

Rain delays next leg of solar plane's round-the-world bid

March 17 2015



Solar Impulse 2 had been due to leave Ahmedabad city in the western state of Gujarat on Sunday and travel on to Myanmar after a short stopover in the holy city of Varanasi in northern India

Poor weather has delayed Solar Impulse 2's departure from India on the next leg of its epic bid to become the first plane to fly around the world powered solely by the sun.

The aircraft had been due to leave Ahmedabad city in the western state of Gujarat on Sunday and travel on to Myanmar after a short stopover in the holy city of Varanasi in northern India.

But [weather forecasts](#) showed there was a good chance of rain in Ahmedabad on Saturday night, and organisers said that "due to the weather", the plane would now take off on Tuesday, March 17.

A senior Ahmedabad airport official who asked not to be named said the team would assess the flying conditions on Monday evening, adding that "moisture levels are higher than usual at this time of the year".

Solar Impulse 2 landed in Ahmedabad near midnight on Tuesday, finishing its second leg in little less than 16 hours after taking off from the Omani capital Muscat to break a distance record for solar planes.

The sea legs pose the greatest challenge for the Solar Impulse team as any loss of power over the water would leave the pilot no alternative but to bail out and await rescue by boat.

Much bigger crossings lie ahead as Swiss pilots Bertrand Piccard and Andre Borschberg, who alternate at the controls of the single-seat aircraft, traverse the great oceans.

The longest single leg will see one of them fly solo non-stop for five days and nights across the Pacific from Nanjing, China, to Hawaii, a distance of 8,500 kilometres (5,270 miles).



Visitors take photographs of the world's only solar powered aircraft 'Solar Impulse 2' in the hanger at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Air Port in Ahmedabad on March 13, 2015

Muscat was the first of 12 planned stops on the plane's journey around the world from Abu Dhabi, with a total flight time of around 25 days spread over five months.

Monday's maiden leg took Borschberg 13 hours and two minutes, while Piccard's flight to Ahmedabad of 1,468 kilometres (912 miles) was said to be the longest point-to-point distance flown by a [solar-powered plane](#).

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