

Four teens from Maharashtra become first tribal students to scale Mount Everest

The four are part of Mission Shaurya, a 10-member expedition made up of tribal students from the state's Chandrapur district.

Four students from Maharashtra's Chandrapur district scaled Mount Everest on Wednesday, becoming the first tribal students from India to achieve this feat.

The four to scale the world's highest peak are Umakant Madavi (19), Parmesh Aale (19), Manisha Dhurve (18), and Kavidas Katmode (18). Katmode and Madavi reached the summit at 3.25am. Aale and Dhurve followed at 4.25am and 4.35am respectively.

The four are part of Mission Shaurya, a 10-member expedition made up of tribal students from Chandrapur district. Mission Shaurya is a joint initiative of Maharashtra Tribal Development Department and Chandrapur Collectorate.

When district collector Ashutosh Salil had suggested training a group of students from ashramshalas (state-run residential schools for tribal children), a few of them had not even heard of Mount Everest.

"The state government decided to scale such initiatives to promote talent in various fields among tribal youth," said Manisha Verma, principal secretary, Tribal Development Department. The 10 selected students, aged between 18 and 21, are from different ashramshalas in Chandrapur.

"The students underwent rigorous training for 18 months before embarking on the mission from the Chinese side," said Sudhir Mungantiwar, Maharashtra's Minister of Finance & Planning and Forests, and Guardian Minister of Chandrapur and Wardha.

The team of climbers began their 60-day expedition from Mumbai on April 11. They were accompanied by manager-cum-trainer Bimla Negi-Deoskar, who scaled Everest in 1993; a high-altitude expert doctor, support staff and 15 sherpas.

On April 19, the group reached Everest base camp. Madavi, Aale, Dhurve and Katmode made history on May 16 when they became the first tribal students to scale Mount Everest. Two of the students, Aakash Madavi and Chhaya Atram, had to return to Chandrapur because of altitude sickness. Vikas Soyam and Akshay Atram may attempt the climb on May 17 and 18 respectively, depending upon their fitness and weather conditions.

Mungantiwar described the climb as an "historic achievement" that has brought fame to Chandrapur district. He announced that the successful tribal students would be given cash awards and jobs in the police department.

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