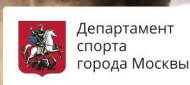




SILK WAY 2022 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



Pre-start press conference

The official press conference for the Silk Way Rally competitors and organizers is one of the main events that are held before the start of the rally. The 12th edition is not an exception – the journalists got a lot of important information.

Vladimir Chagin, the Head of the International Project Silk Way Rally, thanked the federal and regional authorities, as well as sponsors and partners of the rally for their help and support during the preparation for the start.

“We have come a long way to prepare for this rally – both organizers and competitors, Vladimir Chagin said. I am very glad that we have met together, and the drivers have found an opportunity to participate in our race. I would like to thank the sponsors and partners of our crews.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the authorities of the Astrakhan region, the Ministry of Sports, the Governor Igor Babushkin for his benevolent personal attitude towards our sport. We really appreciate it. It is no coincidence that Astrakhan is called the Capital of Cross-Country Rallies in Russia. World-famous drivers like the Astrakhan tracks very much”.



Vladimir Vasilyev, the Silk Way Rally multiple participant in the Car category, two-time World Cup winner and multiple Russian Cross-Country Rally Champion, appraised the new rally route very high.

“This year the Silk Way Rally route will probably be the most unusual one. Its novelty lies in the fact that it will pass through Grozny – to a place where races of this level, and especially cross-country rallies, have never been held, Vasilyev noticed. It’s good that the race will pass through the territory of Russia. Yes, this is a long rally, but it all fits into the territory of our country. Last year we talked with Vladimir Chagin, and I said, “Don’t we have enough of our own roads?” Therefore, let’s hope that our Russian tracks are no worse than Mongolian or Chinese ones. But the main highlight is Grozny. By the way, I have never been there, so we will visit it and take a look at the capital of Chechnya”.

Alexander Maximov, the reigning winner of the Silk Way Rally in the Quad standings, broke the resistance of the legendary Rafal Sonic a year ago. This year he will have to defend the title in the fight against a new opponent. But who is he?

“This year my main opponent is Alexander Gilemov from Izhevsk. At the 2022 rally all the riders in our standings are from Russia. I hope to reach the finish line, and then we’ll see”, Alexander Maximov said.

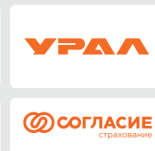
Anastasia Nifontova, the Silk Way Rally multiple competitor, told about the preparations for the start of the most difficult rally of the season.

“Preparation was usual. My car was completely dismantled by the mechanics and assembled before the race, Nifontova said. Yesterday we tested the car and looked at all the nuances. Everything is ready, everything is fine. This race is special for us, because we have a new partner – the G-Energy brand. Actually, we are driving with a new oil that we have also tested yesterday. It showed itself very well. The peculiarity was that we were preparing for the heat.

In the heat, the engine works very hard, and I was just pleased that these oils showed themselves very well. So, we plan to drive for results, of course, because now we are leading the Russian Cross-Country Championship, and we would like to keep this leadership. And the Silk Way Rally is such a race – to come to the podium here is, of course, a dream. Well, we are in a competitive mood”.

Undoubtedly, **Nikita Mazepin, the debutant of the Silk Way Rally,** attracts special attention of journalists. He has changed the flawless asphalt surface of the Formula 1 autodromes to the difficult tracks of one of the most challenging cross-country rallies on the planet.

“I’m very happy to be here. And first of all, I would like to say a big thank you to Vladimir Chagin, Nikita Mazepin noticed. At the invitation of Rustam Minnikhanov, I visited Tatarstan and had the great honor to be at the KAMAZ plant, where I tried my



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hand at off-road. Not as a driver, but as a passenger. A little less than a year has passed, and I'm performing in the Silk Way Rally. So, thank you very much. I really enjoy being here".

A huge number of motorsport fans are watching the rich and keen struggle in the Truck standings of the Silk Way Rally. Dmitry Sotnikov, last year's race winner from the KAMAZ-master team and his main rival Sergey Vyazovich, representing MAZ-SPORTauto, are ready to continue the battle.

"We always try to perform at a high level, Sotnikov admitted. If Airat Mardeev and Anton Shibalov had competed today, they would have strengthened the team. Hope to see them next year.

"Thanks to the MAZ plant for their support in difficult times, we arrived at the Silk Way Rally with their help, Sergey Vyazovich said. Our trucks and crews are waiting for tomorrow's Prologue. And let MAZ win at the end of the rally".

After a break the Chinese-Russian crew of the One Belt One Road team starts at the 2022 Silk Way Rally. The driver is Hou Hongning, a multiple winner of the Chinese national cross-country rally championship in the Truck category.

"We are happy to be in Russia for this wonderful Silk Way Rally, Hou said. – I'm very glad to drive KAMAZ again. We have excellent mutual understanding in the crew. Co-driver Shen Xin and engineer Robert Amatych are a super team. We have a lot of fans in China who will follow our performance in Russia".

This year there is a new "Following Peter the Great" Grand Tour category at the Silk Way Rally. **Vladimir Chagin** shared interesting details of this standings.

"Automobile tourism in our life is developing every year," Chagin noticed. Cross-country rallies are also becoming more popular, and this is our favorite sport. We decided to combine these two desires of a person, to provide an opportunity for those who wish to become part of the Silk Way Rally. To be with the drivers in a production car, to come to the starts, finishes, spectator areas – to become an integral part of our project.

This year marks the 350th anniversary of the birth of the Russian Emperor Peter the Great. The route of this year's race passes through that part of the territory of Russia, where the iconic places of his biography are located. The main task for the competitors is to gain experience that will help them in their lives in the future. In the future, I'm sure, they will have a desire to participate in off-road racing in our project".

This year marks the return of the legendary LADA off-road vehicles to cross-country rallies – the factory team of the Russian automobile plant starts at the Silk Way Rally. Natalya Astafyeva, Head of Product and Sports Communications of AVTOVAZ JSC, talked about the glorious history of the brand from Togliatti.



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"We are returning to cross-country rallies with a car that turned 45 this year – LADA Niva, Astafyeva said. This year we have become the Silk Way Rally partners for the first time and donated 25 cars for the needs of the organizers. We are glad to be useful not only in the matter of cars, but also to become the object of colorful stories. May the strongest win".

At the end of the press conference **Vladimir Chagin** addressed the audience, *"On behalf of the large team of Silk Way Rally organizers, I wish all the crews an interesting and rich fight! And I wish the journalists success in covering the race! Let's hit the road! Let's hit the Silk Way!*

On July 7 at 10.00 the first leg of the Silk Way Rally starts from the Astrakhan Opera and Ballet Theater.



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