



## **Dakar debutant Oriol Mena breaks into top 20 while CS Santosh loses over an hour, slips in the rankings**

**San Juan De Marcona, Peru, January 8, 2018:** The third stage of the Dakar Rally moved from Pisco to a very windy and dusty San Juan De Marcona. It was a very good stage for Hero MotoSports Team Rally's Spanish debutant rider Oriol Mena, who overcame tough navigation to clock-in a fast time today and finish the stage at 13th place.



During the stage, he also stopped for a few minutes to help a fellow competitor who crashed in front of him. This may result in a time refund, which will further improve his rankings. By finishing the stage at 13th place, Mena also broke into the top 20 in overall rankings at the 20th position, pending the time refund decision.

On the other hand, C S Santosh lost a lot of time as he ran out of fuel, 30 km short of finish, due to a loose fuel cap. As a result, he slipped down in the rankings, closing the Stage 3 at 101st position and overall at 57th. With 9 more stages pending, he will aim to make up for as much lost time as possible.



The stage, which was described as “for the hardened off-roadies”, was fought mainly off-piste with the terrain offering 63% sand and more dunes. A total of 504 km was on offer today with a Special Stage of 296 km followed by a 208 km Liaison bringing the competitors to the San Juan De Marcona bivouac to rest for the night.

The Rally will camp in San Juan De Marcona for the 4th Stage as well, where a change in the landscape at the start is expected to provide a new challenge to the riders but not before hitting dunes again for total run of 444 kms including the liaison.

**Oriol Mena** (Comp No: 61): *“First really difficult stage with tough navigation. I stopped for a few minutes at 50 km to help No. 17 who got knocked out due to a crash in front of me. After that I managed to get my concentration again and made up good speed to arrive home in quick time. I am quite happy with my day and enjoying my experience out there.”*

**C.S Santosh** (Comp No: 49): *“I started with a good rhythm today, then went on with the flow in the 2nd part of the stage. I had no issues with the navigation as well. Unlucky for me, the rear tank cap was not closed properly after refuelling and I lost my rear tank fuel before I realized it. Finally, ran out of fuel 30 km short of*



*the finish and had to wait and ask for the fuel from some of the slower riders coming at the back. In the process I lost over an hour's time today. It was not the best day, but I take the positive that I am still in the race and that's what counts."*

### **Provisional Stage 3 Classifications**

1. Sam Sunderland, RedBull KTM Factory Racing, KTM, 03h 20m 43s
2. Kevin Benavides, Honda Factory Racing, Honda, +03m 03s
3. Toby Price, RedBull KTM Factory Racing, KTM, +03m 28s
13. Oriol Mena, Hero Motosports Team Rally, Hero MotoSports, +09m 25s
101. C.S. Santosh, Hero Motosports Team Rally, Hero MotoSports, +01h 55m 14s

### **Overall Provisional Classifications after Stage 3**

1. Sam Sunderland, RedBull KTM Factory Racing, KTM, 06h 44m 23s
2. Kevin Benavides, Honda Factory Racing, Honda, +04m 38s
3. Pablo Quintanilla, Husqvarna Factory Racing, Husqvarna, +05m 00s
20. Oriol Mena, Hero Motosports Team Rally, Hero MotoSports, +32m 33s
57. C.S. Santosh, Hero Motosports Team Rally, Hero MotoSports, +02h 18m 36s

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