



# SILK WAY 2019 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



## PRESS RELEASE

Jiayuguan, July 15th 2019

GMT +8

### S.9 – ALASHAN - JIAYUGUAN

Distance: 501,20KM - Selective section: 290,30KM

#### ALASHAN - JIAYUGUAN - Life in sand

The ninth stage started from the finish point of previous day. It was a fast and beautiful route, mostly set along sandy roads. This was the moment when one got to admire the amazing fixed dunes of Gobi Desert. The next part on your way to finish was slower, as bumps and dunettes were mixed here with dry river beds, but the last kilometers were very fast.

#### @ OF NOTE

# Bikes: Short wins first special

# Cars: Nasser Al-Attiyah the unstoppable force

# Trucks: Shibalov surfs the sand!

# Tomorrow: Chasing the white tiger

### S.9 – The race





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Credit MCH Photo/Marian Chytka

## Bikes: Short wins first special

After Oriol Mena earlier on in the race, today it was the turn of the ex-moto crosser Andrew Short (Rockstar Husqvarna) to win his first ever FIM World Championship special. The stage undoubtedly suited his riding style, but a win is a win and the American was modestly pleased with result. Behind him, another good result for Paulo Gonclaves (Hero Motorsport) who must be regretting the broken engine that pushed him out of the running overall. Also happy with his day was Adrien Van Beveren (Yamaha Rally Team), 3rd (at 1:45). Ill at ease on the muddy enduro style specials in Siberia and handicapped by his engine's lack of 6th gear in the ultra-fast Mongolian stages – the 6 speed box is coming in September – the three-times winner of the famous Le Touquet beach race has come into his own in the sands of the Gobi desert.

Overall Sam Sunderland maintains his lead coming into the final stage tomorrow, with a steady fourth place (+4:19) today. More relaxed here in Jiayuguan at the finish line than after his crash yesterday, the British rider has regained his focus with the end of the rally now in sight. Way too experienced to be tempted into making any predictions, he nevertheless knows he managed his race well on this 9th stage, which will no doubt help him through tomorrow's last kilometres. Behind him, by his own admission, Short might struggle to open tomorrow and safeguard his 2nd place, with Van Beveren and both the Benavides brothers breathing down his neck. The battle for podium places is still as wide open as the immense dunes of the Gobi Desert.

**Andrew Short (Rockstar Husqvarna) 1st:** *"Today it was more like moto-x, not those fast roads, I was able to move on the bike, I had a good start position, so overall a really good day for me. Nice to win my first FIM special even if it has taken me a lot longer than I thought to get to this point - and I've still got a long way to go. These guys have been doing it so long. They have so much knowledge and expertise and also speed. There's some truth in the fact that this being a level playing field helps (first time for bikes on the Silk Way Rally) but for the most part its just because they're fast."*

## Cars: Al-Attiyah, the unstoppable force

At the finish line of this 8th stage Nasser Al-Attiyah (Toyota Gazoo Racing Overdrive) took his time. Looking tired, the Qatari driver was feeling the strain. But the three times Dakar winner is still fighting fit. Because if Nasser is looking tired, Han Wei (Buggy Geely SMG) and Eric Van Loon (Toyota Hilux Overdrive) are looking even more so. The Chinese driver takes full advantage of his second place on the stage to move up to second place overall. We were expecting a fierce fight with the Buggy Optimus of Jérôme Pélichet but it never materialised. Giving away more than half an hour, the Frenchman finished 8th but nevertheless conserves





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his third place on the podium. Still chasing after a stage win, Mathieu Serradori (Buggy CR6 SRT) perhaps pushed too hard. In his battle for today's second place, the driver from the South of France hit a rock and tore off a wheel 50 kilometres from the finish.

**Nasser Al-Attiyah (Qat/Toyota Gazoo Racing Overdrive) 1st:** *"It was a very difficult stage today. I have raced many Dakars but I have never know such an exhausting special. Like yesterday it was very interesting, but the body, already tired, was really tested today. There's only one stage left now to finish this SILK WAY RALLY in style."*

### Trucks: Shibalov shows his teeth!

Winning the SILK WAY RALLY is something of a must for a Kamaz-Master driver's CV. By taking the lead yesterday, following the MAZ of Viazovich's roll in dunes, Shibalov was determined to show everyone that his first place was no one-off. Starting first this morning for what was one of the most difficult stages of this 2019 edition, the young Kamaz-Master driver regulated his teammates Karginov (the title holder) and Mardeev (two-times winner) to 24:48 and 37:29 overall on the penultimate stage.

**Anton Shibalov (Rus/Kamaz-Master) 1st:** *"We drove this special at a good pace but I never had the impression of taking any risks. The goal was to drive carefully and get over the obstacles as efficiently as possible. Something we clearly achieved, as the first cars didn't take much time off us."*



### STAT OF THE DAY

21.196

By installing their bivouac at Jiayuguan for this last bivouac before the finish, le SILK WAY RALLY almost touches the western extremity of the Great Wall of China, with its 'Fort of the Fertile Valley'. The Great Wall has been measured several times. In 2012 the Chinese authorities announced an official length of 21.196,18 mètres, equivalent to 5 times the width of the USA from east to west or, if you prefer, 175.000 football fields in a line! It should be noted however that this figure takes into account all the different walls, sometimes superimposed at certain points, that have been built over the centuries by different dynasties. In reality it is reckoned that the 8th Wonder of the World measures more or less 5.000 kilometres. Which tallies nicely with the wall's alternative name, 'the wall 10,000 li long'. A 'li' being the equivalent of 500 metres...

### ROAD BOOK

**Tomorrow: Stage 10 - JIAYUGUAN - DUNHUANG: "In pursuit of the White Tiger" - Distance: 556,30KM - Selective section: 255,00KM**

The last racing stage starts in the foothills and becomes harder and more technical with every next kilometer, going through the canyons, across plateaus, along twisting roads and dry river beds. After covering the half of section, racers will reach a valley. The last kilometers are set along a smooth and fast ground road, which will define the rally champion.





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## 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.

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