



# SILK WAY 2021 RALLY

## 丝绸之路拉力赛



01/07/2021

## D-1 - OMSK - SCRUTINEERING & START PODIUM

### THE SILK WAY RALLY IS UNDERWAY!



The podium ceremony organised in the early evening, in the historic city centre of OMSK, officially launched the 11th edition of the SILK WAY RALLY. This 2021 edition will finish in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) on 11 July, after nearly 5,300 kilometres of unprecedented adventure in the ALTAI MOUNTAINS and the GOBI DESERT. On Friday the hundred or so competitors will compete on the technical tracks of the first stage to NOVOSSIBIRSK.

### MOTORBIKES: WHO WILL SUCCEED SUNDERLAND?

The second round of the FIM CROSS COUNTRY RALLIES WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP, the SILK WAY RALLY 2021 has attracted nearly all the official teams. Winner in Kazakhstan, Ross BRANCH will be looking to carry on where he left off, as will his team-mates from the MONSTER YAMAHA RALLY OFFICIAL TEAM, the Frenchman VAN BEVEREN and the American SHORT. Commented the Botswana rider, "Our results in Kazakhstan have given the team a real boost and we are looking forward to continuing the good work here on the Silk Way Rally".

Without Britain's SUNDERLAND, who suffered a broken pelvis in Kazakhstan, the RED BULL KTM FACTORY RACING team is counting on the Austrian WALKNER who will find some allies in sister teams ROCKSTAR ENERGY HUSQVARNA FACTORY RACING, with





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the Argentinian Luciano BENAVIDES and the American HOWES and Daniel SANDERS (GAS GAS FACTORY RACING). Commented the Australian: "I'm still only half way up the navigation learning curve, so I am looking forward to getting some more experience under my belt. Just riding out to the test track here the terrain looks really good and I can't wait to start racing."

After a difficult start to the championship, the HERO MOTORSPORTS TEAM RALLY will be hoping the SILK WAY RALLY will allow them to confirm the form they showed in Andalusia. The Argentinian CAIMI, the young German BÜHLER and the Portuguese RODRIGUES, will continue to develop their machines on this varied and demanding track.

The quad category promises a strong men duel between the five-times world champion and former Dakar winner, the Pole SONIK and the Russian MAKSIMOV, both on YAMAHA RAPTOR 700s.

## **CARS, LIGHTWEIGHT PROTOTYPES & SSVs: BATTLES EVERYWHERE**

On the car side (T1), Saudi Arabia's Yazeed AL RAJHI (TOYOTA OVERDRIVE) will be the man to beat on this SILK WAY RALLY, which will award 1.5 coefficient points towards the FIA WORLD CUP FOR CROSS COUNTRY RALLIES. Commented the Toyota driver: "I am very happy to be here. It is going to be a tough race and I hope the weather stays good. Good to have Gerlain Chicherit back racing again." The French driver is making his comeback in a CENTURY CR6 Buggy entered by TEAM SRT. Other candidates for the final podium: the MINIs of the Russians VASILYEV and KROTOV and the BUGGY OPTIMUS of the Frenchman PÉLICHET.

In the Lightweight Prototype category (T3), the Argentine Fernando ALVAREZ (CAN-AM SOUTH RACING), second in the World Cup, has a great chance to win. FERNANDO ALVAREZ: "I'm fighting for the championship lead and will attack hard the first few days to see how competitive I need to be. Hopefully it won't be too hot because that could affect reliability."

Spain's PENA CAMPO (POLARIS XTREME PLUS) and Russia's LEBEDEV (CAN-AM MSK RALLY TEAM), are also serious candidates. Watch out also for the 100% Russian women's CAN-AM crew of NIFONTOVA and OPARINA.

The SSV T4 category features the top three in the current World Cup rankings. Winner in Andalusia and in Kazakhstan, the American Austin JONES (CAN-AM MONSTER ENERGY) starts favourite. "My father Jesse is my fast assistance for this race, which I already entered in 2019," says the Baja 500 winner from Phoenix, "I hope we'll have a lot of fun".

But the Dutchman KOOLEN and the Italian AMOS, two other drivers from the SOUTH RACING team have not said their last word. Outsiders include the POLARIS XTREME PLUS drivers UMEDA (Japan) and CINOTTO (Italy).

## **TRUCKS: KAMAZ OUT IN FORCE!**

With a record seven trucks entered, the KAMAZ-MASTER team battle promises to be epic between SHIBALOV, the title holder, and his teammates, SOTNIKOV, NIKOLAEV, MARDEEV and KARGINOV, all previous winners. The novelty: SOTNIKOV's truck, equipped with a new cabin, with the navigator now on the right rather than in the middle.





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Commented SOTNIKOV: "We worked very hard before this race developing the new generation K5 KAMAZ. Everything will be new for us, the route and the vehicle!"

The Belarusian MAZ team has been on the up in recent years and is making a strong impression with their three long-nose 'Kapotnik' trucks of VIAZOVICH, VISHNEUSKI and MURYLEV. Other outsiders, the three 'small' GAZ RAID SPORT trucks of SKHLYAEV, LAGUTA and KHLEBOV will take advantage of the twisty stages in the Altai Mountains to show their worth. Aboard his MAMMOET RALLYE TEAM Renault, Martin VAN DEN BRINK is hoping to get in among the frontrunners. Two years after sharing the cab with dad, son Mitchell is now flying solo at the wheel of a Volvo.

### QUOTES

**Vladimir CHAGIN (Silk Way Rally Director):** "This SILK WAY RALLY will feature ten magnificent stages and a thrilling battle in every category. The reconnaissance team has worked hard to ensure that the route is balanced and varied. I am grateful to the teams who have joined us despite this difficult context. I wish them all a great rally and an unforgettable experience!"

**Luc ALPHAND (Silk Way Rally Sporting Director):** "In addition to the spirit of adventure and discovery, this SILK WAY RALLY 2021 will feature a completely new route that has never been used in a race. This edition promises to be magical, with an extremely high-quality field for both the FIM Cross Country Rallies World Championship and the FIA Cross-Country Rally Rallies World Cup. The race promises to go all the way down to the wire with terrain as varied as it is demanding. "

**#SilkWayRally2021**

### STAT OF THE DAY

**450**

With the competitors in the motorbike, quad, car, lightweight prototypes, SSV and truck categories, the event brings together 30 different nationalities. Add to this some 114 assistance vehicles to obtain, excluding the organisation team, a total of 450 people registered for this 11th edition of the SILK WAY RALLY.

### TOMORROW > STAGE 1: OMSK - NOVOSSIBIRSK (670 KM/SS1: 87 km)

This is the shortest selective sector of the whole rally (87 km). It is a short but technical start on military ground. It will be a question of remaining attentive. This Friday evening, everyone meets in Novosibirsk for the first bivouac on the banks of the Ob River.

