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—ADRIAN HAYES



The sustainability quest projects a three-fold objective, the first of which is raising awareness for the melting Greenland ice cap. Reflection of an iceberg in the Angmassalik Region, Greenland. — AFP file photo

In Quest of Reaching Another Milestone

Dubai-based Adrian Hayes to undertake Greenland adventure to raise awareness of the melting ice

Karen Ann Mansy

DUBAI — UAE-based British polar explorer Adrian Hayes is gearing up to conquer new heights yet again. The "3 poles" Guinness Book record holder is set to undertake the 'Emirates NBD Greenland Quest 2009' from May to July across a route that has never been completed before.

"If we're successful, the quest will be the longest unassisted Arctic journey in history," Hayes said on Tuesday.

Although conditions won't be as harsh as his former polar expeditions, the biggest challenge his expedition group faces will be that of injury.

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Mountain hiking (with a heavy pack of rocks), stair climbing, tyre pulling, cycling and weight training are all a part of his rigorous cross-training schedule.

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Hayes and his team will also be coordinating with a team of support scientists for scientific monitoring research, such as measuring snow densities, wind speeds and monitoring the rapidly depleting ivory gull species.

Finally — the part Hayes is "most passionate about" — is the sustainability question. "Sustainability has been around a long time now. Most corporates know about it but for sure, 99 per cent of people on the street remain unaware.

"Climate change cannot be solved without looking at the whole environment — melting ice caps are just a part — and the environment cannot be solved without looking at economy and society," he explains, in earnest.



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Adrian Hayes, who has broken the speed record for reaching the North and South Poles and the summit of Mount Everest, is now going to Greenland to raise awareness on climate change. — AFP file photo

In terms of current affairs, he points out, "I think the economic crisis is a classic case of how overconsumption just won't be sustainable. We couldn't keep at that rate and we're in a complete crisis because of an unsustainable economic model/growth. Now, we've all got to look at consumerism and materialism in a different light."

Hayes is grateful for the support provided by his sponsors but notes they are still in need of a co-sponsor.

At the Dubai Community Theatre and Arts Centre on Tuesday, the Dubai-based adventurer held a lively demonstration simulating what it'd be like to lug 150 kilograms of sled weight across a stage, let alone across 3,000 kilometres of snow, ice and frosty winds.

The students of diverse nationalities, chosen from across 15 schools, were only too keen to volunteer and paid rapt attention — evident from the barrage of queries they sent his way during the Q&A session.

The students were encouraged to become ambassadors at their schools and follow Hayes' expedition progress through his website (www.greenland-quest.com), which seeks to act primarily as an education journey with daily blog updates and a support team on hand to answer any query posed to them via chat.

Following his return, a follow-up is in the pipelines to ascertain "how much of a difference they've made" by speaking to different schools.

"You've got to start somewhere. We all say we can't do anything but these kids can make a change through word of mouth and an action plan.

"They can make changes in their own homes or schools. We're even telling our own kids, Alexander and Charlotte, what they can do to cut down waste and help." — karen@khaaleejtimes.com

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