

# Sherpa, an amputee, eyes Mt Everest

By Ballav Dahal

KATHMANDU, Feb. 27: In his bid to set a new record in the world's history of mountaineering, Nawang Sherpa, an amputee, is attempting on the 8,828-metre high Mt. Everest this spring together with his American friend Tom McMillan.

Four years ago, Sherpa, a former trekking guide was seriously injured in a traffic accident. Sherpa, who comes from Solukhumbu district, sports a high tech prosthetic leg and cherishes a very ambitious dream of climbing the world's highest peak.

The two climbers plan to climb the peak via the South Col. route in May this year. They are expected to reach Everest Base Camp in the beginning of April.

If their attempt is successful, this will be the first time that Mt.

Everest or the world's any other peak above 8,000-metre will be climbed by a person with prosthetic leg.

Sherpa had planned to climb the peak last year with renowned American mountaineer Ed Hommer, who was the first person to climb Mt. McKinley, the highest peak of North America, with his two prosthetic legs. The plan could not materialise, as Hommer lost his life in a rock-fall while training at Mt. Rainier in September 2002.

Sherpa's new chance to climb the peak emerged last year when the 55th anniversary of the first ascent of Mt. Everest by late Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Sir Edmund Hillary was celebrated worldwide. As database developer working for San Francisco based ABM Property Corporation, McMillan received a surprising challenge to climb

Mt. Everest with ABM's flag from the company's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Hamid Moghadam. Then, the experienced rock climber and mountaineer chose to include Nawang in his expedition.

"Nawang's long-cherished dream may come true this time, as he reached up to camp two on Mt. Everest last year and showed his proficiency in dealing with avalanches," said Wongchu Sherpa, managing director of Peak Promotion (P) Ltd. that handles the team.

"Nepal will be promoted internationally once the bid becomes successful since international media is watching the event with keen interest," Sherpa said.

Last year, another disabled Wongdi Sherpa, who hails from Sankhuwasabha, had also tried to conquer the highest peak.

But he had to abandon the climb from camp two.

According to the Tourism Industry Division under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), a total of eight expeditions have taken preliminary permission until Friday for the upcoming Spring. Three of them have received permission to climb Mt. Everest. However, Nawang's team has yet to apply for permission. The handling agency said Nawang's team could be merged with another expedition.

Shankar Prasad Pandey, Joint Secretary at MoCTCA and Chief of the Tourism Industry Division, said that some more expeditions are in the pipeline to receive permission.

"More expeditions might attempt on various peaks this season, as we have been receiving a lot of inquiries," Pandey said.