

Machacek almost hit by a car; Aliyyah Koloc rolled on the fast track but was able to continue

The fifth stage of the Dakar, which was the second loop with start and finish in Hail, was difficult for the Buggyra ZM Racing team's crews.

TALLIN, ESTONIA, January 5, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Six-time event winner Josef Machacek was just a short crash away. 18-year-old debutant Aliyyah Koloc had another tough day as she rolled her Buggyra Can-AM DV 21 over the roof.

Even so, the young pilot managed to set the 14th fastest time of the day, with experienced pilot Machacek right behind her and moving up to tenth overall. Aliyyah Koloc was in 28th position overall pending final classifications. In today's truck standings, Jaroslav Valtr was classified tenth and Martin Soltys is right behind him in 11th place. They are fifth and seventh in the overall classification.

"Another very difficult stage is behind us. All the pilots arrived at the finish line very exhausted, But the important thing is that they arrived at the finish line in daylight, because it is going to be very cold tonight as temperatures are expected to drop to zero," said Jan Kalivoda, Buggyra's head of communications, assessing today's Dakar events.

Josef Macháček experienced his most dramatic moment of this year's Dakar so far during the 377 km long stage. In his Buggyra Can-AM Dv 21 he avoided a last-minute crash. "We almost



collided with a car today. They were driving along the dune and we were coming up on it at high speed. The other car was coming towards me from the left and I had two options: either hit the brakes, which would have meant to stop the car or push harder," said the Buggyra ZM Academy driver.

As an experienced Dakar participant, he knows how important it is not to get lost on the Dakar. That's why he appreciates the work of navigator David Schovánek. "When David navigates, it is impossible to get lost. It is just without him, I am lost," said Josef Macháček with a laugh.

Aliyyah Koloc had problems with the performance of her car in the first part of today's stage. "We went into the stage with a performance problem, which was difficult in the dunes. The sand there was very soft and a lot of cars passed us by," she said. But then the problem was sorted out and the 18-year-old drove "at full throttle".

Then she experienced another issues, this time when exchanging with her navigator Stéphane Duplé. "After refuelling, the microphones in our helmets stopped working, so Stephane was using his hands. 130km before the end of the timed section I was going too fast on the sandy route. I hit a bump and went over the roof. But we were able to keep going and made it to the finish," said Aliyyah Koloc with relief.

Jaroslav Valtr fought as hard as he could in the difficult sandy terrain. "Dunes, dunes, dunes. We rode hard, but we had to tighten the suspension of the car. But otherwise I am satisfied. We had one sinkhole. Van Kasteren pulled us out right away, but there was still a 10 to 15-minute discrepancy. We fought as hard as we could, thats all we could do," said the Tatra Buggyra ZM Racing driver. But the experienced driver knows that the Dakar is not a sprint and that it is important to have the long-term goal in mind. "We are still at the beginning of the Dakar. We will see what happens next. I think that everybody will experience technical issues at some point because it's going really fast. I drove at the maximum today," Jaroslav Valtr described Thursday's fight with the sand."



Martin Šoltys, the second driver for Tatra Buggyra ZM Racing, admitted that it has been the hardest stage so far. "It was a long, long stage. Just sand and dunes, and very hard. Our shock absorbers broke down halfway through, it was a disaster." But despite the challenging route, he had time for brief reflections behind the wheel. "I had a message in the cockpit today, so I read it every now and then, thought about it and tried to stick to it," Martin Šoltys recalled the "Enjoy!" message that adorned the cockpit of his Tatra 815 this morning.

After yesterday's technical problems, Robert Kasák was able to get back on the track again. His efforts were rewarded with the 24th position today, making him 25th overall. "We enjoyed it. It was a beautiful dune stage, clean sand. It was very technical, even though it was fast at the beginning. If we hadn't had a puncture, we would have finished a bit earlier. My navigator Tomáš Kazarka is doing a great job for his first Dakar. Hats off to him and his navigation," he praised his navigator.

Tomas' father Robert Kazarka is still third in his category in the Dakar Classic after his fifth place today. The Slovak driver enjoys racing, but he doesn't like the scoring of this event. "It was fast today, we went through the canyon at the end. But we're quite disheartened by the whole system of the Dakar Classic. I got to know the points score. We followed the same limits as the Spaniard in front of us. He got a zero, we got a penalty. I don't understand it and I'm going to ask the stewards to explain. Let's make it an equal fight and don't make anything up," said the Tatra Puma driver angrily.

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