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Win number six of the APRC season: Champion Gill and ŠKODA triumph in India

- › **Six rounds, six wins: Gaurav Gill wins his home race to complete a flawless season for ŠKODA in the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC)**
- › **Glenn Macneall takes the Co-Driver title – fifth win in a row for ŠKODA in the Manufacturers’ and Co-Drivers’ competitions in the APRC**
- › **Michal Hrabánek: “You could not wish for a better way to round off what has been a successful 2016 for us on the rally scene”**

Chikmagalur/India, 5 December 2016 – The perfect end to a magnificent year of rallying for ŠKODA in 2016: local favourite Gaurav Gill claimed a much-celebrated home win at the final round of the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) in India. Victory at the Rally India came three days after the new APRC champion’s 35th birthday, and completed a flawless record of six wins from six races. The latest success in the impressive ŠKODA FABIA R5 also earned his co-driver Glenn Macneall (AUS) the Co-Driver title in the APRC. ŠKODA was already guaranteed its fifth title in a row in the Manufacturers’ and Drivers’ Championships coming into the final race.

“You could not wish for a better way to round off what has been a successful 2016 for us on the rally scene. World rally champions Esapekka Lappi and Janne Ferm received their trophies in Vienna on Friday. Three days later, Gaurav Gill and Glenn Macneall climbed onto the top step of the podium for us again and were crowned APRC champions in front of thousands of fans at the final rally of the season, which took place in the key Asia-Pacific region. That was the best possible advertising for the ŠKODA brand,” said ŠKODA Motorsport Director Michal Hrabánek.

Thousands of fans had flocked through the coffee plantations to watch Indian rally hero Gill. However, it was his ŠKODA MRF team-mates Fabian Kreim/Frank Christian (D/D) who initially took the lead on Saturday’s only special stage. Unfortunately, the exciting all-ŠKODA duel only lasted until the fourth stage on Sunday, which the German rally champions were unable to finish due to a damaged suspension. After that, Gill was untroubled and won all twelve stages on day two. Kreim returned to the rally on Monday and won three of the final four stages to climb back into fifth place. However, it was Gaurav Gill who took a popular victory after 225 kilometres against the clock.

“This victory in my home country is the icing on the cake at the end of an outstanding 2016. I would like to say a special thank you to the ŠKODA MRF team, which has always done a perfect job. It is thanks to this that I was able to add a second APRC title to the one I won in 2013,” said Gill. As well as the triumph in the APRC, ŠKODA also won the continental championship in South America, courtesy of Gustavo Saba (PY). Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q) won the Middle East Rally Championship (MERC), also at the wheel of a ŠKODA FABIA R5, and a further nine national titles also went the way of ŠKODA drivers.



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However, the highlight was undoubtedly the historic victory in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) for Lappi/Ferm in the FABIA R5, which made 2016 one of the most successful years in the 115-year history of ŠKODA Motorsport.

The number for the Rally India: 17

17 stages, 17 stage wins: the ŠKODA FABIA R5 once again ended the APRC season with a flawless record. As at the previous two rallies in the continental championship, in Malaysia and Japan, the two drivers in the high-tech four-wheel drive powerhouse left the opposition in their wake on every single stage of the Rally India. Rally winner Gill took 13 stage wins, while Fabian Kreim was the fastest man on four special stages.

FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally Whangarei – New Zealand	29.04.–01.05.2016
Rally Queensland – Australia	18.06.–19.06.2016
Rally Zhangye – China	05.08.–07.08.2016
Rally Hokkaido – Japan	23.09.–25.09.2016
Rally Malaysia – Malaysia	28.10.–30.10.2016
Rally India – India	03.12.–05.12.2016

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Media images:



ŠKODA at the APRC rally in India

Gaurav Gill won his home rally in India to end the APRC season with a flawless record of six wins from six races. Co-Driver Glenn Macneall also wrapped up the Co-Driver title.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at the APRC rally in India

Gaurav Gill was crowned APRC champion for the second time, having previously won the title in 2013.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

ŠKODA Motorsport Overview:

ŠKODA has been on the motorsport scene since 1901. Be it on the circuit or in rallies, ŠKODA has celebrated victories and won titles all around the world. Historical highlights include numerous title wins in the FIA European Rally Championship (ERC), the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) and the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC), as well as the victory in the European Touring Car Championship in 1981. ŠKODA teams have also triumphed in the world's oldest and most famous rally, taking several class victories in the legendary Monte Carlo, which was first held in 1911.

In 2015, ŠKODA celebrated four victories in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) with their new ŠKODA FABIA R5 rally car. The high-tech 4x4 was homologated by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. In the ŠKODA FABIA R5's very first season, factory duo Pontus Tidemand/Emil Axelsson (S/S) secured the fourth APRC title in a row for ŠKODA. In addition, the brand claimed five national titles with their new winning model.

ŠKODA's new FABIA R5 proudly continues the brand's long tradition in motorsport. Its predecessor, the FABIA Super 2000, was the most successful model in ŠKODA's 115-year motorsport history. With the 4x4 from Mladá Boleslav, factory duo Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) achieved the historic feat of becoming the first duo in history to win the drivers' title in the ERC and the APRC in consecutive years. Between 2009 and 2014, ŠKODA FABIA Super 2000 drivers won a total of 50 national and international titles around the world.

In 2016, the factory teams Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S), Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler and Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (F/F) are competing with the ŠKODA FABIA R5 in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2).



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ŠKODA AUTO

- > is one of the longest-established vehicle manufacturers in the world. The company was founded in 1895 – during the pioneering days of the automobile. Today, the company's headquarters remain in Mladá Boleslav.
- > currently offers the following models in the range: CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, OCTAVIA, YETI, KODIAQ and SUPERB.
- > in 2015 delivered more than 1 million vehicles to customers worldwide.
- > has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. ŠKODA, in association with the Group, independently manufactures and develops vehicles, as well as components, engines and gear transmissions.
- > operates at three locations in the Czech Republic, produces in China, Russia, Slovakia and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- > employs over 26,600 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.