



Press Release

New Delhi, December 21, 2023

HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY GEARS UP FOR THEIR 8th CONSECUTIVE DAKAR RALLY

FOUR-RIDER SQUAD TO REPRESENT THE SOLE INDIAN TEAM AT THE RALLY

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - **Hero MotoCorp**, has unveiled its team for the Dakar Rally 2024. This will be the eighth consecutive appearance for the accomplished young team at the Dakar.

A full-rider squad of four Rally GP class pilots - **Joan Barreda Bort, Joaquim Rodrigues, Ross Branch, and Sebastian Buhler** – will represent the only Indian team at the Dakar 2024. Returning to Saudi Arabia for the 5th consecutive year, the upcoming Dakar Rally is scheduled from 4th to 19th January 2024.

At the Dakar 2024, Hero MotoSports Team Rally will have two new partners on board – **Monster Energy and AlpineStars** – known to be at the forefront of supporting top athletes and teams in multiple sports. The team will be seen at Dakar 2024 in an updated livery that features the new partners.

Dakar 2024 will also be the opening race of the 3rd edition of the World Rally Raid Championship (W2RC). Hero MotoSports is a Rally GP class participant at the W2RC 2024, and will attend its five rounds starting with the Dakar, followed by the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge (Feb), BP Ultimate Rally Raid in Portugal (Apr), Desafio Ruta 40 in Argentina (June), and closing the season with the Rallye du Maroc (Oct).

Hero MotoSports earned a 4th overall team position in the World Rally Raid Championship (W2RC) 2023, with rider Ross Branch bagging the overall 4th position.

Dr. Arun Jaura, Chief Technology Officer, Hero MotoCorp and Team Principal of Hero MotoSports, said, *"We are excited to participate in our 8th consecutive Dakar Rally. Hero MotoSports Team Rally has emerged as a top international team in a short span of time and it speaks volumes of our commitment to the sport and product innovation. In 2023, we had a spate of podiums and stage wins across the globe and with our four riders in good form, we are confident of a strong performance at Dakar 2024. The Hero 450 Rally, completely engineered at the Hero Tech*



Center Germany (TCG), is highly competitive and puts our riders in contention for the top spots. We thank all our fans and partners for their continued support to the team.”

The year 2023 was significant for the Hero MotoSports Team Rally. In addition to victories and new partnerships, it also signed Joan Barreda Bort in November. A contender for the top spot, the Dakar legend with 30 stage wins and two top-5 finishes in his impressive Dakar career will motivate the team with his rich experience and resolute racing style. The team also spent several weeks during the year rigorously testing and optimizing their trusted machine the **Hero 450 Rally** – completely engineered at the state-of-the-art Hero Tech Centre Germany (TCG) near Munich.

For the Botswanan team pilot, Ross Branch, this will be the second Dakar in Hero colors. At the Dakar 2023, he bagged two stage victories and continued to improve his performances during the year.

Joaquim Rodrigues (JRod), the team’s longest-serving rider is returning to active racing after a full year of recovery, following a crash at Dakar 2023 that broke his femur, and a subsequent accident that injured his shoulder. At the Dakar 2024, the Portuguese rider who brought Hero MotoSports their first-ever Dakar Stage Win in 2021, will hope to regain lost ground and make his way back to the top positions.

For Sebastian Buhler - the young German living in Portugal – the year has been one of constant learning and consistent growth. At Dakar 2023, he came quite close to a Stage Win, finishing Stage 2 in the 2nd place. Along with his teammates, he looks forward to a strong 2024.

The 46th Dakar Rally will feature 1 prologue and 12 stages spread across 14 days of racing – equally daunting as in the previous editions, if not more difficult. 820 competitors racing on 455 vehicles are expected to start from the thousand-year-old city of AlUla and traverse the breadth of the country to finish the 5th Saudi Arabian Dakar at Yanbu, on the shores of the Red Sea. The ~8,000 kms of Dakar 2024 will explore 60% all-new territories. Two days are also dedicated to racing in the infamous Empty Quarter, where the organization has introduced a new format – the “48-hour Chrono Stage”. An upgrade from the marathon stages, the uncertainty in these two days goes several folds up, as “when the clock strikes 4pm, all vehicles will be required to stop at the nearest bivouac.”

Dakar 2024 Team Presentation, watch here –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mcz1Tw3qpY>

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