BITS student gears up for chilling reality

Gauree.Malkarnekar @timesgroup.com

Panaji: There are some basic things that each of us can do to halt climate change, such as switching off the fan or light when one leaves the room, said Sarthak Singh, a fourth year dual-degree programme student at BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa campus. Robert Swan, the first man in history to have walked both, the north and south pole, will lead a 80-member strong contingent from across the world, next month, on his annual Antarctica expedition and 21-year-old Singh will be the only student from India to participate in the expedition. The expedition will be held from February 27 to March 12.

"From where we are living, we cannot see the effects of climate change. In Antarctica, however, one can see the glaciers melting,

MISSION ANTARCTICA

Singh along with the 80-member team will explore the Antarctic Peninsula and gain first-hand knowledge of the continent's fragile ecosystem

expedition is to engage and inspire the next generation of leaders to build communities

sustainable in all aspects

> The purpose of the

of living

> He will experience the unique Antarctic wildlife

which is in turn leading to a rise in water levels. You can also see the effect this is having on animal species. It is already an alarming condition. I will be able to see firsthand the contribution of our actions from this part of the world on the Antarctica," said Singh.

Singh was selected after a rigourous process which included writing four essays and sitting through two interviews. He beat dozens of students from India, including some from the BITS Universitv itself.

What worked to Sarthak's advantage was his work with the Andhra Pradesh government's young leadership programme, his role as a winter scholar with the quality council of India attached to the Prime Minister's office and his position as a student member of the senate of the BITS university.

"Due to these roles, I already have contact with a huge network of youngsters across

India. I have also planned workshops and activities once I return from the expedition which will enable me to share what I have seen and learnt during the expedition," said Singh, who heard of Robert Swan's expedition through his brother currently studying at the Harvard medical school.

Singh is partly funding the trip from his personal savings, while also relying on crowd sourcing, the BITS Pilani alumni division, his school in Delhi and tie-ups with private companies to provide the rest of the resources to make the trip possible.

"India has a huge carbon footprint, but many of us are not even aware of opportunities like the ClimateForce: Antarctica 2018 Expedition, where they need people from India to become aware of the impact of climate change,' said Singh.