



NORTHAM, AUSTRALIA: This handout photo taken on July 12, 2016 and received on July 23, 2016 shows a hot-air balloon named "Morton", flown by Russian adventurer Fedor Konyukhov, about to take to the skies for a round-the-world trip. — AFP

Russian breaks round-the-world hot air balloon record

Russian adventurer Fedor Konyukhov yesterday broke the record for the fastest round-the-world flight in a hot air balloon, his crew said.

Flight coordinator John Wallington said Konyukhov, who took off from Western Australia on July 12, had successfully flown the route by Saturday afternoon but had yet to land. His journey, taking just over 11 days, is faster than the record set by the late American adventurer Steve Fossett who in 2002 became the first person to fly solo around the world in a balloon in a feat which took 13 days.

"The record is broken-no question," Wallington told AFP, adding that Konyukhov had flown his balloon almost exactly over his starting point. "He flew over the same field which he took off from." The flight route has taken Konyukhov, who is in his 60s, from Australia to above New Zealand, across the Pacific Ocean, South America, the Cape of Good Hope and the Southern Ocean.

During the journey of some 34,823 kilometers, he has been confined to the lightweight gondola which is hung with more than 30 steel cylinders of propane gas. Wallington said the last 24 hours of the trip had been uneventful for the experienced Russian explorer but joked that "the previous 10 days have been awful".

On Konyukhov's website, which has tracked his progress, he has spoken of the strong polar jet stream which pushed him towards Antarctica as he approached Australia, saying it was "scary to be so down south and away from civilization".

"This place feels very lonely and remote. No land, no planes, no ships," he said at the time. Although equipped with sophisticated instruments, conditions inside the carbon fiber gondola were tough, with Konyukhov using an oxygen mask at higher altitudes. He was also dealing with extremely cold temperatures-which at times reached

minus 35 degrees Celsius and saw a layer of ice several centimeters thick form on the gondola.

Conditions could also be dangerous, with the balloonist flying blind as he approached the coast of South America as night fell. He encountered snow and ice crystals as he flew through clouds and severe and turbulence caused his propane cylinders to smash into each other.

'A nice thing to do'

Konyukhov's son Oscar, among those cheering his father's achievement, said the chances of completing a round-the-world solo flight on the first attempt were "one chance of a billion". "But... we still have to land him safely, so we need to be careful," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The crew hope to get Konyukhov on solid ground before nightfall, but have raised the prospect of keeping

the adventurer in the air if no safe place is found to bring him down.

Oscar Konyukhov admitted that landing was a "very dangerous operation". "We have some wind now so we'll wait until the very late afternoon for the wind to drop and then we will guide him to a big field to slow down and descend," he said.

Konyukhov, who has previously conquered both the north and south poles solo, and sailed a 27-metre-long (89-feet) boat round the world alone was not motivated by breaking the record, Wallington said. "He just thought it would be a really nice thing to do," he said of the round-the-world journey. "Breaking a record is a nice bonus, but the objective was just to fly around the world." — AFP



NEW YORK: Comedian Jon Stewart performs at the 9th Annual Stand Up For Heroes event on Nov. 10, 2015. — AP

Jon Stewart says Trump supporters 'don't own' America

Jon Stewart has told Donald Trump's supporters they can't take America back, because they "don't own" the country in a riff that mirrored his signature segments on "The Daily Show." Stewart was back behind a late night desk Thursday night, joining former Comedy Central colleague Stephen Colbert on a live version of CBS' "Late Show."

Stewart took aim at some of his favorite "Daily Show" targets, Fox News and host Sean Hannity, accusing them of fostering divisiveness. He said Trump supporters feel like they're America's "rightful owners," adding "you don't own patriotism, you don't own Christianity, you sure as hell don't own respect for the bravery and sacrifice of military, police and firefighters." Stewart left the "The Daily Show" last August. He is an executive producer of Colbert's program. — AP



CLEVELAND: Republican Presidential Candidate, Donald Trump, speaks during the final day of the Republican National Convention on Thursday. — AP

British stars complain about Trump's use of their music

The estate of former Beatle George Harrison is complaining about the use of his music at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

Harrison's family tweeted Friday that the use of the song "Here Comes the Sun" during the introduction of candidate Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka was not authorized, and was "offensive and against the wishes of the George Harrison estate."

Rocker Paul Rodgers also complained about the use of his "All Right Now" at the climax of Trump's speech. Earlier in the convention, Brian May of Queen complained about the use of the band's 1977 hit "We Are the Champions" during a Trump convention appearance. — AP

Josh Stewart Joins 'Insidious: Chapter 4'

"Criminal Minds" and "Dirt" actor Josh Stewart has joined the cast of "Insidious: Chapter 4" in a yet to be announced role. Stewart previously played Bane's second-in-command Barsad in "The Dark Knight Rises."

Lin Shaye, who has been in all three films, returns as parapsychologist Elise Rainier. Sony Pictures Worldwide Acquisitions is financing. Sony will handle international distribution while Universal will handle domestic. The pic

is slated to open on October 20, 2017.

"Insidious" launched the franchise in 2011, followed by "Insidious: Chapter 2" in 2013 and "Insidious: Chapter 3" in 2015. The movies had grossed \$357.7 million worldwide. Series newcomer Adam Robitel ("The Taking of Deborah Logan") will direct "Chapter 4" from a script by co-creator Leigh Whannell, who wrote the trilogy and directed "Chapter 3."

Lionsgate Sets Eighth 'Saw' Movie in Horror Franchise

Horror kingpin Jason Blum is producing again through Blumhouse, which also handles "The Purge" and "Ouija" franchises, along with Oren Peli ("Paranormal Activity") and co-creator James Wan ("The Conjuring," "Furious 7").

Steven Schneider, Brian Kavanaugh-Jones and Charles Layton are executive producing. The first two films starred Patrick Wilson and Rose Byrne as a couple dealing with their son mysteriously entering a comatose state and

becoming a vessel for ghosts. The third film was a prequel to the haunting of the family in the first two films, and centered on a girl haunted by a demon.

Stewart most recently wrapped the Netflix pic "War Machine" starring Brad Pitt and was most recently seen in "The Finest Hours." He is reped by UTA, Grand View, and attorney David Krintzman. — Reuters