

Buggyra crews have tuned their cars during the shakedown

After a tiring journey and setting up the facilities, the Buggyra team members began their work on the track.

AL ULA, SAUDI ARABIA, January 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Before the prologue on Friday, all crews tested the Saudi sands in a shakedown around the town of Al-Ula.

Aliyyah Koloc, only 19 years old, is gearing up for her first start in the elite T1+ car class after debuting last year. "Today's test went pretty well. We encountered some minor issues with the car that still need resolving, but overall, I feel positive," said Aliyyah, racing in the Buggyra ZM Racing colors.

"We slightly adjusted the car's geometry and confirmed everything is in order. Aliyyah is getting better at navigating rocky terrains. She's still a bit wary of punctures, but once she started accelerating, she began feeling more confident. We are ready for Friday's prologue and the entire competition," stated navigator Sébastien Delaunay.

In a last-minute change, the Tatra Buggyra ZM Racing truck team welcomed pilot Pascal de Baar. This experienced Dutch driver is stepping in for the injured Martin Šoltys behind the wheel of the Tatra Buggyra EVO3. The shakedown provided de Baar, aged 54, his first opportunity to familiarize himself with his new vehicle.



"It's a great honor to drive for Buggyra. It feels like winning the lottery. Initially, I planned to go to Dakar as a quick assist. But last Thursday, Robin [Dolejš] called me saying, 'Pascal, you have to help me.' So, within 24 hours, I found myself in a completely different truck. Then, Martin [Koloc] called to confirm I would be driving the EVO3. That's just awesome!" expressed Pascal.

For Pascal, driving a brand-new prototype isn't new. "It's like a new baby that's learning to walk, and we're working on that now. I'm quite familiar with this process, having been on the factory teams at MAN and Renault," he explained.

Onboard mechanic Tomáš Šikola experienced his first ride with Pascal. "He may not look it, but he's a real predator. He knows his stuff, and it's nice for me to work with someone so skilled. I'm excited about the new car; it's a big leap forward with a completely different chassis," Tomáš commented.

Experienced Dakar driver Jaroslav Valtr was all smiles after testing his Tatra Phoenix. "I'm having a great time. The truck has progressed nicely, and it's running incredibly well. We're pushing the limits because I believe we can get it across the finish line," said a content Jaroslav.

For Daniel Stiblík, this was his first taste of the Dakar atmosphere. "The car handles really well. I'm looking forward to the race, though I'm not quite sure what to expect from Dakar. My dream is to complete it, but let's see how it unfolds," said Stiblík, last year's mechanic for Martin Šoltys, who is now behind the wheel of the second Tatra Phoenix.

The Dakar Rally, taking place from January 5 to 19, 2024, in Saudi Arabia, starts in the city of Al-Ula, crosses the country towards the Empty Quarter, and finishes in Yanbu on the shores of the Red Sea.

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