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*MOUNTAINEERING TRAINEES AT HMI SET AN EXAMPLE OF DISCIPLINE , DEDICATION AND SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE MOUNTAINEERING COURSE*

## **AMIDST COVID-19, 76 MOUNTAINEERING TRAINEES AT HMI SET AN EXAMPLE OF DISCIPLINE , DEDICATION**

*76 trainees from all across the country including 22 trainees from Bengal got struck at HMI, Darjeeling since 26 Mar 2020. Basic Mountaineering and Search & Rescue Courses of HMI which commenced on 2nd& 6th March 2020 left for HMI Base Camp at Chowrikhang (West Sikkim 14600 ft) for field training on 10th and 14th March respectively.*

By Kautilya / May 6, 2020

## Background:

76 trainees from all across the country including 22 trainees from Bengal got struck at HMI, Darjeeling since 26 Mar 2020. Basic Mountaineering and Search & Rescue Courses of HMI which commenced on 2nd & 6th March 2020 left for HMI Base Camp at Chowrikhang (West Sikkim 14600 ft) for field training on 10th and 14th March respectively. Trainees of both these courses successfully completed their field training on 24th March. With great effort these trainees were safely brought back to the Institute under special arrangements with officials of Govt. of Sikkim and West Bengal.

## Graduation ceremony on 02 May 2020 .

Hoping for the lockdown to get over on 03 May 2020 the trainees were graduated in a unique away. Instead of normal “Passing Out Formation” the trainees were spread out in Hostel Complex maintaining social distancing and performed Yoga Asana on lyrics of Adiyogi. HMI staff and mountaineering trainees under the aegis of Ministry of Defense also paid tribute to corona warriors by performing Yoga Asanas and Suryanaskar.









Under special permission arranged by HMI, between 03 to 05 May 2020, 39 trainees under their own arrangements left for their home state all across the country. Whereas, 31 trainees are still struck at HMI waiting from their Home state Govts to evacuate them from HMI. Though HMI had already communicated to all the respective states. The response from respective state is still awaited, said PPL.

## Pan India Lockdown

As per schedule, both the courses would have been over by 31st March and the trainees would have left the Institute after attending graduation ceremony on 31st itself. However, in view of the countrywide lockdown the Institute had to make special arrangements to keep them at the Institute considering their safety and vulnerability of getting infected with Coronavirus and further spreading it.

## Yoga, Meditation, Physical Exercise, Social Distancing And Sanitation “MANTRA To Fight And Win Against Corona”

The Institute was in no way prepared to tackle such an unprecedented crisis. However, a quick decision was taken to save the human lives and keep corona at bay by keeping all the trainees at the Institute during the lockdown period. To keep them occupied during this period various activities were planned which are being executed by the Institute officials and staff staying inside the campus. The trainees start their day with two hours of physical training including Aerobics, strengthening exercises, Yoga meditation etc. The morning session ends with “Sarvadhram Pooja and National Anthem.

The regime followed at HMI ensures that all students remained safe, motivated and free of any infectious diseases including Corona.

I endorse that routine “Yoga and Pranayama” was our key to keep the students fit and healthy throughout the lockdown period for more than 40 days. During all these activities “Social Distancing ‘Laxman Rekha is being strictly maintained. All precautionary measures are observed while conducting these programmes.

## Challenges to Keep the trainees at HMI

The prime challenge was to keep the trainees protected from an invisible enemy. Other challenges to keep the trainees at HMI Hostel without compromising medical advisories are as narrated:

- Common Bathrooms shared by Trainees.
- Common Corridors.
- Common Dining Hall.

- Keeping the essential staff inside HMI premises to avoid Entry /Exit at HMI (a team of HMI staff was selected and hosted inside campus only for smooth administration and to minimize movement of personnel).
- Provisioning / supply and stocking of food, ration, sanitizer, cleaning material etc. water tankers supply from distant location, fresh ration, issues related to building maintenance, sanitization etc.
- Keeping up the Moral of distressed trainees while they have all sort of worries about their family and beloved one. At the same time their parents and beloved ones to be ensured by HMI that all trainees are safe.
- Financial Crisis No additional fund / Grants available to support 76 trainees + 50 support staff inside the hostel for more than 40 days (beyond the course duration). HMI will not charge any money from students for extra stay at HMI because off lockdown.

***Note: Amidst the Corona spread across the masses it was biggest challenge to ensure social distancing and disconnect trainees from outsiders.***

To up keep the moral of trainees besides following GoI advisories, various activities were planned and conducted by the Institute officials and staff staying inside the campus.

Despite limited resources and restricted funds available at HMI, all out efforts were initiated for the safety of the trainees. **The trainees are now being planned to leave HMI on 04 May 2020 onwards, depending upon transport arrangements by respective states.**



***In this hour of need HMI fraternity and Trainees salutes Corona Warriors, DEDICATED THE SURYANAMASKAR TO CORONA WARRIORS***



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Source: **HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINEERING INSTITUTE, DARJEELING (W.B.) INDIA**

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