

Valtr fourth on the first Dakar stage; debutant Aliyyah Koloc 29th in the T3 category despite more car issues

The first stage of this year's Dakar produced another remarkable result for the Buggyra ZM Racing team.

TALLIN, ESTONIA, January 1, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Jaroslav Valtr Sr. was fourth in the truck category, followed closely by Martin Šoltys. However, he did not enjoy fifth place for long as he received a 15-minute penalty for passing the checkpoints in the wrong order. Buggyra's drivers in the T3 Light Prototypes category tackled the stage with a start and finish in the Sea Camp bivouac with honours. Josef Machacek came 16th, while debutant Aliyyah Koloc finished twenty-ninth. Radovan Kazarka finished third place with Tatra Puma in his Dakar Classic category.

Jaroslav Valtr Sr. did very well in his Tatra after a seven-year break, coming fourth after 367 measured kilometers in Sunday's leg. In addition, he held on to third place for a long time. "I'm still learning. I need two or three stages more to see what the truck can do and then we can fight for the top. My goal today was to fight and improve my position. But my main goal was to learn how to drive in the Tatra again. To find its limits, learn about its acceleration and get to know the kind of dunes we're going to drive on. I'm happy with fourth place," said the pilot, racing with Tatra Buggyra ZM Racing colours.



As the organisers thoroughly mixed the entire field at the start, the truck pilots met a number of

rivals from other categories on the track. "We had a nice fight with Karel Trnety on the 156th kilometer. We overtook three cars in the rock mountains otherwise we had a lot of buggies between us. We overtook about 30 - 40 cars. That was very unpleasant because we were getting lost in the dust. But it was the same for everyone," Valtr shared his impressions of the first stage.

His teammate Martin Šoltys confirmed that his fourth place in the prologue was not accidental as also on the first leg he was fighting with the top of the truck field. However, he did not enjoy his fifth place for long, as he received a 15-minute penalty for not passing a checkpoint. "I thought everyone was going to slow down a bit, but at the intermediate stages we saw everyone flying like a shot. That's why we sped up a bit after that. We had one rear wheel blow, but otherwise we didn't have any major problems. I'm very happy that the car is cooling perfectly.

There were two difficult situations, where we had to go back for a navigation point," Martin Šoltys described Sunday's action on the track.



18-year-old Dakar newcomer Aliyyah Koloc experienced her first long Dakar stage on Sunday. All in all, she had 601 kilometers to cover, including the connection routes.

"It went well on the track. I started very far back because the prologue didn't go well. We caught a lot of traffic. There were a lot of trucks, so we were always in a cloud of dust and didn't see much. Then we were stuck behind one truck for a long time," recalled the racer, racing with Buggyra ZM Academy colours, of the tricky mix of vehicles from different categories.

"About 60 kilometers before the finish, the car lost power. We just drove into big dunes, so it was difficult. But somehow we managed to get to the finish line," Aliyyah Koloc explained at the end of the timed section. "I am very happy to have finished my first long Dakar stage. I hope it will be better tomorrow."

Josef Macháček enjoyed his drive in the Buggyra Can-Am DV 21. The veteran had nothing but praise for the chosen route and his navigator. "It was a beautiful stage to start. There were fast sections, rocks, valleys, riverbeds and dunes. I have say that I was absolutely happy with my

navigator. David Schovánek is simply great," said the Dakar veteran. "We stuck to our tactics and didn't overtake too much. Towards the end, there were heavy sand dunes and a lot of people even from our category got stuck in them. A lot of drivers overdid it today, we even saw a car overturned," Machacek explained.

Robert Kasák finished 22nd on Sunday. Like almost all the participants of this year's Dakar, he spoke enthusiastically about the variety of the route. "It was fantastic and beautiful. Long plains, not so many rocks, but there were also narrow sections. The dunes were terribly challenging. One of the hardest tracks I've raced on so far." He then described the critical moment that the Tatra Phoenix crew found themselves in. "We entered the most difficult dunes in the dark. We went down into a pit about 200 metres deep. It was very difficult to get out, because there were three other overturned cars. It was very tough," said the pilot racing for the Tatra Buggyra Slovakia team.

Radovan Kazarka is not letting his Tatra down in the Dakar Classic. However, he is also ahead of his old rival, the Dutch DAF, in the standings. "We are the only ones in a Tatra of the whole Classic to have driven through the dunes. The Tatra is number one!" said the Slovak pilot of Tatra Puma. His team mate Pavol Zachar was literally blown away by the route of the first leg: "It was beautiful. It was a difficult and challenging stage, but it was amazing."

Buggyra Racing Organisation

Buggyra Powersports OU

+372 5606-4169

buggyra@buggyra.com

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