahead

Siarhey Viazovich (MAZ) has already made his mark on this SILK WAY RALLY. Aboard his new 'long nose' truck he was determined to get ahead of the Kamaz on their home turf. Chucking his powerful monster sideways over the slippery tracks, the Belarus driver finished 56 seconds ahead of Anton Shibalov and his Kamaz, who was loaded down with spares in case his teammates needed them.

The up and coming Russian driver avoided a MAZ one-two by relegating Vishneuski to third place and in doing so avoids having to carry extra weight tomorrow. First on the road, the 2018 winner Andrei Karginov (Kamaz) was more prudent. He leads the fifth placed Renault of Dutchman Martin van den Brink by a handful of seconds.



### STAT OF THE DAY

**23.000**





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Focus of everybody's attention on this first stage of the SILK WAY RALLY, Lake BAĪKAL is the major tourist attraction in the region. The eighth largest in the world, the biggest lake in Asia, with a surface area of 31,500 km<sup>2</sup> it is comparable to that of Belgium. By way of another comparison it has a 54 times bigger surface area than Lac Léman in Switzerland and 258 times more volume. Where it clearly wins out is in depth. At 1,700 metres deep it is the deepest lake in the world. Fed by 365 different rivers and streams, with 23,000 km<sup>3</sup>, it holds 20% of the earth's freshwater reserves.

## ROAD BOOK

**Tomorrow: Stage 2- BAIKALSK-ULAN UDE: "Goodbye to taiga and welcome to Buryati" - Distance: 409,34 KM - Selective section: 207,67KM**

The second stage will go along stony roads – upwards through a mountain pass, then downwards, and... a real tire challenge: not to lose one's wheels, pace and speed. That day all crews will get to enjoy diverse landscapes: mountains, taiga, various bridges across the rivers mixed with fast navigation and search of the correct direction among the Siberian hills. Find the path and rush at full speed towards the finish line across steppe plateaus!



## FAITHFUL PARTNERS

### GAZPROM, the rally's main partner

The Russian global energy company PJSC Gazprom has been engaged on the event as a main partner since the first edition of the Silk Way Rally in 2009.

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

Toyota Hilux for the forth time already are the Silk Way Rally official cars.

Because of their unique design and capabilities, TOYOTA all-terrain vehicles have proved their extraordinary resistance during the various reconnaissance and on the rally. Toyota is producing vehicles that you can rely on in any situation. Distinguishing characteristics offroad, endurance, an amazing ability to adapt to harsh road conditions and climate.... Main idea is that Land Cruiser Prado, Land Cruiser 200, Fortuner and Hilux tackle the challenges delegated to them.

### SIBUR, technical partner

PJSC SIBUR is the largest integrated petrochemicals company in Russia and the technical partner for innovative materials. They are 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 branded diesel fuel, *Diesel Opti*. OPTI fuel performed excellently in extreme conditions, and our continuing cooperation is the best proof.

### GAZPROMBANK, financial partner

Gazprombank is one of the largest multifunctional banks in Russia.





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