

Visitors crowd South Pole for anniversary of conquest

December 12 2011

Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg will join dozens of adventurers at the South Pole this week to mark the 100th anniversary of countryman Roald Amundsen's groundbreaking expedition to the frozen continent.

Often described as "no man's land", the pole will be a relative hive of activity for Wednesday's anniversary.

Stoltenberg will travel by plane to the region -- unlike Amundsen who made the trek on skis -- making him only the second head of government to visit the [South Pole](#) after New Zealand's Prime Minister Helen Clark made the trip in 2007.

Stoltenberg is scheduled to welcome Norwegian adventurers attempting to reach the pole on the anniversary, some of whom are retracing the route taken by the heroic explorer.

According to the Norwegian Polar Institute, a dozen Norwegian South Pole expeditions are expected in December.

To pay homage to the [heroism](#) of English naval officer Robert Scott, whom Amundsen beat to the pole in a dramatic race and who tragically lost his life on his return, British visitors are also expected to visit Antarctica around the same time.

Just beaten to the finish line, Scott and his men, who had chosen to make

the trip using ponies rather than dogs, died after being caught in a blizzard on their way back.

A treaty signed in 1959 bans all claims to territory on the inhospitable continent, and visits there by dignitaries are rare. The lack of jurisdiction also makes it difficult to have an overview of how many [adventurers](#) are there and where they are from.

The only certainty is that none of the current expeditions will reach the pole using sleddogs -- one of the key factors in Amundsen's triumph over Scott -- as canines have been banned in Antarctica since the 1990s to avoid introducing new illnesses.

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