Lawrence school team sets out to climb Mount Everest

SHIMLA, APRIL 2

A souvenir edition of The Lawrence School, Sanawar, set out to scale Mount Everest today to make this year the 60th anniversary since the first ascent of the world's highest mountain by Edmund Hillary and Tensing Norgay. If the attempt is successful, it will make the names of the participants - Pawan Vashishth, Girishbhadar Singh, Prithvi Singh, Ajay Sohal, Shubham, Parvneet Singh and Raghu Saini - unique as it will be the first school team in the world to reach the mountain's summit. The expedition was flagged off by Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh here today.

Pawan Vashishth, headmaster of the school, said the boys are 16-17 years old and four of them are from Punjab and one each from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

Encouragement to the young boys for undertaking the adventure came from their parents, a majority of whom have an Army background. They provide Re 17,600 each to fulfill the dream of their sons and some of them volunteered to be a part of the support team.

The boys were selected for the expedition after undergoing a rigorous process, which put their mental toughness and physical endurance to test. They were also given a 15-day training with German experts in the field of mountaineering. They were also given a 15-day training in the field of mountaineering.

A 15-year-old Ayaj Sohal also expressed his passion for the hills, and he also makes it a point to thank his mentor, Colonel Narender Rana, a former director of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMHI), and his parents. Having grown up inside the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the son of a Mansali businessman, is excited about the latest challenge. He is the only Himachali in a 15-member team from Lawrence School, Sanawar, aiming to create history by scaling Mount Everest next month.

Comprised of boys in the 16-17 age bracket, barring Raghu Saini, who is 15 years and 7 months, the youngest of the team will be the first from a school to attempt the feat. The six - Daksh Vashishth, Girishbhadar Singh, Prithvi Singh, Ajay Sohal, Shubham and Raghu Saini - have undergone a grueling seven-month training regime under the guidance of Colonel Rana.

Though there are certain issues to be resolved with the Nepal government regarding the ascent, the boys are in high spirits as Nepal provides for minimum age of 16 years, and they will definitely go for the ascent. They are also preparing for all other parameters of fitness and training," said Col Rana, ranked by school headmaster Parvneet Vashishth as they interacted with media here on Tuesday.

The group will begin their two-month adventure from Kathmandu on April 6 and will proceed to the base camp on April 11. The final ascent is scheduled for April 30. This will be the first-ever school team in the world to attempt the climb. The youngest Indian to have scaled the peak, Anjum Vuppalapati (16 years and 3 months), was among the 16. American Jordan Momocs (13 years and 4 months) is also the youngest in the world. Col Rana added: "The expedition, however, is a self-sponsored trip with each parent coughing up Rs 17,600.

"Like every adventure, including those who love danger, we are addicted to the heights - the mountains. We are setting off for something that will make history and our school and country proud," says Prithvi Singh. The boys will be accompanied by four others including two women (Kashmirs) and Priyanka from Maharashtra.

Students of The Lawrence School at Sanawar who will attempt to scale Mount Everest.