



Press Release

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HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY GEARED-UP FOR DAKAR 2021

**ANNOUNCES THREE-RIDER SQUAD – SEBASTIAN BUHLER,
JOAQUIM RODRIGUES & CS SANTOSH**

UNVEILS NEW RALLY BIKE AND LIVERY

Close on the heels of an exciting win at the BAJA Portalegre, **Hero MotoSports Team Rally**, the motorsport team of the world’s largest two-wheeler manufacturer Hero MotoCorp, today unveiled its plans for the **Dakar Rally 2021**.

Participating with a full strength three rider team, Hero MotoSports will take on the Dakar 2021 with the 2020 FIM Cross-Country BAJAs World Cup winner – **Sebastian Buhler**, 2019 Pan Africa Rally winner - **Joaquim Rodrigues** and ace Indian rider - **CS Santosh**.

This will be the second official appearance for Sebastian in Hero colors at the Dakar, while it will be the fifth appearance for both JRod and Santosh.

The riders will take on the Dakar challenge on a new Hero 450 Rally bike, which now features a new 450cc engine and evolved Chassis. The engine, developed especially for rally sport, offers improved top speed and acceleration. With an optimum weight balance, better rider ergonomics, more voluminous fuel-tank, improved suspension and cooling system, the new bike is built for juggling the dual roles of covering long strides at a heightened pace.

The Team will also be seen in a new Livery, sporting a futuristic “Barcode” inspired design aesthetic, to showcase the technical edge of our Rally team.

In view of the ongoing pandemic, it was a comparatively shorter #RoadToDakar for the Team in 2020. Yet, the Team made its presence felt with an impressive comeback in competitive racing with the BAJA Portalegre and the Andalucia Rally. Gaining valuable race-



experience, all three riders of the Team utilized these races to acquire some saddle time and proficiency, ahead of the Dakar 2021.

Wolfgang Fischer, Team Manager, Hero MotoSports Team Rally: *“This is an emotional return for us at Dakar after the tragic event earlier this year. We are determined to put on a good show. While we were away from racing for quite some time due to the pandemic, we utilised the time to develop the new bike and conduct thorough testing sessions with our riders, thus, keeping the team engaged and motivated in the most challenging times. We are excited for the next few weeks as we aim to sustain our momentum and garner good results this year. The new bike is performing well and the Team looks stunning in the new Livery.”*

Joaquim Rodrigues, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally: *“Dakar Rally will not be the same for me after the tragic experience of January 2020. It has been a tough year for me and my family. However, the experience has taught me a lot - how to stay undeterred and resilient in the worst of situations and the team has also supported me a lot to keep me motivated and engaged. While we didn't have much time to prepare this year, our testing sessions on the new bike and the recent runs at BAJA Portalegre and Andalucia Rally 2020 helped me overcome my fears and find the momentum as I made the comeback. It's going to be a tough emotional battle for me but I'm ready to face it and take on the Dakar for one more time.”*

Sebastian Buhler, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally: *“My first year with Hero MotoSports has been an exciting one. Though there weren't many opportunities to race in 2020, I am glad that we are entering the Dakar Rally after two impressive runs in the recent months. We utilized the time away from racing in training on the new bike and that kept our energies high. For me personally, entering the Rally straight after the Baja win will help to stay focused. All I can say is that I am thrilled to be a part of the Hero MotoSports family and looking forward to the Dakar 2021 Rally.”*

CS Santosh, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally said, *“This has been an exceptional year with limited races and opportunities to train, yet we are satisfied with the preparations that we underwent ahead of Dakar Rally. I have tried to make the most of the situation and used this time to train hard and help the team in the development of our new bike. The new bike offers great performance and maneuverability so I am really excited to ride it at the Dakar. The Dakar Rally is coming back with a new set of rules and routes, so it is going to be an interesting one this year and I am looking forward to it.”*

Hero MotoSports made its debut at the Dakar Rally in 2017 and within just a few years, it has emerged as one of the top Teams in international motorsports.



The biggest rally-raid in the world, Dakar Rally, for its 43rd edition will venture across the entirety of Saudi Arabia. Convening and culminating in the city of Jeddah, the Rally kicks-off on January 3, 2021 and travels through various cities before returning to the same city on January 15, 2021. The Rally will see competitors travelling through a total of 7646 km, of which about 4767 km will be competitive divided into 12 stages. The Rally also has nearly an all-new route with more slush, open desert, dunes and mountains to traverse than before.

For more information:

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