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Antonio de la Rosa ships his craft north and holds 17 July as his launch date

The Spanish explorer has air-freighted his expedition gear to Pond Inlet after days of delay and with the crates damaged in transit. Forecasts point to a week of favourable easterly winds for entering Lancaster Sound.

OTTAWA — 12 July 2026. Antonio de la Rosa has shipped his craft and all expedition equipment to Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik), on the northern tip of Baffin Island, from where he will begin his attempt to cross the Northwest Passage solo and unsupported on a stand-up paddleboard.

The shipment is running late. The crates carrying the craft, more than two and a half metres long, did not fit the aircraft flying the direct route from Montreal. They had to be rerouted via Toronto, adding two further flights. They reached Ottawa several days behind schedule and visibly damaged, with breaks and clear signs of rough handling.

The explorer has described the episode as the expedition's "first major logistical assault".

The connection system: a single point of failure

The craft is a prototype built in Thailand by Sunova. It is constructed in two sections that lock together by means of a custom-designed system of tubes and connecting parts. That modularity is what allows the board to convert into a sled, to be dragged across the sea ice when the ice closes the route — a manoeuvre expected above all in the first stage of the crossing.

The connecting parts travel inside the sections. Without them, the two halves cannot be joined and the crossing cannot take place.

"What I really need to check is whether the connection systems inside the two board sections are there. If they weren't, it would be impossible to join them. I'm keeping my fingers crossed — I'm clearly worried."

Antonio de la Rosa, opening the crates in Ottawa

On inspection, the parts were intact. De la Rosa shipped the gear the same day by priority cargo with Canadian North.

"The Arctic doesn't make it easy, not even before you start. But the drive to get paddling and begin this adventure is intact."

Antonio de la Rosa

A one-week weather window

Cargo transit is now the critical variable. The carrier estimates between three and seven days, though in the worst case it could stretch to ten or twelve. In the Canadian Arctic, air freight depends on weather and on the space available on each flight.

De la Rosa is holding 17 July as his target launch date, conditional on the gear reaching Pond Inlet on the 14th or 15th.

Forecasts point to close to a week of easterly winds — the condition he needs to enter Lancaster Sound, the gateway to the Northwest Passage. The prevailing currents there run west to east and make entry difficult.

"There's almost a week of favourable weather coming with easterly winds — ideal for getting into Lancaster and dealing better with the entry currents. Let's see if the miracle happens."

Antonio de la Rosa

Official engagements in Ottawa

While the gear travels north, De la Rosa is completing an official day in the Canadian capital, including a visit to the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and a gala dinner with the Spanish Ambassador to Canada. The expedition sails under the flags of Spain and of the Spanish Geographical Society, whose standard will fly on the bow of the craft.

The crossing

De la Rosa will attempt to become the first person to cross the Northwest Passage solo and unsupported on a stand-up paddleboard. The route runs more than 3,000 kilometres from Cape Liverpool, on Bylot Island, to Tuktoyaktuk, on the Beaufort Sea, across the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. He expects the crossing to take more than two months.

The craft weighs 32 kilograms empty and is rated for a 200-kilogram load. De la Rosa will carry between 90 and 100 kilograms: freeze-dried food for 70 days; two dry suits, one of them capable of keeping him afloat for twelve hours in water at zero degrees without hypothermia; two tents, one designed to be pitched on the board itself so he can sleep on the water; satellite communications equipment; solar panels; and action cameras.

Against polar bears, his first resort is a flare gun. Local regulations also require him to carry an authorised firearm.

"I never want to kill a polar bear — unless it really does intend to attack me, which is quite rare, but it could happen."

Antonio de la Rosa

The route remained sealed by ice for more than three centuries and cost hundreds of lives among the expeditions that tried to open it. It is navigable again today because of the retreat of the sea ice, and documenting that is the stated purpose of the crossing.

"We will show that what was an impossible passage yesterday is today a reality we have a duty to document."

Antonio de la Rosa

EXPEDITION FACT SHEET

Start	Cape Liverpool, Bylot Island (Nunavut, Canada). Logistics base: Pond Inlet / Mittimatalik
Finish	Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories, Beaufort Sea
Distance	More than 3,000 km
Expected duration	More than two months (July–September 2026)
Style	Solo, unsupported, on a stand-up paddleboard
Craft	Sunova prototype (Thailand). Two lockable sections. 32 kg empty, 200 kg capacity. Converts into a sled.
Payload	90–100 kg
Historical reference	Roald Amundsen's route (Gjøa, 1903–1906)
Flags	Spain and the Spanish Geographical Society
Live tracking	antonioexpeditions.com

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Available to media: high-resolution photography, video, route map, technical specifications of the craft, and satellite interviews (in Spanish; interpretation can be arranged). Material free for editorial use with credit.