

Solar plane leaves India for next stop in Myanmar

March 19 2015



Swiss-made Solar Impulse-2 takes off from Ahmadabad, India, Wednesday, March 18, 2015. The solar powered aircraft is Wednesday headed to the northern Indian city of Varanasi on the third leg of its' historic round-the-world trip. (AP Photo/Press Trust of India) INDIA OUT

A solar-powered airplane on a historic round-the-world journey took off Thursday from the northern Indian town of Varanasi and was headed for its next stop in Myanmar.

Swiss pilots Bertrand Piccard and Andre Borschberg are taking turns flying the aircraft as they attempt to circumnavigate the globe on the journey that was expected to take five months.

The fuel-free aircraft, called the Solar Impulse 2, is powered by more than 17,000 solar cells on its wings that recharge the plane's batteries, enabling it to fly during the day or night.

The single-seat Swiss-made plane was expected to land in Mandalay in Myanmar later Thursday, taking nearly 16 hours to complete the 1,400 kilometer (870 mile) trip over the Bay of Bengal. The plane flies ideally at around 25 knots, or 45 kph (28 mph).

The flight has attracted attention around the world from people who see solar power as the fuel of the future, providing a source of clean, renewable energy.

The journey of the world's first aircraft powered by solar energy began in Abu Dhabi on March 9, when Borschberg flew the first leg of the trip from Abu Dhabi to Muscat, Oman.

For the second leg, Piccard was at the controls of the aircraft. The 1,465-kilometer (910-mile) flight from Muscat to Ahmadabad in western India took nearly 16 hours, and took the plane over the Arabian Sea in its first sea crossing.



Swiss pilots and founders of Solar Impulse 2 Andre Boschberg, left and Bertrand Piccard pose for media before the Solar Impulse-2 took off from Ahmadabad, India, Wednesday, March 18, 2015. The solar powered aircraft is Wednesday headed to the northern Indian city of Varanasi on the third leg of its' historic round-the-world trip. (AP Photo/Ajit Solanki)

On Wednesday, Borschberg flew the aircraft to Varanasi from Ahmadabad.

The Solar Impulse 2 is slated to make 12 stops during its 35,000-kilometer (21,700-mile) world trip, including two stops in China, before it crosses over the Pacific Ocean. It will then land in Hawaii and the U.S. Midwest and the East Coast before flying over the Atlantic Ocean.

Some legs of the trip, such as over the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, means five days and five nights of flying solo. But the pilots have

prepared for the exhaustive long stretches: Borschberg has been practicing yoga, while Piccard uses self-hypnosis to calm himself.



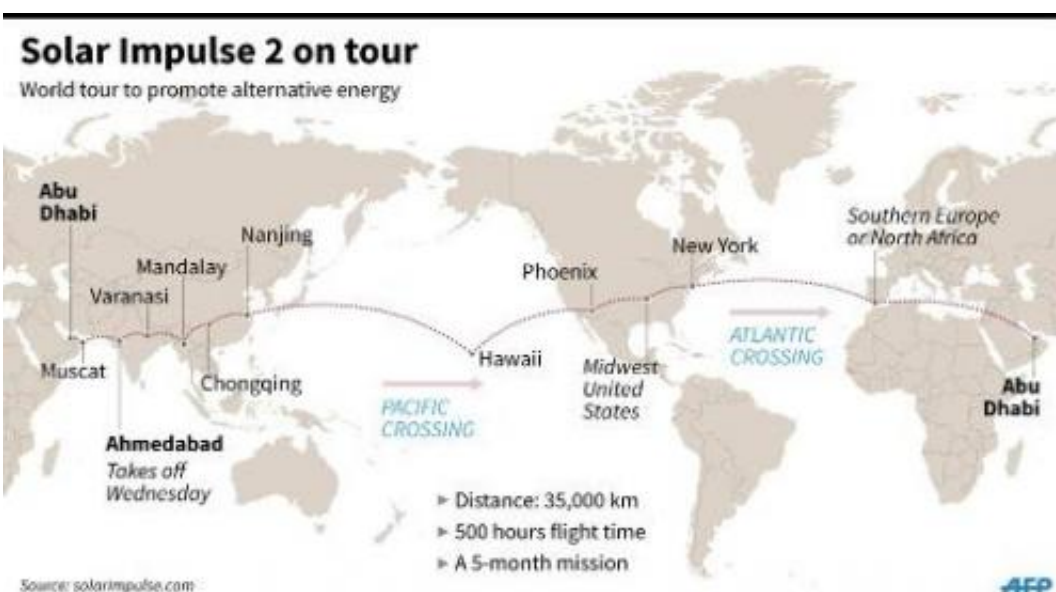
An Indian security man guards as Swiss-made Solar Impulse-2 prepares to take off from Ahmadabad, India, Wednesday, March 18, 2015. The solar powered aircraft is Wednesday headed to the northern Indian city of Varanasi on the third leg of its' historic round-the-world trip. (AP Photo/Ajit Solanki)

The pilots say they want to take a message about sustainable development to people and encourage them to opt for clean technologies in their daily lives instead of old polluting technologies.

Piccard told reporters if solar energy were more widely used, it would allow countries to halve the amount of fossil fuels that they consume.



Swiss-made Solar Impulse-2 takes off from Ahmadabad, India, Wednesday, March 18, 2015. The solar powered aircraft is Wednesday headed to the northern Indian city of Varanasi on the third leg of its' historic round-the-world trip. (AP Photo/Ajit Solanki)



Graphic showing the planned route of the Solar Impulse 2 world tour

© 2015 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Solar plane leaves India for next stop in Myanmar (2015, March 19) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-03-solar-plane-india-myanmar.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.