



First stage win in the 2014 Dakar Rally for Nasser Al-Attiyah

- **Bad luck for Nani Roma**
- **Diminished gap between Roma and Peterhansel**

X-raid and the Monster Energy X-raid Team celebrated a successful border crossing to Chile. In stage eight, from Salta to Calama, Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and Lucas Cruz (ESP) in the white MINI ALL4 Racing secured their first stage win in this year's Dakar Rally. Just a minute behind them, the two Frenchmen Stéphane Peterhansel and Jean-Paul Cottret took their black MINI ALL4 Racing to second place. While Argentinean Orlando Terranova and his Portuguese navigator Co-driver Paulo Fiúza, the unlucky fellows of yesterday's stage, finished fourth, with their orange MINI ALL4 Racing, followed by Krzysztof Holowczyc (POL) / Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS) in the red MINI ALL4 Racing. Nani Roma (ESP) and Michel Périn (FRA) had to settle for finishing sixth, in the eighth stage.

In stage eight, Al-Attiyah finally celebrated his first stage win. He started from second position into the stage and quickly closed in on Carlos Sainz in his buggy. "We opted for pushing right from the start and we did a good job," said the driver from Qatar who still is annoyed due to the one-hour time penalty he received following stage 5. "I still am very disappointed because of this penalty and I have to think of this hour again and again. But now I'll try to forget it. Tomorrow there will be more dunes and I hope this will be good for us."

By finishing runner-up, Peterhansel succeeded in reducing the lead of his team-mate Roma in the overall standings to some 24 minutes. "The special stage was short but dynamic", he said. "I saw the dust of Nasser and Carlos but wasn't able to fully match their pace. In addition, the subsoil differed a lot from the one in Argentina and again and again I believed that we had a puncture as the car tended to pull."

In the overall standings, Terranova keeps on closing in on Ginieł de Villiers. With today's eighth stage contested, the South African's lead over Terranova amounts to just four minutes. "We quickly closed in on De Villiers, today, but overtaking in all the dust proved to be impossible," revealed the Argentinean. "On the other hand, we didn't take any unnecessary risks as we wanted to avoid making a mistake or suffering a puncture."

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Holowczyc also survived today's stage without encountering any major problems. "We made good progress without any special highlights," said the Pole. "We certainly could have pushed harder but we talked to Sven Quandt and agreed upon not taking any risks, from now on." Nonetheless, he could work his way up to seventh position in the overall standings, right behind Carlos Sainz.

For Nani Roma, the first part of the special stage went absolutely according to plan. Then however, the Catalan suffered two punctures and consequently lost several minutes. "This was neither a great special stage nor a great day for us," he said annoyed. "I haven't got the slightest idea what could have caused the two slow punctures. But the day is over and we have to look ahead." After all, Roma has to defend his lead for another five days.

Tomorrow's ninth stage from Calama to Iquique will take the Dakar field from the mountains back to sea level. Following a 37-kilometre liaison, the drivers start into the 422-kilometre special stage that will end right at the bivouac. In the closing stages, the competitors will have to battle their way through a 150-kilometre dune section. In the earlier stages of the special stage, sandy sections alternate with solid track surfaces. The final metres to the finish will be spectacular as the cars will thunder down a long downhill section from the dunes to the bivouac.

Results stage 8

- 1st N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / L. Cruz (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 32m 57s
- 2nd S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 34m 09s
- 3rd C. Sainz (ESP) / T. Gottschalk (GER) Buggy – 2h 35m 33s
- 4th O. Terranova (ARG) / P. Fiúza (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 39m 37s
- 5th K. Holowczyc (POL) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 40m 46s
- 6th N. Roma (ESP) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 42m 16s
- ...
- 8th V. Vasilyev (RUS) / V. Yevtyekhov (UKR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 44m 56s
- ...
- 12th M. Kaczmarek (POL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 51m 30s
- ...
- 19th B. Garafulic (CHI) / G. Picard (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 54m 07s
- ...
- 22nd S. Schott (GER) / H. Schmidt (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 56m 58s
- 23rd Zhou Yong (CHN) / Hong Yu Pan (CHN) MINI ALL4 Racing – 2h 57m 58s
- ...
- 73. F. Villagra (ARG) / J. P. Compagnon (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing - 6h 17m 27s

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Overall standings after stage 8

- 1st N. Roma (ESP) / M. Périn (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 29h 46m 08s
2nd S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 30h 09m 54s
3rd G. de Villiers (ZAF) / D. von Zitzewitz (GER) Toyota – 30h 34m 33s
4th O. Terranova (ARG) / P. Fiúza (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 30h 38m 03s
5th N. Al-Attiyah (QAT) / L. Cruz (ESP) MINI ALL4 Racing – 30h 55m 13s
...
7th K. Holowczyc (POL) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing – 32h 15m 30s
...
12th B. Garafulic (CHI) / G. Picard (FRA) MINI ALL4 Racing – 33h 53m 07s
...
15th M. Kaczmarski (POL) / F. Palmeiro (POR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 34h 01m 41s
...
17th V. Vasilyev (RUS) / V. Yevtyekhov (UKR) MINI ALL4 Racing – 34h 59m 56s
...
20th S. Schott (GER) / H. Schmidt (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing – 36h 58m 59s
...
46th Zhou Yong (CHN) / Hong Yu Pan (CHN) MINI ALL4 Racing – 43h 21m 18s
...
tba. F. Villagra (ARG) / J. P. Companc (ARG) MINI ALL4 Racing

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