

Team Mitsubishi Ralliart Announces Team Lineup for Asia Cross Country Rally 2023

Tokyo, June 30, 2023 – Mitsubishi Motors Corporation (hereafter, Mitsubishi Motors) announced that Team Mitsubishi Ralliart, for which the company provides technical support, will be competing in the Asia Cross Country Rally (AXCR) scheduled for August of this year. As with last year, Mitsubishi Motors' Hiroshi Masuoka will serve as team director, Chayapon Yotha (Thailand) the champion driver of AXCR 2022 and Rifat Sungkar (Indonesia) will be returning again this year, joined by new Japanese driver Katsuhiko Taguchi.



AXCR2023 Special website:

<https://www.mitsubishi-motors.com/en/innovation/motorsports/axcr2023/>

Team Mitsubishi Ralliart claimed an overall victory last year in its first attempt at AXCR. This year, the following team drivers and co-drivers will attempt to claim a second consecutive win: defending champions Chayapon Yotha (Thailand) and Peerapong Sombutwong (Thailand), last year's 5th place drivers Rifat Sungkar (Indonesia) and Chupong Chaiwan (Thailand), and Japanese duo Katsuhiko Taguchi and Takahiro Yasui. They will be driving a total of three new Triton Group T1s (prototype cross-country vehicles). Team Mitsubishi Ralliart will have all the resources it needs to take on the AXCR challenge; TANT SPORT (Thailand), which owns the team, is joined by team director Hiroshi Masuoka, a former two-time consecutive Dakar Rally champion driver, and Mitsubishi Motors engineers will accompany the team to provide technical support.

From June 19 to June 23, Team Mitsubishi Ralliart conducted rigorous endurance tests of the Triton rally cars, envisioning actual rally conditions, on an off-road course near Khao Yai National Park, in the heart of Thailand. The all-new Triton rally car has been completely redesigned, including its body, frame, chassis, and engine, greatly increasing its competitive potential. The reliability and durability of the rally cars, primarily their bodies and engines, were confirmed by driving roughly 800km over the course of the five days endurance test, and adjustments were made in preparation for the actual competition.

"Based on the original strength of the all-new Triton, the handling performance, stability on rough roads, and ride comfort are further improved as a rally competition car. In addition, the turbocharger has been improved to increase engine response throughout the entire rally range from low to high rpm, resulting in a powerful rally car that can handle any road conditions." said Hiroshi Masuoka, team director of Team Mitsubishi Ralliart. "We have conducted the endurance test with a harder course setting than the actual rally conditions, but the testing cars were able to drive through about 800 km each without any major initial troubles, confirming performance beyond our expectations and giving us a great confidence for our second consecutive championship."

1. Profile of Team Mitsubishi RALLIART

Team Director: Hiroshi Masuoka (Mitsubishi Motors)
Team Principal: Chayut Yangpichit (Thailand: TANT SPORT)
Technical Director: Kopong Amatayakul (Thailand: TANT SPORT)
Technical Support (body, chassis): Noriyoshi Aiba (Mitsubishi Motors)
(engine): Takashi Shibayama (Mitsubishi Motors)

Drivers and co-drivers:

Chayapon Yotha

From: Udon Thani Province, Thailand

Born: August 16, 1987 (35)

Career: Champion driver of AXCR 2022, who led Team Mitsubishi Ralliart to overall victory in its first time competing in AXCR with his careful and precise driving. He has won numerous races since 2012, including the Thailand Super Series, and RAAT Thailand Endurance Championship International. In 2019, he took victories in the Thailand Super Series' Supercar GTC.

Co-driver: Peerapong Sombutwong (Thailand)

Rifat Sungkar

From: Jakarta, Indonesia

Born: October 22, 1978 (44)

Career: One of Indonesia's top drivers, he has won the Indonesian Sprint Rally Championship in 1997, been an Indonesian Rally Championship winner three years in a row up to 2002, and more. In 2012, he was named brand ambassador for PT Mitsubishi Motors Krama Yudha Sales Indonesia (MMKSI). In 2019 and 2021, he won overall victories at the Indonesian Sprint Rally Championship by the Mitsubishi Xpander.

Co-driver: Chupong Chaiwan (Thailand)

Katsuhiko Taguchi

From: Okayama, Japan

Born: February 7, 1972 (51)

Career: At age 18, he got into motor sports through dirt trials. When he was 20, he won his first All Japan Dirt Trial Championship, demonstrating his talents at an early age. As a member of Mitsubishi Motors Works Team, he began taking part in overseas rallies such as the World Rally Championship (WRC) from a young age. In 1999 and 2010, he won the FIA Asia Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). In 2007, he won the Rally Japan in Group N.

Co-driver: Takahiro Yasui

2. Partner companies

Team Mitsubishi Ralliart participates in the AXCR 2023 with the support of the following partner companies (in alphabetical order).

Company	Support
CARROSSER Co., Ltd.	Support for development and supply of CUSCO front and rear suspension, and front and rear LSD
ENDLESS PROJECT Co., Ltd.	Supply of ENDLESS brake calipers, rotors and pads
ENEOS Corporation	Supply of motor oil
Fortec Motorsport Ltd	Supply of racing coolant, brake fluid
HANKYU HANSHIN EXPRESS Co., Ltd.	Support for transportation of special rally parts to Thailand
HKS Co., Ltd.	Support for development of rally specification engine
PT PERTAMINA	Sponsor
The Yokohama Rubber Co., Ltd.	Supply of GEOLANDAR M/T G003 (mud terrain tires for pickup trucks)
Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Engine & Turbocharger, Ltd.	Supply of turbocharger
Work Co., Ltd.	Supply of competition wheels

3. About AXCR2023

Asia Cross Country Rally 2023, now in its 28th year, will begin with a ceremonial start on Sunday, August 13, in Pattaya, one of Thailand's top sightseeing locations. The rally begins in earnest on the following day, Monday the 14th, with vehicles racing east, roughly parallel with the Cambodian border, entering Laos on Thursday the 17th, and reaching the goal on Saturday the 19th. Over the course of the rally, drivers cover a total of roughly 2,000 km including over 1,000km of Special Stages. This year's course also has a great deal of variety, including mountainous areas, thick forests, muddy roads, river crossings, and more. The difficult course is expected to put the road handling and durability of the rally cars to the test. This year, the event will be held in August the typical rainy season, and the muddy conditions are expected to be even more severe than last year.

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About Mitsubishi Motors

Mitsubishi Motors Corporation (TSE:7211) –a member of the Alliance with Renault and Nissan–, is a global automobile company based in Tokyo, Japan, which has about 30,000 employees and a global footprint with production facilities around the world. Mitsubishi Motors has a competitive edge in SUVs, pickup trucks and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, and appeals to ambitious drivers willing to challenge convention and embrace innovation. Since the production of our first vehicle more than a century ago, Mitsubishi Motors has been a leader in electrification–launched the i-MiEV –the world’s first mass-produced electric vehicle in 2009, followed by the Outlander PHEV –the world’s first plug-in hybrid electric SUV in 2013. For more information on Mitsubishi Motors, please visit the company’s website at <https://www.mitsubishi-motors.com/en/>