



## Silk Way Rally enters the home straight

- **Just two more special stages to be contested**
- **Al-Rajhi /Gottschalk now second**

As yesterday's special stage had to be cancelled due to a sandstorm, the pleasant anticipation of today's stage was even bigger. At the end of the 425-kilometre special stage, Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) / Timo Gottschalk (GER) finished second, followed by Russian pairing Vladimir Vasilyev / Konstantin Zhiltsov. Meanwhile, Harry Hunt (GBR) and Andreas Schulz (GER) had to settle for finishing sixth. Aidyn Rakhimbayev (KAZ) / Anton Nikolaev (RUS) crossed the line in eighth position, with Bauyrzhan Issabayev (KAZ) and Vladimir Demyanenko (RUS) coming 12<sup>th</sup>. After the stage Sébastien Loeb received a four-hour time penalty for having missed two waypoints. Due to this decision, all the five MINI ALL4 Racing vehicles gained a position in the overall standings.

In the night from Tuesday to Wednesday at Dunhuang, a sandstorm came in and partly reduced the vision to less than 100 metres. As the helicopters mustn't take off, in these conditions, the special stage had to be cancelled and the competitors to Jiayuguan cruised on the service route. The city also was hit by the sandstorm but fortunately, the weather improved overnight and the pairings could start into the 12<sup>th</sup> special stage, to Alashan.

Al-Rajhi und Vasilyev met several times, during the course of the stage. "As the track was extremely wavy and didn't suit our car well we were aware that we couldn't push," revealed the Saudi, "Then we had to stop due to a damaged tyre and he passed us." Zhiltsov added: "Afterwards, he stayed several kilometres behind us, in the dunes – to disappear all of a sudden." 20 kilometres later, however, they met again. "We then passed one another again and again – until we turned left and he went straight on," continued the Russian. "Later, we also lost time due to a tyre

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puncture.” At the end of the day, Al-Rajhi finished second, Vasilyev third and hold second and third positions in the overall standings.

Hunt, however, encountered a difficult day. “We had a puncture in the early stages and then, our power steering failed for the final 250 kilometres,” said the young Briton who now holds fourth place in the overall standings. “And to make things worse, we later even lost our way.” For Rakhimbayev things also didn’t run according to plan. “We had three punctures and I haven’t got the slightest idea why,” he admitted. Issabayev also lost time due to a damaged tyre. “With just 10 more kilometres to go,” he said. “Very annoying.” With the 12<sup>th</sup> stage contested, the two Kazakhs now hold fifth and seventh positions in the overall standings.

Tomorrow, stage 13 will take the field to Wuhai. The competitors will cover 724.89 kilometres, with the special-stage distance amounting to 367.44 kilometres. At first the drivers have to drive across a dried-out riverbed to then return to the dunes.

**Result stage 12:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> C. Despres (AND) / D. Castera (AND) Peugeot - 5h 04m 48s
- 2<sup>nd</sup> **Y. Al Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing - 5h 07m 18s**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> **V. Vasilyev (RUS) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing - 5h 08m 06s**
- 4<sup>th</sup> S. Peterhansel (FRA) / J.-P. Cottret (FRA) Peugeot - 5h 11m 11s
- 5<sup>th</sup> W. Han (CHN) / J.-P. Garcin (FRA) SMG - 5h 20h 22s
- 6<sup>th</sup> **H. Hunt (GBR) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing - 5h 26m 35s**
- ...
- 8<sup>th</sup> A. Rakhimbayev (KAZ) / A. Nikolaev (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing - 5h 38m 11s
- ...
- 12<sup>th</sup> **B. Issabayev (KAZ) / V. Demyanenko (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing - 5h 50m 09s**

**Overall standings after stage 12:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> C. Despres (AND) / D. Castera (AND) Peugeot - 27h 29m 56s
- 2<sup>nd</sup> **Y. Al Rajhi (KSA) / T. Gottschalk (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing - 28h 00m 26s**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> **V. Vasilyev (RUS) / K. Zhiltsov (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing - 28h 24m 00s**
- 4<sup>th</sup> **H. Hunt (GBR) / A. Schulz (GER) MINI ALL4 Racing - 29h 10m 56s**
- 5<sup>th</sup> **A. Rakhimbayev (KAZ) / A. Nikolaev (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing - 29h 32m 15s**
- ...
- 7<sup>th</sup> **B. Issabayev (KAZ) / V. Demyanenko (RUS) MINI ALL4 Racing - 30h 19m 46s**