

Axe on Everest: Sanawar boys on top of the world

AMBIKA SHARMA

SANAWAR, MAY 21

A team of seven students of Lawrence School in Sanawar scaled Mount Everest in the early hours of Tuesday and set a record of being the youngest team to conquer the world's tallest peak. The successful expedition of the cub mountaineers, aged 15-17 years, also made the school the world's only boarding school to have achieved the feat.

Four of the seven summiteers are from Punjab and the rest from Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Six of them are Class XII students -- Prithvi



Singh Chahal, Fateh Singh Brar, Guribadat Singh Somal (all from Punjab), Ajay Sohal (Himachal) and Shubham

Kaushik (Delhi) while - while Raghav Joneja (Uttar Pradesh) is a Class X student of the school. The seventh team

member, Hakikat Singh Grewal (Punjab), had to stay back at Balconey ahead of Camp 4 due to a technical problem.

The Sanawar Everest Expedition 2013 summited the peak at 4.37 am this morning. **Continued on page 8**

ON A RECORD HIGH

- The seven-member team aged 15-17 years is the youngest team to scale the 8,848-metre Mount Everest
- The herculean feat has made Lawrence School the only boarding school in the world to conquer the peak
- Raghav Joneja set an individual record and is the youngest Indian at 15 years and seven months to scale Everest

FOUR HP LADS SCALE PEAK

Manali: A nine-member National Cadet Corps expedition scaled Mount Everest on May 19 and 20. While two of its members, Rajni and Khimi Ram, are Class XII students of the Government Senior Secondary School at Manali, Ashwani Kumar hails from Chamba and Kumi Dawa from Lehaul

← The Lawrence school team that scaled Mt Everest

Everest conquered

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They unfurled the Tricolor and the school flag atop the 8,848-metre peak. Prithvi Singh Chahal and Ajay Sohal were among the first to reach the summit at 4.37 am while the last of the team members scaled the summit around 12.30 pm.

Raghav Joneja, who is 15 years and seven months old, became the youngest Indian to scale the peak. He was the third to arrive at the summit.

The seed of the expedition was sown last September when a seven-member team was short-listed from among volunteers after a grueling basic mountaineering course at Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling. Team members underwent three-week training at the institute to enhance their endurance and fitness training under a qualified instructor.

Subsequently, the team underwent a 1,000-km cycling expedition from Suratgarh to Jaisalmer in 10 days. This was followed by intermediate and advanced courses of fortitude

and acclimatisation under the supervision of the Army at the formidable heights of Khardung La in Ladakh.

Lawrence School Headmaster Praveen Vasisht had flagged-off the expedition from the school on April 2 and they arrived at the base camp in Nepal on April 19. Thereafter, the youngsters spent time acclimatising between the base camp and Camp 3. Their final ascent was scheduled for the third week of May from the southern face of the massif. Precautions, such as the weather forecast, were taken for the final climb between May 18 and 23. The team reached Camp 4 on the evening of May 20 and the final ascent began at midnight. They carried a traditional prayer flag given by the locals to revere the mountain.

A very proud and elated headmaster, Praveen Vasisht, said the conquest of Everest was not a mere step, but a giant leap for Sanawar. "They have firmly upheld their school credo 'Never Give In' in letter and spirit," he said.

Sanawar boys unfurl Tricolour atop Everest

HT Correspondent

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SOLAN: With the hoisting of the Tricolour and the school flag on the highest peak of the Everest, a seven-member team of students of The Lawrence School, Sanawar, has set a new record of being the youngest team to scale the Everest on Tuesday.

Four among the seven climbers of Class 12 are from Punjab, while others are from Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. This Herculean feat has accorded them the claim of being the only boarding school in the world to unfurl the Tricolour and the school flag atop the lofty peak. The school has also become the first school worldwide to send a team to the Mt Everest.

Six boys are 16 years of age and Raghav Juneja is of 15 years, making him the youngest Indian to scale the Mt Everest. He has



✦ The seven-member expedition of Lawrence School, Sanawar, outside camp 4 on the way to scaling the Everest on Sunday. HT PHOTO

now beaten the record of Arjun Vajpai, who was 16 when he scaled the Everest.

The team - Sanawar Everest Expedition 2013 - led by Col Neeraj Rana (retd), former principal, Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling, was short-listed among the volunteers after a gruelling basic mountaineering course at Himalayan Mountaineering Institute.

