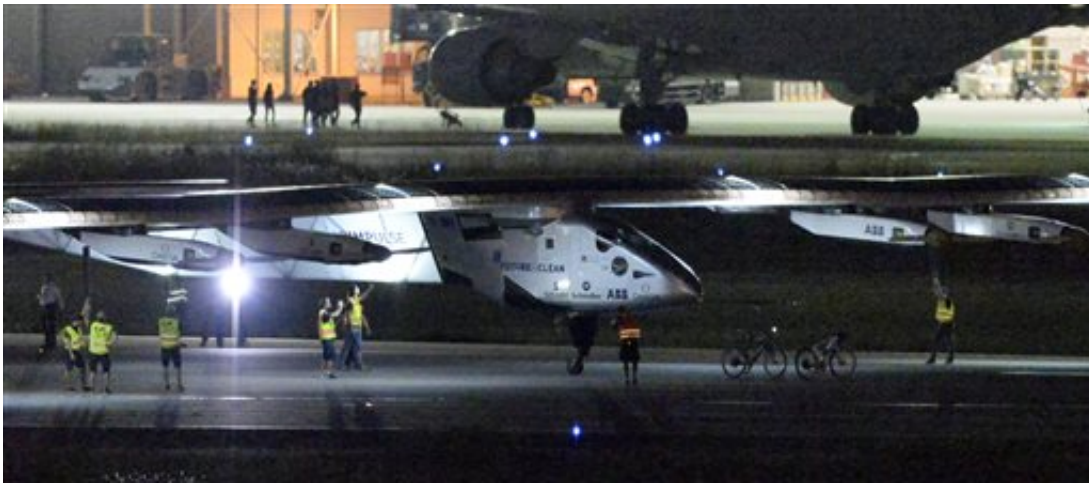


Solar Impulse plane lands in Japan to wait out bad weather

June 1 2015, byMari Yamaguchi



The Solar Impulse 2 project staff members gather around the aircraft as it lands the Nagoya Airport in Toyoyama, near Nagoya, central Japan, Monday, June 1, 2015. The solar-powered plane attempting to circle the globe without a drop of fuel made an unscheduled landing late Monday in Japan to wait out bad weather. Swiss pilot André Borschberg took off from Nanjing, China, on Sunday on what was to be the longest leg of the journey, a six-day, 8,175-kilometer (5,079-mile) flight to Hawaii. (Takuya Inaba/Kyodo News via AP)

A solar-powered plane attempting to circle the globe without a drop of fuel made an unscheduled landing late Monday in Japan to wait out bad weather.

Swiss pilot André Borschberg took off from Nanjing, China, on Sunday

on what was to be the longest leg of the journey, a six-day, 8,175-kilometer (5,079-mile) flight to Hawaii.

Instead, the Solar Impulse 2 made an unscheduled visit in central Japan, and landed safely at the Nagoya Airport.

Japanese Transport Ministry and Nagoya airport officials said earlier that they were arranging for the landing to occur after the airport's usual closing hours to accommodate the plane with a wide wingspan.

Live Internet feed on the organizers' website showed crewmembers in the control room applauding and cheering at the landing. Borschberg, who emerged from the cockpit with a full smile, was mobbed by the project's ground staff welcoming his safe arrival.

Bertrand Piccard, Initiator, Chairman and Co-Pilot of Solar Impulse 2, told the organizer's live feed, Solar Impulse TV that it was unfortunate the weather turned bad when the flight was going very well. He said the plane will continue its journey to Hawaii when the weather improves.



The Solar Impulse 2 touches down Nagoya Airport in Toyoyama, near Nagoya, central Japan Monday, June 1, 2015. The solar-powered plane attempting to circle the globe without a drop of fuel made an unscheduled landing late Monday in Japan to wait out bad weather. Swiss pilot André Borschberg took off from Nanjing, China, on Sunday on what was to be the longest leg of the journey, a six-day, 8,175-kilometer (5,079-mile) flight to Hawaii. (Kyodo News via AP)

"You know, it's one of these strange moments of life between elation and disappointment," he said. The team has achieved the longest flight ever of a solar plane going through the night, but the front is too dangerous to cross ..."

"It's just the weather doesn't fit. Everything we could do has been done and was successful. What we cannot control is the weather. So we land in Nagoya, we wait for better conditions, and we continue," he said.

Elke Neumann, a spokeswoman for the Solar Impulse project, said from Nanjing that the team had noticed the weather more than a day ago.

"We thought we might go through it," she said. "But between Japan and Hawaii there's no place to stop."

The safety of the pilot and the plane are a priority, and they will likely wait a few days in Japan until the weather changes, she said.



The Solar Impulse 2 approaches Nagoya Airport in Toyoyama, near Nagoya, central Japan, shortly before its landing Monday, June 1, 2015. The solar plane attempting to fly around the world without a drop of fuel made an unscheduled stop late Monday night in Nagoya because of bad weather. Swiss pilot André Borschberg took off from Nanjing, China, on Sunday on what was to be the longest leg of the journey, a six-day, 8,175-kilometer (5,079-mile) flight to Hawaii. (Takuya Inaba/Kyodo News via AP)

Solar Impulse 2 needs room to land, so it generally avoids times when commercial flights are operating, Neuman said. The plane also usually lands at night, because the winds tend to be lower. It needs wind to be no more than 10 knots, she said.

"We are a little bit sad, because everything's functioning perfectly: The batteries are charging, there's enough sun, the pilot is in good health, he's in good condition—it's all working well," Neumann said.



The Solar Impulse 2 flies over Nagoya Airport in Toyoyama, near Nagoya, central Japan, shortly before its landing Monday, June 1, 2015. The solar plane attempting to fly around the world without a drop of fuel made an unscheduled stop late Monday night in Nagoya because of bad weather. Swiss pilot André Borschberg took off from Nanjing, China, on Sunday on what was to be the longest leg of the journey, a six-day, 8,175-kilometer (5,079-mile) flight to Hawaii. (Takuya Inaba/Kyodo News via AP)

At the time of landing, the plane's batteries were still 74 percent charged, according to the organizer website.

The journey started in March in Abu Dhabi, and the plane has stopped in Oman, India, Myanmar and China. The flight from Nanjing to Hawaii is the seventh of 12 flights and the riskiest.



Bertrand Piccard, Initiator and Chairman of Solar Impulse, center, reacts with Mission Director Raymond Clerc, right, and son of Swiss pilot Andre Borschberg piloting Solar Impulse 2, Deniz Borschberg, left, after the landing of Solar Impulse plane in Nagoya, Japan, at the Mission Control Center for the Solar Impulse flight in Monaco, Monday, June 1, 2015. The Swiss solar-powered plane Solar Impulse 2, is attempting to fly around the world without a drop of fuel, but now plans to make an unscheduled stop Monday night in Nagoya, Japan, because of bad weather on the way to Hawaii. (AP Photo/Lionel Cironneau)



Bertrand Piccard, Initiator and Chairman of Solar Impulse, right, with Prince Albert II of Monaco speak with Swiss pilot Andre Borschberg piloting Solar Impulse above Japan, at the Mission Control Center for the Solar Impulse flight in Monaco, Monday, June 1, 2015. The Swiss solar-powered plane Solar Impulse 2, is attempting to fly around the world without a drop of fuel, but now plans to make an unscheduled stop Monday night in Nagoya, Japan, because of bad weather on the way to Hawaii. (AP Photo/Lionel Cironneau)

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