

'Polar Preet' embarks on 700-mile trek to the South Pole

Self-titled 'Polar Preet', Captain Chandi is in the final phase of her rigorous training ahead of the 45-day challenge, where she will endure temperatures of up to -50 degrees Celsius and wind speeds of up to 60mph.

The British-born Indian Sikh's preparation has been underway for two years and included various extensive training exercises such as dragging tyres to simulate pulling a 90kg sled. Earlier this year, Preet headed to Greenland for a 27-day 'warm up' expedition encountering gruelling weather conditions. She will head to Antarctica in November and, if she completes the unsupported trek, will pull and carry all her equipment without resupply.

Defence Minister Leo Docherty said:

People are Defence's best asset and Preet's determination and drive to complete this momentous challenge is a true testament to that. The physical and mental resilience shown during her preparations is something we can all learn from. Preet shows that people from all backgrounds can achieve incredible things through a career in the Armed Forces.

We all wish Preet the very best of luck and will be eagerly following her progress.

At a launch event held at The Shard on 21 October, Preet spoke to guests about the physical and mental training she endured ahead of the trek. Equipment she will be carrying with her such as a pulk (a Nordic small sled), cooker, freeze-dried food and specialist clothing were also on display highlighting the extensive preparation she has undergone and the enormity of the challenge ahead.

Brigadier Lizzie Faithfull-Davies CBE, Commander 102 Logistics Brigade said:

It is genuinely inspiring to watch Captain Harpreet Chandi's polar ambition turn into reality and every aspect of her preparation demonstrates the values and standards that are so important to the British Army.

We are delighted to have such a talented and determined officer in 102 Logistic Brigade who can set such a great example to all our people about how to turn a dream into reality. We will all be avidly watching and supporting her endeavours from afar and, from the whole brigade, we wish Polar Preet the very best for her expedition.

Preet joined the Army in 2008 and has served for 13 years, including supporting the Covid-19 vaccination efforts in recent months. She had never camped or hiked prior to joining, it was participation in Adventurous Training which sparked her passion and drive to complete this incredible feat. Preet has already set her sights higher and plans to also complete a solo and unsupported full crossing of the continent from coast to coast.

Captain Harpreet Chandi said:

There is so much to prepare for an expedition like this and I'm really proud to be representing the Army. As I started to train for it, I learned more about it and it just shows the more you do, the more you realise you're capable of.

So, wherever you're from, whatever experience you've got, if you want to go out and do something different, take that first step and go for it.