

Swiss guide globetrotting for a green cause

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KOLKATA: Some people will swim the seven seas and climb the tallest peaks to have their voices heard. Dario Schwoerer is one such person who will go to any extent, talking for the earth and its frail health.

The Swiss has already climbed some of the highest peaks in the world, across four continents. Dario, who is on his way to Kathmandu after a brief halt in the city, will scale the world's tallest peak, Mount Everest.

Dario, a mountain guide in Switzerland, was concerned by the fast-melting glaciers of the Alps and made him think about the menace of global warming. Anxious to do his bit against the havoc being wreaked in the planet, he set out on the Global Climate Expedition in December 2002.

Advocating the cause of

clean climate and green energy, Dario decided that his globe trotting ways would be also be green, with solar and wind energy being the backbone of his energy sources. With cycle and self-propelled boats as his modes of travel, the Swiss campaigner has travelled across continents.

Dario reached the city sailing all the way from Thailand on his way to the Mount Everest. "I came to Kolkata since this is the closest port from the airport. I also wanted to visit the city and interact with school children here regarding climate change and global warning," he said.

Going by his enthusiasm, Kolkata's schoolchildren have impressed the Swiss green champion with their "intelligent questions" and observations. "I saw it in their eyes that they are keen to do something. Since the children are our future I always want to meet and talk to them.

Their brain is open to creativ-



ity, with no limitations to their thinking," he said.

Three of Dario's teammates, who would scale the Everest with him in mid-

April, will reach the city on Saturday and join him in a cycle journey to the Sunderbans, where they will meet Aila victims and inau-

gurate solar charging centre near Patharpratima.

After a three-day tour to the mangrove forests of the Sunderbans delta, Dario and his team would cycle all the way to Kathmandu, passing through Burdwan, Asansol, Dhanbad, Gorakhpur and crossing over to Nepal through Bhairawa.

"Wherever we go, we look for traditional technologies that can be used to combat global warming and climate change. Although it's not always possible to replicate these technologies for mass production, one can learn a lot from these technologies," Schwoerer said. Supported by the United Nations Environment Programme, along with maker of Swiss Army knife Victorinox and SGS, sponsor for the Indian leg of Dario's journey is two-wheeler and automobile spares major TVS, under the aegis of its telecom wing ITIL.

Despite the political sce-

narios motivations behind climate change and resolutions taken at global for a, Dario remains hopeful of change. "Global conferences are for politicians but change comes when pressure comes from the bottom, from the common people. I believe most people around the world are concerned about environment and change will come with their initiative," he said.

Dario promised to return to Kolkata after his mission to make Mount Everest a cleaner place. And during the trip he will interact with more school children, share his views with them and pick up a few bright ideas on the way, which he hope will be used to make the earth a better place. "When you have the privilege like me to travel across the world you will find that it's still a beautiful planet and there are reasons for optimism," he said with the smile of a man who knows he is not alone on his journey.



■ Dario Schwoerer in the city.