The team members - Prithvi

Chahal, Ajay Sohal, Raghav Joneja, Shubham Kaushik, Fateh Brar, Guribadat Singh and Hakikat Grewal - arrived at the base camp in Nepal on April 19.

School headmaster Praveen Vashisht said the conquest of the Everest was not a mere step, but a giant leap for Sanawar.

"They have indomitably upheld their school credo - Never Give In - in letter and spirit," he said.

Sanawar team on top of the world, scales Everest

NTIN SHARMA
SANAWAR, MAY 21

SIX students of Lawrence School, Sanawar, have set the world record for the youngest team to achieve arguably mountaineering's toughest feat after scaling Mount Everest early on Tuesday morning in the process earning Raghav Joneja (at 15 years and eight months), the distinction of being the youngest Indian to reach the summit surpassing Arun Vijpai who was 16 years and 11 months when he achieved the feat.

The team comprised of Prithvi Singh Chahal, Fateh Singh Brar, Garibadati Singh Somal, Ajay Sohal, Shubham Kaushik and Raghav Joneja are all students of Class X and XII. One member, Hakikat Singh Grewal, hasn't been able to reach the summit after facing problems with his oxygen cylinder. He is scheduled to try again on May 23. The other six, however, had no such hiccups with the first student reaching the peak at 4.30 am on Tuesday and the last scaling it at 12.30 pm.



The team from Lawrence School, Sanawar, on Mount Everest.

As news trickled in of the feat, Lawrence School headmaster Praveen Vashisht began receiving phone calls from past alumnus and current students of the school. "Last year when Col (ret'd) Neeraj Rana, former head of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling, visited the school campus, some students asked him about mountaineering

and he had put forward the idea of the students scaling Mt Everest. He then short-listed 15-20 students and in the end these seven were selected. Hakikat's father Lt Col (Ret'd) PS Grewal was the one who organised everything and it is unfortunate that Hakikat fell short of scaling the summit. But he will get a chance again on May 23 as he has got the

necessary permission," Vashisht said while talking to *The Indian Express*.

Their journey to the summit has seen the team undergo a gruelling training regimen over the past year. They initially took part in an advance mountaineering course at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling before cycling for some 1,000 kms in

OMAR TWEETS APPROVAL

AN ALUMNUS of Lawrence School, Sanawar, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday tweeted his approval of the feat. "Congratulations to the kids of Lawrence School, Sanawar, for reaching the summit of Everest this morning. Great effort guys. Never Give In," Omar said on the micro-blogging site. "If the information coming out is correct, Sanawar is the first school to mount an Everest expedition successfully," he added.

Rajasthan last December. This January, they trekked and hiked to Khardungla Pass in Ladakh.

The boys reached Lukla in Nepal on April 10 and reached the Mt Everest base camp on April 19 where they spent the next one month trekking. They began their ascent from Camp 4 on Monday evening and started the final climb for the summit on Monday night. "We were bit worried about Raghav as he was under 16 years of age and needed special permission

for climbing the summit. Earlier he had climbed BC Roy Peak and Frey Peak in the Kanchenjunga area. But then Col Rana got the necessary permission from the Tourism Ministry in Nepal. We talked with Raghav last Saturday and we are waiting for his call after the descent. Lt Col Grewal and Iqbal Singh, Garibadati's father are at the base Camp 2 and have been in touch with us," shared Ajay Joneja, Raghav's father, who is based in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, and runs a lighting business.

The expedition, however, has literally come at a cost. Each member of the team had to shell Rs 17.20 lakh with sponsors and the school chipping in with 29 per cent of the amount and parents coughing up the rest. "They had read about Ajeet Bijaj, the first Indian to ski to the North Pole and an old student of the school and used to spend hours reading about his experience. It's a dream come true for all of them and most of them want to meet Bijaj when they come back," said MK Gulla, the school's sports officer.

दुनिया के शिखर पर सनावर के बच्चे



16 वर्षीय सोहल लारेंस स्कूल सनावर में 12वीं के छात्र इस उपलब्धि को पाने के लिए एक वर्ष से लिया कड़ा प्रशिक्षण

एवरेस्ट की ऊँची चोटी पर पहुँचने वाले मनाली के रहने वाले अजय सोहल अपने दोस्त के साथ। संबंधित खबर पेज 7 पर ☞