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Trainee teacher becomes first female Singaporean to scale Everest in 2017



Yusrina Ya'akob, the first Singaporean to scale Everest in 2017. Photo: Nur Yusrina Ya'akob

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SINGAPORE — The Nepal earthquake may have foiled her first Everest summit attempt in 2015, but it did not stop Ms Yusrina Ya'akob from giving it a second try.

On Monday (May 22), at approximately 11:55am Singapore time, the 30-year-old trainee teacher became the first female Singaporean climber to scale the world's highest peak this climbing season.

After conquering the 8,848m-high mountain, MsYusrina said the "success of the expedition is a particularly sweet one" for her.

"It is a good thing that I did not give up on my dreams after the Nepal earthquake in 2015. The value of perseverance, resilience and resolve to finish what I started meant a lot to me," she added.

Ms Yusrina is part of the NTU-NIE Everest Team Singapore from the Nanyang Technological University (NTU Singapore) and the National Institute of Education (NIE).

The team also includes Dr Arjunan Saravana Pillai, 47, a teaching fellow at NIE, and Mr Jeremy Tong, 26, a recent graduate from NTU's Sports Science and Management programme.

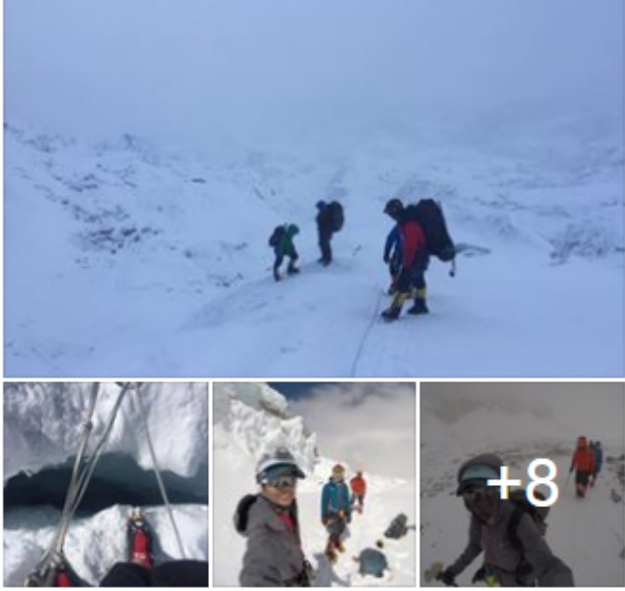
The team arrived in Kathmandu on March 26, before embarking on a 10-day journey to Everest Base Camp South. During that time, the trio underwent acclimatisation climbs, including to the 6,119m Lobuche Peak, to adjust physically and mentally to the low oxygen levels, highly volatile and extreme weather conditions, with temperatures averaging -25 °C, and dangerous terrain.

On May 13, the team updated their Facebook page after a second rotation reaching the base of the Lhotse camp at about 6,600m.

"Weather has been erratic as we experienced extreme heat and extreme cold while climbing to the Lhotse face. We are now back at Everest Basecamp and will be resting while waiting for the summit push," they wrote.

**NTU - NIE Everest Team Singapore**
about 2 weeks ago

Update:
"The team have completed our 2nd rotation reaching the base of the Lhotse face at about 6600m. Weather has been erratic as we experienced extreme heat and extreme cold while climbing to the Lhotse face.
We are now back at Everest Basecamp and will be resting while waiting for the summit push.
Wish us luck and keep us in your prayers. "



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After more than two months of arduous climbing and acclimatisation, Ms Yusrina and Mr Tong left the Base Camp on May 19. Dr Saravana stayed behind as he was not well.

Ms Ya'akob and Mr Tong reached Base Camp 4 two days later on Sunday (May 21), before commencing their summit attempt.

At 8,480m, Mr Tong was forced to turn back due to breathing difficulties.

Ms Yusrina pushed on and reached the summit, aided by her guides Dukchung Lama and Nosang Bhote.

Ms Yusrina's journey to the top was plagued by the lack of food and rest, she recounted.

"Climbing to the summit was tough as I was so tired from the lack of rest and food," she said. But when she reached the South Summit of Mount Everest and saw the famed Hillary Step, she told herself: "this is it! ... I will stand on the summit, and that I can do this!"

Two hours later, she reached the summit. "I was overwhelmed with emotion," she said.

Ms Yusrina reiterated that her summit is a success for the team as well. "We are all proud of what we have achieved as a team. We have supported each other through our training in Singapore and our Lobuche Peak summit, and the team also worked remarkably well together during the difficult times throughout the expedition," she said.

The last Singaporean Team to have at least one member reach the peak was the Singapore Women's Everest Team in 2009. Singapore Airlines pilot Felix Tan also summited Everest in May last year.