

# Solar-powered plane completes journey across Pacific Ocean

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. (AP) — A solar-powered airplane landed in California, completing a risky, three-day flight across the Pacific Ocean as part of its journey around the world.

Pilot Bertrand Piccard landed the Solar Impulse 2 in Mountain View, in the Silicon Valley south of San Francisco, at 11:45pm following a 62-hour, nonstop solo flight without fuel. The plane taxied into a huge tent erected on Moffett Airfield where Piccard was greeted by the project's team.

The landing came several hours after Piccard performed a fly-by over the Golden Gate Bridge as spectators watched the narrow aircraft with extra-wide wings from below.

"I crossed the bridge. I am officially in America," he declared as he took in spectacular views of San Francisco Bay.

Piccard and fellow Swiss pilot Andre Borschberg have been taking turns flying the plane on an around-the-world trip since taking off from Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, in March 2015. It made



**LONG LEG COMPLETED.** The Solar Impulse 2 flies over San Francisco on April 23, 2016. The solar-powered airplane landed in California, completing a risky, three-day flight across the Pacific Ocean as part of its journey around the world. The project, which began in 2002 and is estimated to cost more than \$100 million, is meant to highlight the importance of renewable energy and the spirit of innovation. (AP Photos/Noah Berger)

stops in Oman, Myanmar, China, Japan, and Hawai'i.

The trans-Pacific leg was the riskiest part of the plane's global travels because of the lack of emergency landing sites.

The aircraft faced a few bumps along the way.

The Solar Impulse 2 landed in Hawai'i in July and was forced to stay on the islands after the plane's battery system sustained heat damage on its trip from Japan. The team was delayed in Asia, as well. When first attempting to fly from Nanjing,

China, to Hawai'i, the crew had to divert to Japan because of unfavorable weather and a damaged wing.

A month later, when weather conditions were right, the plane departed from Nagoya in central Japan for Hawai'i.

The plane's ideal flight speed is about 28 mph, though that can double during the day when the sun's rays are strongest. The carbon-fiber aircraft weighs more than 5,000 pounds, or about as much as a midsize truck.

The plane's wings, which

stretch wider than those of a Boeing 747, are equipped with 17,000 solar cells that power propellers and charge batteries. The plane runs on stored energy at night.

Solar Impulse 2 will make three more stops in the United States before crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Europe or Northern Africa, according to the website documenting the

journey.

The project, which began in 2002 and is estimated to cost more than \$100 million, is meant to highlight the importance of renewable energy and the spirit of innovation. Solar-powered air travel is not yet commercially practical, however, given the slow travel time, weather, and weight constraints of the aircraft.

## New and familiar Asian faces begin National Women's Soccer League's historic fourth season

Continued from page 7

2014. Upon her arrival, Sky Blue head coach Jim Gabarra called Kerr "one of the most promising young players in the world" and said they had been watching her for some time.

Kerr wants to help Sky Blue climb from the bottom half of the league, where they have finished the past two seasons, a climb that has already begun in 2016. In their opening match, New Jersey defeated the two-time defending NWSL Shield winner, Seattle Reign FC, at Seattle's Memorial Stadium, where they had previously been unbeaten.

Leading off the scoring in that match was Natasha Kai of Hawai'i, the striker who has returned to Sky Blue after a long layoff playing rugby with the U.S. Women's Sevens squad. Kai was a standout with the Philadelphia Independence and Sky Blue when those teams played in the Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) league, which folded in 2011.

Kai led her WPS teams to two different championship games, including Sky Blue's victory in 2009 and the Philadelphia Independence's loss to the Flash in 2011. Kai's return to U.S. pro soccer will bring her veteran leadership and an energetic personality to the club.

Other Asian players to watch this season include Caprice Dydasco, a fullback from Hawai'i whose role should grow with the Washington Spirit after she appeared in just six games in 2015. Two other standouts are goalkeeper Lydia Williams of the Houston Dash and striker Kyah



**HISTORIC SEASON.** Meleana "Mana" Shim (left photo) of the Portland Thorns is starting her fourth season with the club. Pictured in the right photo is Abby Erceg, who was acquired in the offseason by the Western New York Flash after spending two seasons with the Chicago Red Stars. (AR Photos/Jan Landis)

Simon of the Boston Breakers, both Australian players with Aboriginal roots.

Williams is returning to NWSL following 46 appearances with the Australian women's national team and several seasons with Canberra United in Australia's Westfield W-League. Simon has played with the Breakers since 2013, but missed large chunks of time because of



the Women's World Cup and a knee surgery in 2014. In just seven games with the Breakers last season, Simon still managed to score twice and will be an exciting presence on the pitch in 2016. With so many players to follow and root for, Asian sports fans can look forward to another exciting NWSL season this year.

## Tibetans in exile re-elect Lobsang Sangay as PM

Continued from page 2

to fight for basic freedoms and genuine autonomy for Tibetans living under Chinese rule in Tibet.

In April, he called for China to engage in dialogue on autonomy for his people's homeland. Stressing that a dialogue with China would be his main initiative, he said he hoped Chinese President Xi Jinping would look at the Tibetan issue and take the initiative to hold talks with Tibetan exiles.

Sangay called the results of the election "the consolidation of democracy" and said an increased participation of Tibetans in the voting process reflected their maturity.

"By democratic standards, the exile Tibetan democracy is now a full-fledged, consolidated democracy," he said.

The international community, he said, should look at his administration as a legitimate democratic identity. He said the exiled government "in many ways" reflected the aspirations of Tibetans inside Tibet.

Tibetan officials in exile say at least 114 monks and laypeople have set themselves on fire to protest Chinese rule over their homeland in the past five years, with most of them dying. U.S. government-backed Radio Free Asia puts the number of self-immolations at 144 since 2009.

Beijing blames the Dalai Lama and others for inciting the immolations and says it has made vast investments to develop Tibet's economy and improve the quality of life.

## Two Malaysians plead guilty to wildlife smuggling

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Two Malaysian nationals pleaded guilty to smuggling wildlife into the United States and were sentenced by a judge in Portland, Oregon, to six months in federal prison.

The investigation began three years ago, when authorities found a helmeted hornbill mandible while searching an international package headed to Forest Grove, Oregon. Undercover agents then purchased orangutan skulls, bear claws, a wild pig skull, and other parts.

Prosecutors said the men — 35-year-old Eoin Ling Churn Yeng and 33-year-old Galvin Yeo Siang Ann — owned an online business that was responsible for smuggling \$95,000 worth of endangered wildlife parts into the U.S. since 2004.

After the plea and sentencing, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy chief Edward Grace said orangutans are one of the rarest great ape species, and possessing such a skull as a trophy won't be tolerated.

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