



# SILK WAY 2019 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



## PRESS RELEASE

Ulaanbaatar, July 10th 2019

GMT +8

### S.4 – ULAANBAATAR - ULAANBAATAR

Distance: 476,96KM - Selective section: 470,19KM

**ULAANBAATAR - ULAANBAATAR - Rushing across the steppes of Mongolia!**

It was a loop stage from Ulaanbaatar to Ulaanbaatar with start and finish points just two kilometers away from the bivouac. Accept the challenge of dry creek beds, low hills and endless steppe roads of Mongolia! Competitors drove through stony plateaux, between picturesque rocks and salty lakes. Beware of wild animals: they are fond of racing too! The second half of the route offered some beautiful landscapes on a track across stony pyramids and rocks. This section might have affected the day's classification, so one should get ready to deal with hard navigation and high speed on steppe roads.

#### @ OF NOTE

# Bikes: Marathon problems for Honda

# Cars: Al-Attiyah, steppe by steppe

# Trucks: MAZ, MAZ, MAZ!

# Tomorrow: Mongolian splendours

### S.4 – The race



Credit DPPI Photo/Eric Vargiolu





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## Bikes: Marathon problems for Honda

Kevin Benavides (Monster Energy Honda Team) knew that starting first this morning he would lose some time opening the track. He certainly wasn't planning on losing 18 or so minutes as a result of his front brake support breaking at km 40, forcing him to ride the whole of the rest of the special with just the rear brake.

Unfortunately for him, today is the first part of the marathon stage, with no outside assistance allowed. It means that this evening his problems are far from over. Overall he is still in fourth place at 15:38, while his teammate Cornejo is 34:31 from the leader. If the Honda team decide to change the broken part in the 15 minutes work time they have tomorrow morning, the regulations stipulate a 3 hour penalty for the person who leaves the parc ferme with the new part. But will that person be Kevin Benavides or will they decide that Cornejo should cover for his better placed colleague? The Red Bull KTM Factory team had a much better day. Starting in an 'ideal' fourth place Sunderland won the stage 3:46 ahead of his teammate Luciano Benavides and leads him overall by 05:11. Honda's best performing rider Joan Barreda (Monster Energy Honda Team) was third on the stage and is now third overall just 1 second behind Luciano.

**Sam Sunderland (GB/Red Bull KTM Factory) 1st** *"Super long day, a really, really fast stage. Hard to stay focused and at one point it started to rain, which made it difficult to see. But I'm feeling really good on the bike and the navigation was good. Should be good for the result, but as we don't know how the stages coming up are going to be, it is difficult to work out a strategy."*

A good day too for Rafal Sonik (Yamaha Raptor) in the quads. The champion of the discipline consolidates his overall lead ahead of the Russian Aleksandr Maksimov (Yamaha Raptor), who ran out of petrol before being refuelling from the rear tanks of Anastasia Nifontova, just before she fell and broke her collarbone. Arkadiusz Lindner (Can-Am Renegade), has been reported as riding at reduced speed in the company of the sweeper truck...

## Cars: Al-Attiyah steppe by steppe

Day after day, stage after stage, steppe by steppe: Nasser Al-Attiyah and Mathieu Baumel (Toyota Gazoo Racing Overdrive) continue to dominate the car category. The Dakar title holders won their fourth stage on the trot today and continue their trouble-free run. And it is not as if they are taking it easy. Over this Ulaanbaatar – Ulaanbaatar loop they swallowed up the 470 kilometres of steppe at an almost unbelievable 120 kph! While no one doubts the Qatari driver's talent, it could also be that the car was well suited to the stage. A notion supported by the second place of their Toyota Hilux teammates, Eric Van Loon and Sébastien Delaunay. Starting eighth on the road this morning, they eat their weight in dust to compensate for Monday's mechanical problems. Behind these two it is a buggy free-for-all, led today by Chinese driver Liu Kun (Hanwei SMG) and the Optimus of Jérôme Pélichet. Fourth today, the





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Frenchman profits from Han Wei's 2 minute speeding penalty to move up to 3rd place overall. Fellow countryman Mathieu Serradori (Buggy CR6 SRT) lost significant time with a defective accelerator.

