



SILK WAY 2017 RALLY

丝绸之路拉力赛



Loeb and Viazovich on the charge



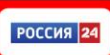
While Sébastien Loeb (Peugeot 3008DKR Maxi n°104) takes control of the car category at the end of the 3rd stage, in the trucks the Belorussian Siarhei Viazovich won his first special stage in rally-raid aboard his factory MAZ.

Key Points

- *Autos: Loeb goes into attack mode!
- *T2: Muira takes the overall lead
- *Trucks: Viazovich breaks his duck



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*Tomorrow: Direction Akmolá

Cars: Loeb goes into attack mode!

Opening the piste for his team mates yesterday, Sébastien Loeb (Peugeot 3008DKR n°104) attacked from beginning to end on this third, 324 kilometre long special. Early in the day the terrain was once again treacherous, with numerous water crossings, but the conditions didn't appear to slow down the nine times World Rally Champion, who charged after his team mates, before overtaking them mid-way through the special. Second today, Peterhansel (Peugeot 3008DKR 106) ended up giving away 4m34s to Loeb and is this evening 3m15s behind overall. The big surprise of the day came from the Chinese driver Zhou Yong (Toyota Hilux Overdrive n°116), who started way back in 39th place this morning, but worked his way through the field to finish in an almost incredible 3rd place, knocking Cyril Despres (Peugeot 3008DKR n°100) off the day's podium in the process. Stuck for nearly 8 minutes, the Frenchman lost almost 15 minutes to the leader in total but nevertheless preserves his third place overall, comfortably ahead of Menzies, with the American's team mate Al Rajhi (Mini John Cooper Works n°101), who started 11th this morning, completing the top 5.

T2 category

Muira takes the overall

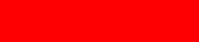
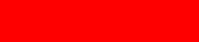
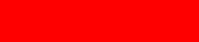
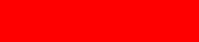
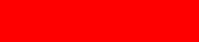
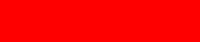
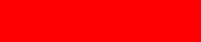
In the T2 category, after two stages dominated by the Australian Di Lallo (Isuzu n°135), it was the turn of the Japanese driver Akira Miura (Toyota Land Cruiser n°133) to shine. Winning the special by a comfortable margin, the Team Toyota Autobody entrant now leads Di Lallo by 10 minutes. Third on the stage and overall, the Kazakh driver Chernenkov (Nissan n°136) gives away more than 50 minutes.

Trucks: Viazovich breaks his duck

After having nearly taken victory on three previous occasion, thanks to their driver Siarhei Viazovich, the factory MAZ team from Minsk finally realised their dream of winning a rally-raid special on this 3rd stage of the 2017 Silk Way Rally. Second, less than a minute behind, the Czech driver Kolomy (Tatra n°311), Saturday' winner, takes the overall lead, ahead of a trio of Kamaz led by Anton Shibalov (n°312) ahead of his team



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mates Sotnikov (n°303) and Mardeev (n°300). Discreet up until now, the Kamaz look ready to pounce. Not such a good day however for yesterday's front runners. Starting first this morning, Martin van den Brink (Renault 'Sherpa' n°301) ran into mechanical problems at the end of the special, losing nearly 30 minutes, while Gerard De Rooy (Iveco Powerstar n°302) gave away 17 minutes opening the piste.

ROAD BOOK

Tomorrow: Direction Akmola

This first 100% Kazakhstan stage, at 908 kms the longest of the rally, will also be the first of this edition to be divided into two parts, with a neutralisation between them. At the end of an early morning 148,51 kms liaison, the 1st timed section (214 km) starts on a fast track, becomes more technical beside a big river, before finishing in farmland. Following a 44,18 km neutralisation the 2nd special (159,22 km) is fast between fields. The day finishes with a 342,89 km liaison to Astana, the futuristic capital of Kazakhstan.

Quotes

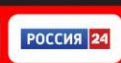
Cars

Sébastien Loeb (FRA/Peugeot 3008DKR Maxi n°104): "The special was drier today so I decided to attack right from the start. The navigation wasn't easy and Daniel did an excellent job. It was the kind WRC special that suits me down to the ground. I was able to catch my team mates which meant that we opened the piste over the second half. In spite of that we managed to keep our pace. We hope to be able to do the same tomorrow. But it will be a long special."

Stéphane Peterhansel (FRA/Peugeot 3008DKR n°106): "Really nice special on grass tracks and through the forest. We opened for the first half. Then Sébastien passed us. 'Paulo' (Cottret) did a good job up until when Daniel (Elena) took over. When Loeb passed it woke us up. It is never easy to open the piste. You always lose a little time. I was able to follow the pace. We did several kilometres in the high grass. There it was easier to drive behind... Seb is no doubt a little faster than me and in certain circumstances his car also (smiles)."



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Yazeed Al Rajhi (SAU/Mini John Cooper Works n°101): After 25 kms we got stuck behind a Kamaz. After that we got lost three times. But apart from that it went better today. It isn't easy to drive when you no longer have a chance of featuring in the results, but we are here to gain experience. My objective now is to try and forget about those two hours of penalties and get to China to get experience in the dunes.

Bryce Menzies (USA/Mini John Cooper Works n°105): "We punctured the rear right tyre on a rock. At the end we were overtaken by a competitor that lost us a bit of time. Finally it was a hard special but we came out of it ok. Navigation played a big part today with a lot of difficult to see tracks."

Cyril Despres (FRA/Peugeot 3008DKR n°100): "We've had problems with our brakes since the start. After CP1 we missed a turning and hunted for the right direction. There was a hole and the rear of the car got stuck in it. The dried grass caught fire with the exhaust but we quickly got it under control and then the police helped us get out. In total we lost 15 minutes, but it doesn't really matter as there is a long way to Xi'an."

Zhou Yong (CHI/Toyota Hilux n°116): "After a disastrous stage yesterday it took me an hour to get all the mud off me. It gave me time to think about my errors. I regret taking it out on my co-driver for my mistakes. This morning therefore I started with one thing in my head: to be patient. It helped me a lot. I never thought I'd be able to beat a driver like Despres but the important thing now is for me to focus on my new tactic and put it into practice. At the same time we have to get used to the car..."

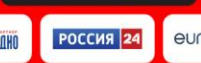
Trucks

Martin Kolomy (Tch/Tatra n°311): "I really like this kind of special. I train on this kind of stuff often in the Czech Republic. It is what I like best. Today we didn't have any problems and I hope it continues like this..."

Ton Van Genugten (NLD/Iveco n°306): "Starting a long way back I knew we could do something today. We passed a MAZ after 30 kilometres before getting a little stuck behind Huzink. We could see the Kamaz tracks in the high grass. We cut the course, but not as much as them. In the end we once again just missed out on the win!"



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Gerard De Rooy (NLD/Iveco Powerstar n°302): "Soon after the start I realised that we were going to lose time today. But I didn't expect to lose so much! We stopped a few seconds to close the rear of the truck but that was all. Apart from that no problems. When a Kamaz went past me I could see how much he was cutting the corners. It is a risk I couldn't take because you don't know what you might hit in the high grass..."

Anton Shibalov (RUS/Kamaz-Master n°312): "It was a lot drier today and very fast in places. As far as navigation was concerned, starting in the middle of the pack was a big advantage as the track was a lot more visible. But we can't see yet what the hierarchy will be in the truck class."



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