



PRESS RELEASE Lenzing Plastics GmbH



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Nepal Expedition: Lenzing PROFILEN underwear and socks in 30-day endurance test

Gerhard Pilz, the five times World Champion in tobogganing, set off on October 11th together with his mountaineer friends Wolfgang Kölbinger and Siegfried Plassek to ascend the 7,168 m high Baruntse in Nepal. The expedition should help Gerhard Pilz prepare for the coming season. Apart from the sport aspect, an aid programme was also planned to help people in the remote mountain villages in Nepal.

Three pairs of socks for one month? A real endurance test

Lenzing Plastics supplied the expedition members with functional underwear from Damart and socks from Ridgeview – both manufactured from Lenzing PROFILEN yarns. In order to save weight and space, each expedition member could only take three pairs of socks and two vests along, these would have to be sufficient for a month. The underwear as well as the socks were tested under severest conditions. The clothes could not be washed and were nearly worn all the time (even during the night). In addition, the mountaineers crossed various climatic zones: The temperatures ranged from tropical-humid +28°C in Katmandu at the beginning of the expedition down to icy -25°C at Camp 1 on the Baruntse in perpetual ice.

“...the best socks I have ever worn”

The functional underwear and **the socks made out of Lenzing PROFILEN yarns were therefore subjected to a real endurance test. They passed the test with flying colours. None of the members of the expedition got blisters on their feet, even though they were wearing new boots. The socks still felt soft even after days of constant wear and there was no unpleasant odour.** Wolfgang Kölbinger, with 40 years of mountaineering experience even commented: “These are the best socks I have ever worn! In future I will wear them for work.” Mr. Kölbinger is head forester and therefore outdoors every day in open countryside in the heat of summer and in freezing temperatures in winter. The functional underwear kept the mountaineers warm in the perpetual ice and kept them comfortably cool at the tropical-humid 28°C in Katmandu. Thanks to the special underwear made with Lenzing PROFILEN yarns, there were no abrasions or skin irritations on backs or shoulders, usually caused by carrying heavy rucksacks.

The route up the Baruntse

The route taken went from the village of Lughla at 2,840m to Mera Peak at 6,461m. The ascent to this peak goes through jungle, swamps and mountain pastures finally up to perpetual ice. The next leg of the expedition was to the Baruntse base camp, where the socks were changed for the first time. The three mountaineers changed their socks for somewhat thicker ski socks. As Siegfried Plassek was suffering from slight altitude sickness he could no longer accompany his friends. Therefore Gerhard Pilz and Wolfgang Kölbinger, assisted by a climbing sherpa, started to lay the fixed ropes without him. On the third day of the Baruntse-summit expedition, the ascent was successful and together with a French expedition team, the summit of the 7,168m Baruntse was finally reached. The mountaineers could only enjoy their achievement for a short while as the cold temperatures and a strong gale forced them to descend immediately.

Help for the local inhabitants

At base camp they met up again with Siegfried Plassek. The three mountaineers continued their trek. The next path took them to the Khumbu valley to the village of Kunde. Here 300kg of urgently needed medication was handed over to the director of the Hillary Hospital. The next stop was the school in Lompaza. Here urgently-needed school articles and toys were handed over to 350 children which had previously been collected by school children in Upper Austria. The expedition came to a touching end in an orphanage in Katmandu. The children were overjoyed to receive 650 pairs of socks from Ridgeview (a Lenzing Plastics customer). Mr. Plassek commented: "Totally understandable if you saw the state of the old socks the children were wearing, they had holes in, were torn and some of them weren't even wearing any socks at all."

Lenzing Plastics would like to congratulate the three expedition team members once again on their success. They have shown that sport ambitions can be excellently combined with a humanitarian aid programme.

Lenzing Plastics would like to thank their customers Damart and Ridgeview for their help and commitment without which the expedition would surely not have been such a great success.



Lenzing Plastics

Lenzing Plastics with headquarters in Lenzing, Upper Austria, is one of the worlds leading manufacturer of products made of polyolefins and fluoropolymers. The core competence of this 100% subsidiary of Lenzing AG is monoaxial stretching of polymers – a technology that allows production of films, tapes and yarns with extremely high strengths.

Lenzing PROFILEN® is the brand name for PTFE (Polytetrafluorethylen) yarns and fibres, which are used in the field of medical, industrial, sportswear, safety & protective clothing and hot gas filtration.

Facts and Figures 2003:

Revenues: 73.2 Mil. EUR
Export: 93%
Production: 17,000 tons of films, tapes and yarns
Employees: 300