

MAN ON A MISSION

MANDIP SINGH SOIN
OF IBEX EXPEDITIONS
TELLS US WHY THE
ANTARCTICA TRIP
HE IS LEADING
THIS MONTH IS SO
IMPORTANT



Have you been to Antarctica before?

This is our maiden voyage to Antarctica although my son Himraj went on a similar journey in March 2015. I have previous polar experience when I took part in an environmental expedition in 1989 to study the depleting ozone layer and pollutants present in the Arctic.

What is the purpose of the expedition?

Ibex is trying to raise awareness about Robert Swan's Project 2041 (which campaigns and educates about the moratorium on mining activities in Antarctica which expires in 2041) and how important the status quo is, so no country goes to do any mining, etc in this mineral rich area as that will directly lead to the rise of micro climates and the melting of

icebergs and all the resultant catastrophies. One of our signups is the partner of Luthra & Luthra Law Offices who has pledged pro bono work for this cause through lobbying with the Indian government and the United Nations.

Any particular memory from your Arctic trip that stands out?

Two things come to mind: one, the sheer beauty of the landscape, even though it was full of pollutants like PCBs. Second, the amazing geographical phenomenon of 24-hour daylight (I visited in May). The sun didn't rise or set, but instead revolved around at the horizon level.

What are the other standout Ibex trips in the

coming months?

Well, there is a photo tour in Central India led by a National Geographic photographer; a literary tour led by a writer; a yoga and meditation trek in the Himalaya led by a yoga guru; looking for the elusive snow leopard in Ladakh led by a wildlife expert. Then there are overseas trips to Namibia for wildlife and sand dunes; to Mongolia in search of dinosaur eggs; and to Chile for everything from the high-altitude desert of Atacama to the mountains of Patagonia.

What's that one dream destination you still haven't been to?

The Kamchatka peninsula in Russia is still on my bucket list. It's awesome for its volcanoes, remoteness and wildlife and birding.

GOODFELLAS



It has the ring of a secret organisation. Thankfully, it's not but it's certainly very exclusive. Named for legendary explorers Ernest Shackleton and Frederick Selous, they introduce themselves as 'a small network of individual fellows who are leaders of exceptional journeys to the world's wild places'. We met a few of them at a select meet in Delhi recently. The journeys on offer are absolutely riveting, like the intimate boat trips Capt Dennis Rogers offers on the *Northern Song* in Alaska. Similarly, The Tailor's handcrafted Australian journeys are by private jet. And there are fellows in every exotic corner of the globe. In India, it's our very own Mandip Singh Soin. It all began with an epiphany founding fellow Howard Saunders had while leading a family on a private journey in Kenya. They were planning a trip to Australia next and asked Saunders to recommend someone. Saunders mentioned Drew Kluska. And, when Kluska was asked to suggest someone in Africa, he thought of Saunders and the idea of the society was born—an extraordinary league with extraordinary offerings. See shackletonandselous.com.