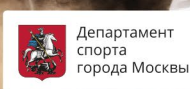




# SILK WAY 2022 RALLY

## 丝绸之路拉力赛



## Astrakhan welcomes the Silk Way Rally

The first day of the 12th edition of the Silk Way Rally ended with a Ceremonial start that took place on the square in front of the Astrakhan National Opera and Ballet Theatre. Numerous spectators took part in a real motorsport festival!

Astrakhan and its residents traditionally treat the Silk Way Rally competitors and spectators with special attention and hospitality. The Ceremonial start of the 12th edition of the rally was not an exception – despite the 30°C heat, thousands of spectators came to the starting podium in order to send the crews off on a ten-day journey.

Igor Babushkin, the Governor of the Astrakhan Region, Sergey Kogogin, the General Director of KAMAZ PJSC and Vladimir Chagin, the Head of the International Project Silk Way Rally, welcomed the audience.

In his parting words, the head of the region wished good luck to the race competitors, who have decided to start at one of the most challenging cross-country rallies on the planet.

*"I welcome the competitors of the Silk Way Rally and the Gold of Kagan Baja, round of the Russian Cross-Country Championship, to Astrakhan, Igor Babushkin said. All the drivers have probably missed good tracks and bright emotions. That is why they will*



gladly challenge our legendary Astrakhan dunes. There are four and a half thousand kilometers of distance to overcome. The route crosses several regions and includes mainly challenging special stages. This is a serious test for the vehicles. But I am sure that you can make it and get your adrenaline rush! The spectators and fans will see the most interesting fight and take part in a real motorsport festival. Good luck! Let's go!"

**Vladimir Chagin** greeted the people of Astrakhan in his response, "For almost twenty years the hospitable Astrakhan land and its residents have warmly and cordially welcomed our crews. Cross-country rallies are becoming more and more popular every year in the Astrakhan region, in our country, and in the world. Thank you for that. On behalf of the competitors and organizers, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Igor Babushkin for his personal attention and comprehensive support of our event and the Gold of Kagan Baja, round of the national championship that starts together with our competitors these days and finishes on July 9. I wish all competitors pleasure and satisfaction from driving on our beautiful Russian tracks, in our new regions – the Chechen Republic and Dagestan that are included in this year's route. I wish photographers and videographers to get the most beautiful shots that will be remembered for a long time by all those who will watch the rally. And I wish fans – both in Astrakhan and along the entire route of the rally, to enjoy what they will see. Good luck – let's hit the Silk Way!"

After the completion of the official part, the presentation of the competitors of the 12th edition of the Silk Way Rally started. There are 73 competitors in seven categories: off-road prototypes, production off-road cars, trucks, SSVs, motorcycles, quads, as well as in the new "Following Peter the Great" Grand Tour category. Numerous spectators saw with their own eyes the cars and motorcycles in which the drivers will overcome four and a half thousand kilometers of the track to finish in Moscow on July 16.

### **Sand test on the banks of the Volga River**

The Ceremonial start of the 12th edition of the Silk Way Rally completed the first day program. It started early in the morning – the competitors went to the Prologue: a short special stage that preceded the main legs of the rally.

The Silk Way Rally organizers managed to offer the crews an interesting route – it ran along the banks of the Volga River. And it was here that the drivers got the first taste of the Astrakhan sands.

A straight special stage along the river was followed by a narrow winding part. A sand dune that was the highlight of the Prologue caused problems for some competitors.

The experienced cross-country rally drivers set the best time in each category. Andrey Rudskoy was the first among the T1 prototypes. Eduard Nikolaev topped the Truck standings. Alexey Cherkesov was second to none in the SSV category, Merdan Toylyev



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won the T2 production standings, and Alexander Maximov became the best among quads.

On July 8, the crews will face the first proper leg of the 12th edition of the Silk Way Rally – the circle stage along the Astrakhan – Astrakhan route. The leg total distance is 290 kilometers.

## QUOTES:

**Andrey Rudskoy, driver, NG-Energo team (No. 203),** From the very beginning they let us accelerate. The air from the Volga River is fresh. And then they sent us to the real Astrakhan steppe with bumps, holes, sand and corners. It's very cool, awesome! This is not my first time in Astrakhan. It's a good start along the river, we speed up over 150 km/h.

**Alexander Maximov, rider, Chyr Mari team (No. 101),** I'm happy to be here again. I had a month break, last time we went to Ulyanovsk. But if to speak about the rally of such level – half year break. Everything is well, I'm happy to have an opportunity to come here again and again and get pleasure. My main opponent in Quad standings is Alexander Gilemov. There's another quad biker that rides without a mechanic. We have strong opponents here in Russia, they are always at the back of the pack and sometimes jump ahead. Everyone can ride to Dakar or anywhere from here.

**Vladimir Vasilyev, driver, Vasilyev Racing team (No. 201),** We've missed the races. After such breaks you can forget how to drive. There were sandy paths here. We drive to the Chechen Republic for the first time and don't know what to expect. Let's see.

**Anastasia Nifontova, driver, G-Drive Motorace team (No. 208),** Yes, I feel nervous. I really worry. Like a girl, like it's the first time in the first grade. The Prologue is not racing, especially at a long rally, but tactics. And now the opponents, most likely, will not push hard, but will try to drive in a way to get good positions for tomorrow. But all the same, inside you catch yourself on the fact that you still want to go faster, sometimes you even slow yourself down somewhere. Now we drove smoothly, well, without incidents, well, it's a short Prologue. I hope that tomorrow it will be easier, I will calm down and the real work will start.

**Nikita Mazepin, driver, Snag Racing team (No. 215),** Yes, the atmosphere is actually really cool. We did some [test] segments with Sergey Karyakin, but I didn't expect [that]. Because, firstly, people have the opportunity to get very close, helicopters fly, the weather is great, barges float along the Volga, so I really liked it, but unfortunately the dashboard didn't work. Therefore, it was difficult for the co-driver. But in general, it seems to me that the first start, the first finish doesn't mean anything. The most important thing is that we have reached it.



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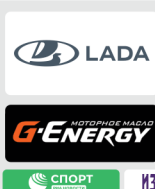
**Sergey Kupriyanov, driver, KAMAZ-master team (No. 305),** Compared to last year, our car has a fundamentally new engine; a gas system is redesigned to increase reliability. Everything works like clockwork. We overcame a small problem that the previous engine had at constant even throttle and high speeds – the engine did not warm up, but the exhaust gases were very hot. Now everything is fine, the car works fine on gas, with much higher dynamics than just on diesel. The lack of constant participation in the races has a strong impact on us, especially since the truck has changed. In fact, we start from the very beginning, and it takes time to get used to.

**GAZPROM PJSC**, a global energy company, has been with us for many years.

We have been choosing the **Gazpromneft filling station network** as the rally fuel partner for several years in a row for its high-quality indicators. Today this cooperation has grown in practice into a whole program that operates throughout the year, and not just during the days of the rally. These are large online, tourism and social projects that start along with the rally and continue to operate after the finish of the race. Each edition is a new stage and a new project that complements all previous ones.

Traditionally, from year to year, the Gazpromneft filling station network helps organizers and competitors to solve key technical, sports and domestic issues. The **G-Energy** high-tech brand of lubricants from Gazprom Neft joined this support. The technical experts from a mobile laboratory will help team mechanics monitor the condition of all vehicles during the rally.

We also highly appreciate the contribution of **Gazprombank**, our financial partner and one of the largest universal banks in Russia, to the development of rallying and motorsport in general.



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