

Father-son duo set sights on Everest again

By REEM AL DAAYSI



■ 15-year-old Ali during one of his basketball games

AN adventurous Bahraini father-son duo have been training for months to trek to the Everest Base Camp, for a second time, next week as part of their one-month expedition in Nepal.

At 63 years, Dr Ahmed Shakeeb, a retired plastic and burn surgeon, is one of the oldest men in the region to take up the challenge – which he has done almost 30 times since 1990.

His son, 15-year-old Ali, has been training for the last few weeks by running 7km a day, carrying a 7kg backpack and 2kg dumbbells in each hand, to increase his tolerance and strength for the upcoming journey.

Although the two are embarking on the 5,364m trek to the Everest Base Camp and the 5,644m trek up Kala Patthar together, Ali hopes to break away and trek to the 6,119m Island Peak on his own.

The GDN previously reported that Dr Shakeeb and his two sons – Ali and Hamad – had trekked through rain and snow last year to reach the Everest Base Camp on a family adventure.



■ The brothers and their father after reaching Everest Base Camp last year

“Sharing this journey with my father – who I admire so much – is an incredible opportunity, especially since I have been preparing to scale Island Peak on my own, just like my brother Hamad did last year,” Ali said. “I fell in love with these adventures because my father has been doing it for decades and he’s my role model.”

“I’ve been running with weights and dumbbells and climbing a fixed rope attached to a tree in our garden because I need to strengthen my shoulders, arms and hands.”

The 15-year-old, who is also a budding basketball player for Manama Club, highlighted the importance of parental support when pursuing dreams and passions and stated that his family has always been athletic, adventurous and determined to take on challenges.

“We will spend around three to four weeks on this journey which commences on May 31,” Dr

Shakeeb told the GDN.

“It is important to take things slow and not cut corners, because a reckless decision could cause serious accidents.”

“There’s a domestic flight we have to take from Kathmandu to Lukla and once we get there the rest will be on foot and the plan is to first trek to the Everest Base Camp followed by Kala Patthar so that we slowly acclimatise.”

“Once we complete that, Ali will proceed to Island Peak – his first technical climb – on his own, just like his brother did.”

“Sharing this trip with my son means a lot to me and it is incredible to see your children taking part in such activities.”

Dr Shakeeb added that 17-year-old Hamad was also planning a solo-journey in October.

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Bahrainis raise flag on tallest mountain

By REEM AL DAAYSI

FOUR Bahrainis have made the kingdom proud by raising its flag high at the Everest Base Camp, at an altitude of 5,364m above sea level.

The three men and a woman, all aged between 39 and 43, joined a group of GCC nationals and embarked on the trek last month ... mindful of the challenges they would be facing along the way.

The gritty and determined foursome, who completed the 15-day expedition on May 19, are now urging everyone to chase their dreams while reconnecting with nature.

Motivational speaker and best-selling author, 43-year-old Mohamed Isa, said the trek was an incredibly humbling experience.

“I’m an adventurous person and I always challenge myself to take risks to stretch my limits mentally and physically,” Mr Isa told the GDN.

“I have a chronic incurable facet joint fracture in my back and hence the trip was a challenge, but I was determined.”

“You need to prepare for a lot of things including scarcity of resources, lack of running water, electricity, and heaters in the cold temperatures. Decreasing oxygen levels, altitude sickness and the extreme terrain are other factors.”

“We surmounted all challenges, I believe, it’s basically about staying positive,” he said.



■ The Bahraini team along with Kawthar Al Habsi from Oman and Hamad Al Zaidi from the UAE

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Ahmed Khalaf, 40, who injured his knee during the start of the trip and suffered from altitude sickness powered through with basic medication.

“I’m an adventurous person,” Mr Khalaf said. “I have already done scuba diving, horse riding and sky diving and the only thing pending was a trip to

Mount Everest.”

Mr Khalaf is planning to scale multiple peaks such as Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa and Toubakalin in Morocco as well as diving with tiger sharks in the Maldives.

The third Bahraini, 39-year-old Mai Alraisi, had travelled to Nepal in 2016 for her first hike while also doing community service and volunteer work which

changed her perspective on travelling.

“The Everest Base Camp journey was on my bucket list since 2018,” she said.

“I spent four months preparing mentally and physically by jogging around 8km wearing my hiking boots every day and I also joined a gym while gathering all the information needed to be ready.”

“The trip was a challenge because even with the extensive preparation I undertook, I was shocked by the terrain, altitude sickness and low temperatures, but I’m grateful because it took me out of my comfort zone.”

She urged people to follow their dreams, undertake the challenge and trek the Everest Base Camp to expand their horizons and strengthen their personalities.

The fourth member, 40-year-old Hasan Yaqoob, echoed similar sentiments while stating that the expedition had changed his life.

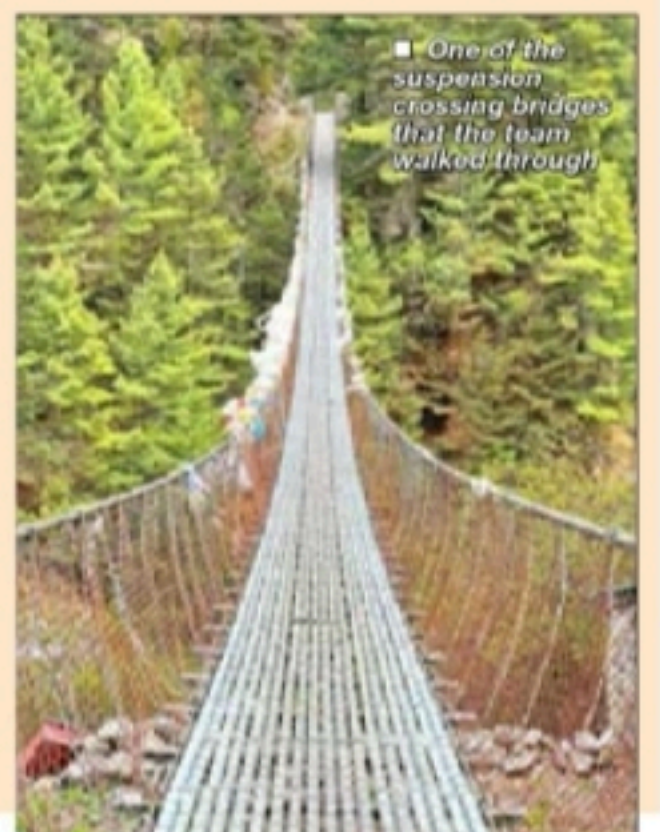
“Physical preparation is critical because the terrain is steep and tough, I struggled a lot walking for eight hours a day,” he said.

“These trips are important to disengage from the modern, fast life and reconnect with nature as well as rediscover ourselves.”

“I am more confident now and have decided to participate in Iron Man in Oman in September.”



■ Camping tents set up by explorers prior to the trek



■ One of the suspension crossing bridges that the team walked through