

# On top of the world with a new Guinness record

Chefs Soundararajan and Sanjay Thakur create fine-dining pop-up restaurant at 6,189 m above sea level — on Mt Everest; prepare a three-course Indian meal

**GAURAV SARKAR**  
gaurav.sarkar@mid-day.com

TWO Indian chefs are on top of the world, literally and pun intended! Soundararajan Palaniappan, corporate executive chef at Mahindra Holidays and Resorts, and Chef Sanjay Thakur of Etihad Airways have set a new Guinness World Record by setting up a pop-up Indian fine-dining restaurant at the highest altitude on earth — Mt Everest.

After a rigorous and exhausting trek last month, the two prepared a three-course fine-dining meal at a staggering 6,189 metres above sea level, at Island Peak. The duo named their pop-up restaurant Triyogyoni, which has now been recorded by Guinness as the 'highest altitude pop-up restaurant'.

## Grocery shopping en route

Speaking to mid-day, Palaniappan said, "We are chefs, not trekkers; so the most difficult part was to make the entire trek to the location. The lack of oxygen is the toughest to deal with. We had a lot of difficulty breathing."

He added that at Everest Base Camp, oxygen levels were bordering at 53 per cent, and where they cooked at Island Peak, slightly above Base Camp, the levels were 43 per cent.

The two chefs along with a team of seven members, which included helpers, sherpas, and a manager, managed to whip up dal bhat arancini stuffed with nak cheese, herbal lemon tea, shisno mousse with local foraged mushrooms, and a basa and



Chefs Sanjay Thakur and Soundararajan Palaniappan have entered the Guinness Book of World Records for setting up a fine-dining pop-up restaurant at the highest point on earth



**43%**  
Oxygen level at the spot they cooked the meal

wild spinach dish. "We foraged the Himalayas while trekking, to find ingredients; the aim was to use organic ingredients for sustainability. We picked fresh coriander, onions, and mushrooms that we found along the way, all of which we used while cooking."

## Eat right to trek right

Palaniappan added that for those going trekking through the Himalayas, it is of utmost importance

to recognise and eat the right type of food. "Food plays a very important role because you have to combat altitude sickness as well. People trekking through such mountain ranges have to eat judiciously; they should eat small meals rather than heavy ones, and carry some dry food items along, as sustenance might not be available at that height. Carrying fruits is also a must."

According to him, nothing beats eating chicken and fruits in the mountains, as they are rich in protein, which is good for the muscles.