



Santosh, Rodrigues set for gruelling Dakar 2017 with Hero team

With ace Indian rider CS Santosh and Portuguese star Joaquim Rodrigues in its ranks, Hero MotoSports Team Rally is gearing up for Dakar rally, the most gruelling race on the annual motorsports calendar, starting Monday from Asuncion, the capital city of Paraguay. It will be third appearance for Santosh at this rally but first with a factory team. Joaquim will make his debut at the Dakar, having delivered impressive finishes in the Merzouga Rally and Oilibya Rally of Morocco in his rookie year on the rally-raid circuit.



"Since the last race in the Oilibya Rally of Morocco in October 2016, which was the final stop for the team before the Dakar Rally, it has been a race against time for the technical team to get the bikes ready for the Dakar," a release said.

The 2017 Dakar Rally will get underway on Monday from Asuncion and finish in Buenos Aires on January 14. The Rally will travel across Paraguay, Argentina and Bolivia on a 9,000-km journey out of which more

than 4,000 km will comprise timed sections that have been divided in 12 special stages, including one marathon stage during which no assistance will be allowed to the riders at the end of the days run.

For the first time in the history of the rally, the participants will make crossings above 5,000 metres over the high passes in the Andes en-route to Bolivia. *"I am very optimistic about our performance at the Dakar this year. There is a positive energy in the entire team and we can feel it here. We arrived two days back and are geared up for the race. The preparation has been good and the motivational levels are high, I cant wait for the first stage to get started,"* Santosh said. Joaquim Rodrigues his Co-rider said, *"I am extremely excited about the start of my first Dakar. Everything has been good and the preparations have been perfect so far. After arriving at bivouac, everything feels just right. I am charged up and hopeful that I will put-up a great show at my first Dakar."*

Hero Motosports Team Rally was formed in April, 2016, as a strategic partnership between Hero MotoCorp, the world's largest two-wheeler manufacturer and German off-road racing specialist Speedbrain.

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Press contact Hero MotoSports Team Rally

e-Mail: motosports@heromotosports.com

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