



### **Joaquim Rodrigues and C.S. Santosh further improve their overall standings**

**Oruro, Bolivia January 6, 2017:** The inclement weather forecast that has been threatening to throw the Dakar out of gear in Bolivia finally came true during the running of the sixth stage. Heavy rains washed out parts of the track in the latter half of the 447-km special stage between Tupiza and Oruro forcing the organisers to cancel the remaining half of the special stage at the 292km mark.



In these conditions, both Hero MotoSports Team Rally riders overcame frigid temperatures, pouring rain, hail storm and tricky track conditions to further improve their standings in the overall general classification, while several top riders got a heavy penalty.

Joaquim Rodrigues, started this stage at 17th place after his rankings further improved overnight on account of a time refund of 27 minutes for stopping on two separate occasions on the fourth special to call in the medical helicopter to evacuate two crashed riders.

On the fifth stage this morning, he displayed maturity well beyond his rookie's status in the Dakar to overcome the testing conditions of rain and high altitude with a great deal of panache to complete the abridged stage in 2 hour 48 minutes and 36 seconds. It put him in 11th place in the day's classification and 11th place in the overall provisional general standings.

*"Today's stage was very difficult because of the rain on the real fast tracks on the piste that made it very slippery. Then we got to a waypoint that was really hard to find. After that when we got to the dunes, I*

*attacked a bit and passed a few guys ahead of me. Overall, it was a good stage for me and had no crashes. I also went up the classifications, so I am happy for that, but there is still a long way to go. I am pretty happy with my bike and to put Hero Motosports Team rally in a good position,”* said Rodrigues.

Santosh, who made substantial gains in the fourth stage, too kept up the good work. The Indian rider came up with yet another day of consistent riding without taking undue risks. Starting the special in 66th place—he gained five places overnight after the final penalties were calculated—Santosh finished the stage with a time of 3 hour 42 minutes and 37 seconds that pushed him up to 61st place in the day’s standing placing him in 70th place in the overall provisional general standings.

*“The first part was really slick because of all the rain on the track. Apart from that, it was really cold. There was a section that involved some tricky navigation, but I managed to find the waypoint. Then on the main piste in the latter part, there were some navigational challenges, but I managed to get in the right direction to collect a really tricky waypoint. But the biggest challenge today was the cold and the length of the day,”* said Santosh after arriving at a rain-drenched bivouac.

The sixth stage of the 2017 Dakar will take the participants from Oruro to La Paz where the rally will take rest for a day, giving a chance to the riders and assistance crews to recover their energies. But before they can look towards having a well-deserved break, they will have a total of 786 km on the agenda out which the special distance will be a mammoth 527 km, which is the longest timed section in this edition of the Dakar.

#### **Provisional Stage 5 General Classification**

1. Sam Sunderland, Red Bull KTM Factory Rally, KTM, 2:21:51
2. Paulo Goncalves, Monster Energy Honda Team, Honda, 2:28:56
3. Adrian Van Beveren, Yamaha Official Rally Team, Yamaha, 2:29:20
- 11. Joaquim Rodrigues, Hero Motosports Team Rally, Hero Speedbrain, 2:48:36**
- 62. C.S. Santosh, Hero Motosports Team Rally, Hero Speedbrain, 3:42:37**

#### **Provisional Overall General Classification**

1. Sam Sunderland, Red Bull KTM Factory Rally, KTM, 15:22:05
2. Pablo Quintanilla, Husqvarna Factory Rally, Husqvarna, 15:34:05
3. Adrian Van Beveren, Yamaha Official Rally Team, Yamaha, 15:38:12
- 11. Joaquim Rodrigues, Hero Motosports Team Rally, Hero Speedbrain, 16:32:25**
- 70. C.S. Santosh, Hero Motosports Team Rally, Hero Speedbrain, 21:23:57**



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