**Eric Van Loon (P-B/Toyota Overdrive) 2nd:** *"An amazing experience! I have been racing for 12 years and I've never done anything like that. 470 kilometres flat out, through amazing scenery, it was just fantastic, even if we had a lot of dust, especially from the trucks, who weren't easy to overtake. I'm also very happy to find myself back up at the front of the pack, after the mechanical problems we had on Monday..."*

In the SSV class the fourth stage allowed the Russian Sergei Kariakin (Can-Am Maverick) to increase his overall lead over his compatriot Schmotev (Can-Am Maverick) to more than 25 minutes. The American Jones (Can-Am Maverick), was second today and is nearly an hour behind overall.

## Trucks: MAZ, MAZ, MAZ!

In the battle between neighbours, the MAZ from Belorussia won the day against the Kamaz from Russia in decisive style. Taking advantage of the series of mechanical problems that beset the Blue Armada, the MAZ team scored an historic triple. Despite a small scare, Siarhey Viazovich took his third stage win, with teammates Vasilevski and Vishneuski completing the day's podium. Overall Viazovich is now more than 23 minutes ahead of Anton Shibalov and more than half an hour in front of the title holder Andrei Karginov.

**Siarhey Viazovich (Blr/MAZ):** *"We started behind the Kamaz today. In the dust over the fast tracks it was impossible to overtake. We tried just once and ended up in a hole. Luckily without damage to either us or the truck. We set off again only to see Karginov stopped at the side of the track. Then we passed Shibalov who had just punctured. Once we were out in front we drove steadily to the finish, like a training run, because we knew we'd done the job!"*



## STAT OF THE DAY

### 15.000

Party time! From tomorrow Ulaanbaatar celebrates Naadam – the biggest event in their calendar. Three days during which Mongolia comes to a grinding halt. Even the airport is closed! The festival is to celebrate the Mongolian revolution of 1921. Several competitions are held around three themes: achery, wrestling and horse racing. In addition to the 1.5 million Mongolians taking part, 15,000 foreign tourists will be joining in the fun.

## ROAD BOOK

**Tomorrow: Stage 5 - ULAANBAATAR - MANDALGOVI: "The state of rocks" - Distance: 364,59KM - Selective section: 337,00KM**

The fifth stage is set along Mongolia's signature tracks: hills, steppes, off-road driving and many parallel paths, which may misdirect the inattentive ones. There are tourist zones, monuments and stony hollows on the route. Trying to escape from the heat, the track then







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leads the racers into the mountains, where they are required to seek for their speedy path across plateau at the altitude of 1,600 meters.



## FAITHFUL PARTNERS

### GAZPROM, the rally's main partner

The Russian global energy company PJSC Gazprom has been engaged on the event as a main partner since the first edition of the Silk Way Rally in 2009.

### TOYOTA, « official vehicles » of the organization

Toyota Hilux for the fourth time already are the Silk Way Rally official cars.

Because of their unique design and capabilities, TOYOTA all-terrain vehicles have proved their extraordinary resistance during the various reconnaissance and on the rally. Toyota is producing vehicles that you can rely on in any situation. Distinguishing characteristics offroad, endurance, an amazing ability to adapt to harsh road conditions and climate.... Main idea is that Land Cruiser Prado, Land Cruiser 200, Fortuner and Hilux tackle the challenges delegated to them.

### SIBUR, technical partner

PJSC SIBUR is the largest integrated petrochemicals company in Russia and the technical partner for innovative materials. They are sponsoring a special award for "impressive vehicle reliability and excellent skills demonstrated under extreme circumstances".

### GAZPROM NEFT, official fuel partner

Gazprom will be filling up the Silk Way Rally's vehicles along the route with the company's branded diesel fuel, *Diesel Opti*. OPTI fuel performed excellently in extreme conditions, and our continuing cooperation is the best proof.

### GAZPROMBANK, financial partner

Gazprombank is one of the largest multifunctional banks in Russia.

## MEDIA CONTACT:

International media director

Chris Rodrigo

[crodrigo@silkwayrally.ru](mailto:crodrigo@silkwayrally.ru)

