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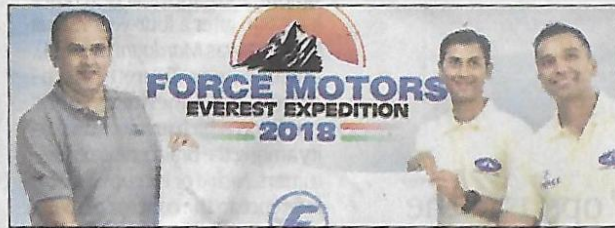
Pune mountaineers set for 70-day expedition to Mount Everest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
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FORCE MOTORS flagged off an expedition to Mount Everest on March 22. The 70-day expedition, which was flagged off at the company's Akurdi plant, will be undertaken by Pune-based mountaineers Samir Patham and Sauraj Jhingan, who will depart on March 25.

The expedition will take at least two weeks from Kathmandu to reach the Everest Base Camp, at 5,437 metres, and three weeks after that to set camp higher up on the mountain. The final summit attempt is expected by May-end.

"At 29,050 feet above sea level, with temperature minus 40 degrees Celsius, winds at 200 kmph and 33 per cent atmospheric oxygen, summiting Mount Everest is a true test of endurance and perseverance," said Force Motors MD Prasan Firodia at the flag-off ceremony, where the expeditioners



At the flag-off event at Force Motor's Akurdi plant

were presented with an ice-axe and the Force Motors flag.

Samir Patham quit his job in IT to climb mountains in Europe, Africa, India and Nepal, while Sauraj Jhingan is an HR professional and a certified sky diver, who wishes to climb the seven tallest peaks in seven continents. "Every person aspires to conquer their own personal Everest — the one dream that redefines them. For us, it is literally Mount Everest. Having attempted it in 2015 and 2017, and falling just short of the summit, we were tempted to give

up", said Patham.

The duo survived the 2015 earthquake in Nepal that triggered the avalanche on Everest. They stayed back to assist in the relief work, braving aftershocks and the threat of more avalanches, and left after a week of rescue work. In the 2017 attempt, they reached 8,000 m but were thwarted by bad weather. The team members put their personal aspirations on hold for the collective safety of the team. They descended safely, hoping to summit next year.