



HERO MOTOSPORTS TEAM RALLY KICK-OFF THEIR RALLY DU MAROC CAMPAIGN

INDIA'S NEXT DAKAR HERO SHLOK GHORPADE MAKES HIS WR2C DEBUT

AGADIR, MOROCCO | 28 SEP 2026

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, kicked-off their campaign for the Rally du Maroc, one of the most gruelling and prestigious challenges in the rally-raid calendar. The team enters this rally with an exciting line-up featuring the debut of India's rising star, Shlok Ghorpade in his first-ever FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) event alongside the seasoned Nacho and Mike.

This milestone marks a significant moment for the India's Next Dakar Hero (INDH) program—an initiative aimed at identifying, nurturing, and promoting the next generation of Indian rally talent with an ultimate goal of representing India at the toughest rally in the world – the Dakar Rally.



For 18-year-old Shlok Ghorpade, his inclusion in the program has been a catalyst for rapid development, providing him with professional mentorship, technical guidance, and the necessary international exposure to learn and improve while competing against the world's best. Shlok's journey to Rally du Maroc follows a promising international debut at the Spanish Rally Championship in Zaragoza, where he demonstrated good pace and mind set, securing a podium in his opening special stage and leading for significant portions of the race.

The team started their campaign in Agadir today with Mike, Nacho and Shlok finishing the 18km Prologue stage successfully in 7th, 13th and 19th positions respectively, to ascertain their starting positions for the first stage of the rally tomorrow.

Over the course of next 5 days, the rally will cover over 2600 kms, including 1500 kms of the timed competitive stages posing a variety of challenges – from dirt tracks, to sandy tracks to the famous dunes and rocky sections as well - to test the mettle of the riders.



Hero MotoSports Team Rally will be looking to go in with an approach that balances their vv pursuit of podiums with the development of a new talent pool, closely watching the progres- sion of Shlok. The team will be missing the services of Ross Branch, who is currently recovering from an injury.



Wolfgang Fischer, Manager and Head – Hero MotoSports Team Rally said, “It was a really good and encouraging start in the prologue and especially for Shlok. In his first prologue, he showed good speed and strong basics to bring the bike safely home. It marks the start of a new era for Hero MotoSports with an Indian rider competing in a World championship Race for the first time. Nacho and Mike also had a good outing today showing improvement in speeds and our Hero 450 Rally also had a good outing so overall an encouraging start. But this is rally and we know that this is only the beginning of 5 long days to come. We wish for the team to bring it home every day safely. We are missing Ross here in Maroc and wish him a quick recovery so that he can return to action and the team.”

Speaking about his first WR2C rally, **Shlok Ghorpade** said, "The prologue today was an amazing experience. I got to learn a lot. As it's my first time doing a prologue and that too in a World Championship race, I focussed on executing our plan and I am glad that I did it well. So I am very happy that today went very well. The routes were really close together so I had to follow the road book closely to navigate. Thank you everyone for your love and support. It means the world to me. I am ready, excited and looking forward to my first stage tomorrow.”

Mike Docherty, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally said, “Feels good to finally start the race and brush off all the nerves to get your heart rate pumping. It was a little bit sandy and navigation was easy. I just had to make sure that I don't miss any waypoints so nothing too major. I'm happy with my position and looking forward to the first stage tomorrow.”

Nacho Cornejo, Rider, Hero MotoSports Team Rally said, “I am happy to be done with the prologue today. It was a short but intense stage with a lot of loose stones so it was easy to hit one if you're not careful. I did better than usual and also improved my speed, and the bike also performed well, so really happy with how it went for me today. I am feeling really positive and ready to fight for the 5 long days ahead.”

Provisional Overall Rankings – Prologue

01.	Daniel Sanders	Redbull KTM Factory Team	00h 10m 58s
02.	E. Canet	Redbull KTM Factory Team	+ 00m 12s
03.	Ricky Brabec	Monster Energy Honda HRC	+ 00m 13s
07.	Mike Docherty	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 00m 32s
13.	Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 01m 09s
19.	Shlok Ghorpade	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	+ 01m 17s

Provisional Rankings – Rally GP

Nacho Cornejo	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	8th Place
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Provisional Rankings – Rally 2

Mike Docherty	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	2nd Place
Shlok Ghorpade	Hero MotoSports Team Rally	10th Place

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About Hero MotoCorp

Hero MotoCorp, headquartered in New Delhi, India, is the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters for 25 consecutive years with ~\$5 billion revenue. The Company's global footprint spans 53 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, Central and Latin America with a customer base of over 130 million. The Company operates eight manufacturing facilities - six in India and one each in Colombia and Bangladesh - along with two Research and Development centres: Hero Centre for Innovation and Technology (CIT) in India and Hero Tech Centre Germany (TCG). Hero MotoCorp is driving the transition to electric mobility through VIDA. Strategic alliances with Harley-Davidson and Zero Motorcycles support the design and development of premium and electric motorcycles, respectively. Further demonstrating its commitment to the EV future, the Company has made strategic investments in two- and three-wheeler EV manufacturers, Ather Energy and Euler Motors. Hero MotoCorp is the only Indian two-wheeler manufacturer listed on the prestigious Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI). Hero MotoCorp's Executive Chairman, Dr. Pawan Munjal, was named to the 2025 TIME100 Climate List of the 100 most influential leaders driving business climate action. Beyond mobility, Hero MotoCorp is a major global promoter of sports, including golf, football, field hockey, and cricket. Hero MotoSports Team Rally is India, a flag bearer in global rally racing.