

# The Age

MUMBAI

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**A TALE OF HUMAN POWER:** British adventurer Jason Lewis cycled his way from the Himalayas to Mumbai en route his 13-year long world tour Expedition 360. A photograph by Vishal Olwe.

## British adventurer visits city as part of 13-year world tour

SHEFALI MARTINS | MUMBAI

It was just the idea of the human mind, body and spirit circumnavigating this planet without any assistance from another power source for the first time," this is the motivating factor for British adventurer Jason Lewis who is traversing through Mumbai enroute his 13-year long human powered world tour called Expedition 360.

Jason, who cycled his way to Mumbai on November 16, started this tour in 1994 at the Greenwich Meridian Line in London. He has travelled over 3,500 miles through different countries. He embarked on the journey with his partner Steve who prepared with him for the journey and accompanied him till its first leg.

But the Indian aspect of the journey did not come only when he arrived in India hiking through the Himalayas; this aspect was there right since he started in 12 years back as his pedal boat he called *Moksha*. "Both Steve and I were very inspired by different scriptures and texts, especially the Bhagavad Gita, and so we called this paddle-boat *Moksha*, as it would lead us to the liberation of the spirit."

But this freedom of spirit encountered many challenges as well, especially when he had to fight sickness and prevent animal attacks on the sea. He had a narrow escape and was almost run over during the

### LEWIS & LIBERATION

- The boat has a simple paddle mechanism.
- The frame was borrowed from an old cycle.
- This boat was called *Moksha* as the expedition is a search for liberation and 'moksha' in Sanskrit means liberation.
- On the boat's sides, there are signatures of 35,000 people from around the world who have supported Lewis.

journey. "But more or less, I have been fortunate," says Lewis, who displays immense positivity through his spirit and almost echoes Paulo Coelho's message in *The Alchemist* as he holds, "If you have something really big in your mind. Bring it out, things in the universe will trigger to make it possible."

A lot of preparation goes into the planning of the travel, whether it is arranging the boat or planning the route through the ocean. "There are not just the physical aspects but also arriving at the right place and finding the right people that make my journey possible as this project is not very well-funded. I work at the grassroots so if

it's okay to run out of funds in America, it may not be the same elsewhere," smiles Lewis.

"In the southern hemisphere, it is easier to get westward because the current helps you to," Lewis can practically explain not just the geography of the various places that he's been to, but also talk about their culture. In his journey, he has been to 894 schools and worked with groups of children. "Cross-cultural activities help in promoting understanding between young people, as their minds are still open. Through the various countries that I have been to, everyone essentially wants the same thing — peaceful lives," explains Lewis.

Lewis plans to conclude the journey next year and reach England by travelling through Africa, Ethiopia, Turkey, Greece, Europe and finally peddling up river Thames. He will be in India for the next five weeks which would prepare his boat for the next journey. "It is a delight to be here in India, because it is a spiritual hub," says Lewis. About his plans after finishing the expedition, he says, "I'm going to focus on school-kids and am going to develop outdoor expeditions and media-oriented learning for them." Where does he get the energy to continue such a long effort and he replies, "The energy is not so much in my feet, it is in my heart." Indeed with people like Jason, the world is at an arm's reach.