

ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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APRC in Japan: ŠKODA driver Gaurav Gill wins – ŠKODA takes FIA APRC Cup for Manufacturers

- › At Rally Hokkaido ŠKODA prematurely secured the Cup for Manufacturers of the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC) one round before season's end
- › At the same time Team MRF ŠKODA won the APRC Teams Award
- › After their victory in Japan Gaurav Gill and co-driver Stéphane Prévot are in the best position to win APRC driver and co-driver titles
- › Teammate Ole Christian Veiby, also driving a MRF ŠKODA FABIA R5, had to retire on day one but scored valuable points after restarting and winning the second leg of the rally
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: "Congratulations to the MRF ŠKODA Team for securing the Cup for Manufacturers of FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship."

Obihiro/Japan, 17 September 2017 – At Rally Hokkaido, second but last round of the 2017 FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), Team MRF ŠKODA's Gaurav Gill and co-driver Stéphane Prévot (IND/BEL) achieved a dominant win. They took the lead on the second stage and defended it up to the finish line. Meanwhile their teammates, talented Norwegian shooting stars Ole Christian Veiby and Stig Rune Skjærmoen (NOR/NOR), had bad luck. With a slow puncture they slid into a ditch on the third stage and had to retire for the day. After re-starting on the second leg they were fastest overall on the final day eventually scoring valuable points for the championship. While reigning APRC Champion Gaurav Gill regained the lead in the drivers championship from teammate Veiby, ŠKODA prematurely won the FIA APRC Cup for Manufacturers. Also Team MRF ŠKODA became winner of the APRC Teams Award. The drivers and co-drivers title will be decided only between the two MRF ŠKODA teams at Rally of India (24 to 26 November 2017).

Temporary rainfalls made the gravel tracks on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido even more demanding for the teams competing in the fourth round of the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC). On the shortest stage of the whole championship, the 0.96 kilometres of the opening show stage "Sammy Satsunai" close to the service park, O.C. Veiby was fastest followed by teammate and reigning APRC Champion Gaurav Gill.

On the opening stage next morning, Gill scored the fastest time and everybody expected the thrilling season-long battle between Gill and Veiby to be continued in Japan. But on the 29 kilometres of the third stage, all went wrong for the Norwegian youngster. After a big jump a shock absorber broke followed by a slow puncture. Veiby slightly went off the road, unfortunately got stuck in a ditch and had to retire. From there on Gaurav Gill was clearly in command, scored all the fastest time of the day and built up a comfortable lead. "It has been a great day for us and Team MRF ŠKODA. We made a perfect tyre choice and a good car set-up really paid off. The conditions were really rough with huge rocks and stones on the really fast stages sometimes averaging over 125 kilometres an hour", concluded the Indian ŠKODA driver.

ŠKODA youngster Ole Christian Veiby could re-start on Sunday, won the second leg and scored valuable championship points. "Although this weekend was a setback to our title hopes, we will never give up and will fight up to the finish line of the last APRC round in India", he promised.



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Reigning APRC Champion Gaurav Gill has it now in his hands to win his third title after 2013 and 2016 at the Rally of India (24 to 26 November 2017). "Again many thanks to MRF ŠKODA for providing me with such a fast and reliable car. I am now looking forward to my home round in India to win the drivers title again", said a delighted Gaurav Gill at the finish line in Obihiro.

"The FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship is of major strategic significance to ŠKODA as the rallies are run in extremely important growing markets like India and China. I am happy to congratulate the MRF ŠKODA Team for prematurely securing the FIA APRC Cup for Manufacturers for ŠKODA. Since 2012 every title holder in this championship has driven a ŠKODA. This year again drivers and co-drivers titles will be decided only between the two MRF ŠKODA teams", said ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek.

Final Result APRC Rally Hokkaido/Japan 4th round of the 2017 FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC)

1. Gill/Prévot (IND/BEL), ŠKODA FABIA R5, 1:53.21.8 h
2. Blomberg/Andersson (SWE/SWE), Mitsubishi Mirage AP4, + 11:41.4 min.
3. Imai/Farmer (JPN/NZL), Subaru Impreza WRX STi, +14:43.6 min.
4. Takahashi/Nakamura, (JPN/JPN), Subaru Impreza WRX STi, +15:04.2 min.
5. Aoki/Ikeda, (JPN/JPN), Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX, +16:02.8

Number of the day: 0.96

With 0.96 kilometres only Rally Hokkaido's special stage "Sammy Satsunai" is the shortest stage of the entire 2017 FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship.

Calendar of the 2017 FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rally of Whangarei – New Zealand	28/04–30/04/2017
Rally Canberra - Australia	26/05–28/05/2017
<i>China Rally (cancelled)</i>	<i>07/07–09/07/2017</i>
Rally of Johor – Malaysia	11/08–13/08/2017
Rally Hokkaido – Japan	15/09–17/09/2017
Rally of India	24/11–26/11/2017

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ŠKODA at Rally Hokkaido/Japan

Gaurav Gill and co-driver Stéphane Prévot, driving a ŠKODA FABIA R5 run by Team MRF ŠKODA, won Rally Hokkaido and are now in the best position to win the FIA 2017 Asia-Pacific Rally Championship.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



ŠKODA at Rally Hokkaido/Japan

Team MRF ŠKODA's Ole Christian Veiby and co-driver Stig Rune Skjaermoen had to retire on day one of Rally Hokkaido/Japan but won the second leg after re-starting.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

ŠKODA Motorsport Overview

ŠKODA has been successful 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 winning the title in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2) for the first time in 2016, 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.

2016 was one of the most successful years in the history of ŠKODA Motorsport. In the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2), Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (FIN/FIN) won the title for the Czech car maker for the first time. In total, ten of the 2016 season's races in the World Rally Championship were won by a ŠKODA FABIA R5. ŠKODA drivers Gustavo Saba (PY) and Gaurav Gill (IND) also won the continental championships in South America and the Asia-Pacific region at the wheel of the successful ŠKODA FABIA R5. Nasser Al-Attiyah (Q) was unbeatable in the Middle East Rally Championship (MERC), while a further ten national titles also went the way of ŠKODA drivers.

The ŠKODA FABIA R5, a high-tech 4x4, was homologated by the International Automobile Federation FIA on 1 April 2015. ŠKODA's new FABIA R5 is successfully continuing the long tradition of ŠKODA Motorsport. Its predecessor, the FABIA SUPER 2000, won 50 national and international titles around the world. In 2017, works duos Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson (S/S) and Jan Kopecký/Pavel Dresler (CZ/CZ) contest selected races in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC 2). Kopecký/Dresler also compete in the Czech Rally Championship (MČR), where they already claimed the third title in a row.

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, KAROQ, KODIAQ and SUPERB.
- › in 2016 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, Algeria and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan through local partners.
- › employs over 30,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.

