

This doctor conquered Covid, Mt Everest is next

Dr Hemant Leuva, Avid Mountaineer & Surgeon At SVP Hospital, Begins His Ascent

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Ahmedabad:

‘The mountains are calling, and I must go,’ said famed American mountaineer and conservationist John Muir. Dr Hemant Leuva, a city-based surgeon and avid mountaineer, is living by the same philosophy. In fact, this professor of surgery at NHL Municipal Medical College has started his ascent of Mount Everest on Saturday.

Talking to TOI, Dr Leuva said that if weather permits and all goes well, his team would summit on May 12 or 13. “No amount of preparation can prepare you for the ultimate ascend that not only pushes you physically, but also mentally. But I am in the company of good and experienced hands,” he said.

His feat is however not only of a mountaineer. In November and December last year, the doctor and his wife Dr Surabhi, chief medical officer with Gujarat Vidyapith, both tested positive for Covid-19. The tryst with infection made their resolution to conquer the Everest stronger. Dr Surabhi, also a mountaineer, has accompanied him to the Mt Everest Base Camp.

The duo worked tirelessly during the pandemic in their respective fields. Along with the administrative and operative work at SVP Hospital for the Covid patients, Dr Leuva also coordinated the calls on 104 for Covid queries. “The pandemic however inspired me, and pushed me to realize my dream sooner than later. It could have been riskier, but I was declared medically fit for the arduous climb, which only motivated me to attempt it this season,” said Dr Leuva. Thus, when Covid cases started downward fall earlier this year, Dr Leuva eyed the summer window of 2021. The preparations took over two months – from starting a fundraiser to support his quest to prepare mentally and physically.

“We climbed Mt Lobuche with 20,000 feet height to prepare for Mt Everest. The acclimatization also takes place with the teams going regularly from camp 1 to 4 at different elevations and coming back to the base. On the final ascend,

the mountaineers just go from camp 4 to the peak,” said Dr Leuva, adding that the weather they experience is good for the climb.

He is making the climb with the message of saving the environment to save Earth. “It’s any mountaineer’s dream to reach the highest peak of the world – but there must be a reason for taking this up. For me, it’s like going to the mother’s lap,” said Dr Leuva. “We have been running a group of semi professional mountaineers and trekkers ‘Mountain Movers’ from Ahmedabad where doctors and other professionals are members. Our aim is to go closer to nature to motivate the members to preserve it for the next generation and promote sustainable practices.”

He along with Mountain Movers in the past have ascended Mt Stok Kangri, Mt Deo Tibba (India), Mt Kilimanjaro (Tanzania) and Mt Island Peak (Nepal) among others in the past few years.



Dr Leuva (R) and his team will summit on May 12 or 13