



NTU-NIE Everest Team Singapore members Arjunan Saravana Pillai, 47, Nur Yusrina Ya'akob, 30, and Jeremy Tong, 26. Ms Yusrina was the only one of the trio who managed to summit Mount Everest last month. Mr Tong is now planning a second bid via the more dangerous North Ridge route. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

## Foiled climber gunning for second shot at Everest

**Yuen Sin**

His maiden attempt at conquering Mount Everest last month was foiled by a sudden onset of hypothermia just about 200m from the summit.

But mountaineer Jeremy Tong, 26, who returned earlier this month with teammates Nur Yusrina Ya'akob, 30, who summited the peak, and Dr Arjunan Saravana Pillai, 47, is giving it another shot.

He is now gunning to be the youngest Singaporean to summit the world's tallest mountain via the less popular, more dangerous North Ridge route from Tibet.

"The camps are higher and more

exposed on the northern side, so the conditions may be tougher. But I've already been through this experience (from Nepal), so I think (this) will be a richer experience," said Mr Tong at a media conference hosted by Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the National Institute of Education (NIE), which together helped the team raise over \$150,000 to fund their expedition.

Last week, the NTU graduate quit his job as a team-building programme facilitator to focus on training and raising funds for his bid next year.

The NTU-NIE Everest Team Singapore had aimed to be the first multi-racial Singapore team to summit

the 8,848m-high mountain.

Of the three team members, only Ms Yusrina succeeded, and she became the first Malay-Muslim woman from Singapore to make it. It was her second attempt after an earthquake stopped everyone from summiting in 2015. Ms Yusrina, who is pursuing a postgraduate diploma in physical education at NIE, said she had to overcome her memories of the avalanche, which claimed at least 19 lives on the mountain, as a result of the quake.

She had nightmares about it, and even looking from the base camp at Mount Pumori – where the avalanche had occurred – made her fearful. "I told myself not to look at

it, and after climbing towards the mountain I slowly overcame the sense of fear."

Dr Saravana, an NIE teaching fellow, reached an altitude of at least 6,500m but did not attempt to summit because of frostbite.

In the months ahead, the team will visit schools to share their Everest experiences to inspire youth to lead active lifestyles.

Dr Saravana said: "Conditions in the outdoors can be very volatile and require tenacity and resolve, but this can also send out a message to the young that trials and tribulations are part and parcel of life."

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