

# ŠKODA MOTORSPORT PRESS RELEASE

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## Gill and Veiby – two ŠKODA drivers fighting for APRC lead at Malaysian rally

- › Both MRF ŠKODA teams holding top spot and runner-up position after two rounds of the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC)
- › Norwegian youngster Ole Christian Veiby two points ahead of reigning APRC champion Gaurav Gill from India
- › After winning the first two APRC 2017 rounds MRF ŠKODA is aiming for a hat trick at upcoming International Rally of Johor in Malaysia
- › ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek: “Victory in the APRC manufacturers category is our main goal.”

Mladá Boleslav, 8 August 2017 – With the third round of the 2017 FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship (APRC), International Rally of Johor in Malaysia (11–13/08/2017), coming up the title fight so far is the most exciting since years. After reigning champion Gaurav Gill and co-driver Stéphane Prévot (IND/BEL) of Team MRF ŠKODA won the opening round in New Zealand with Ole Christian Veiby and Stig Rune Skjaermoen (NOR/NOR) finishing second, the Norwegian pair fought back with a victory at Rally Canberra in Australia ahead of their teammates. In the championship standings Veiby is now leading with two points ahead of Gill. With two ŠKODA drivers fighting for the 2017 title the Czech manufacturer brand can look back on unparalleled success in the APRC. Every championship winner since 2012 was driving a ŠKODA. Now the brand is aiming at another title with the most successful rally car in its category, the ŠKODA Fabia R5.

ŠKODA youngster Ole Christian Veiby is well prepared for the Malaysian adventure. After strong results in the World Rally Championship (WRC 2) – and his maiden category win at Rally Poland – he currently lies second in the WRC 2 standings. At Rally Finland he was in the lead again before going off the road in spectacular style. After the third APRC round, the China Rally, was cancelled due to logistical reasons, teammate Gaurav Gill on the other hand returns to competition after a break of more than two and half months. He will try to compensate this lack of practice with his experience of having competed in Malaysia in recent years. ŠKODA Motorsport boss Michal Hrabánek emphasises: “Although I am really looking forward to see another round in the fight between experienced Gaurav Gill and our promising newcomer Ole Christian Veiby at the Rally of Johor, the victory in the APRC manufacturers category remains our main goal.”

At the Malaysian APRC round, officially known as International Rally of Johor, the teams have to face 14 demanding special stages of 236 kilometres on small, fast and soft gravel roads on palm oil estates close to Kota Tinggi. The rally stages around the city, north of Johor Bahru and close to the border to Singapore, are arguably amongst the best in the country.

Fast, flowing and technically challenging roads all the way through, spiced up with high humidity of more than 80 per cent, temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius combined with heavy, temporary rainfalls are challenging the competitors. “I think, the best way to prepare myself for the rally is to do some work out in a sauna, wearing full clothes and my racing overall,” O.C. Veiby looks ahead to his Malaysian premiere. The International Rally of Johor starts on Friday evening at Johor Circuit, where the winner will cross the finish line on Sunday at 16h00.





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## 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>
<b>Rally of Johor – Malaysia</b>	<b>11/08–13/08/2017</b>
Rally Hokkaido - Japan	15/09–17/09/2017
Rally of India	24/11–26/11/2017

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#### ŠKODA at International Rally of Johor/Malaysia

Ole Christian Veiby (right) and co-driver Stig Rune Skjaermoen, driving a MRF ŠKODA FABIA R5, want to extend their championship lead

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



#### ŠKODA at International Rally of Johor/Malaysia

Gaurav Gill and co-driver Stéphane Prévot want to regain the lead in APRC. Both compete in a ŠKODA FABIA R5 run by MRF Team

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## 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.

