

**WHAT
THEY
WILL BE
CARRYING**

The duo will be spending close to one week carrying 15 to 20kg of gear each. Among the items:

Tri-climate jackets : Three jackets act as layers to be worn in varying degrees of cold

E-Tip gloves: These gloves allow them to use smartphones to take pictures and stay connected without

removing their gloves in extreme cold
Mountain tent: High-technology tent does not rip apart even with the 25kmh strong wind

Blue Kazoo sleeping bag: Made from special material to keep them warm in sub zero temperatures

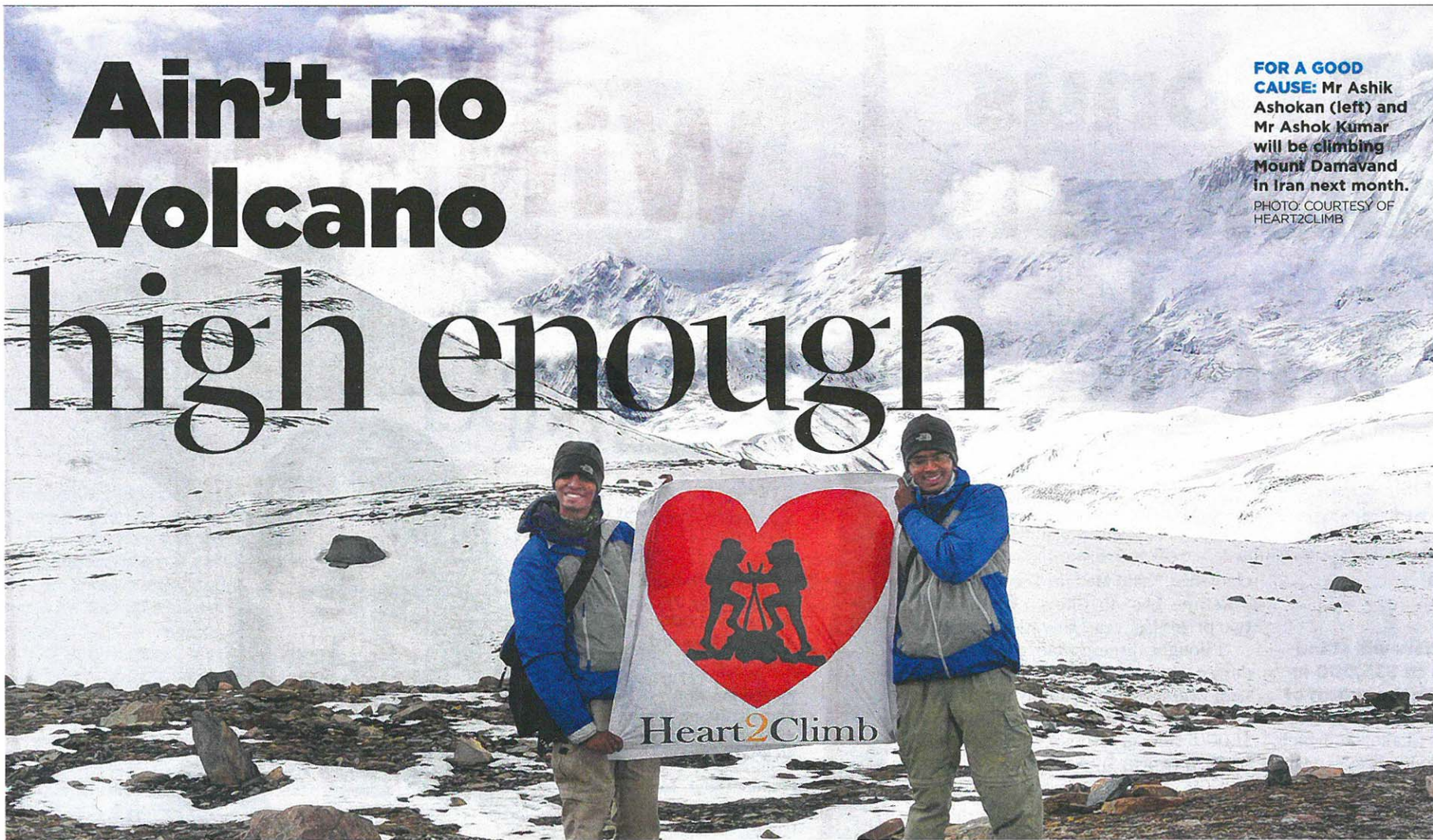
Gore-tex pants: Waterproof and snowproof pants to keep dry

The above items are products from their sponsor, North Face.

Crampons: To attach onto boots to walk on ice

Petzl Sirocco, world's lightest helmet at 150g: The helmets are to protect them against rockfall

Nikon D7100 and AW1 Cameras: To document the journey.



FOR A GOOD CAUSE: Mr Ashik Ashokan (left) and Mr Ashok Kumar will be climbing Mount Damavand in Iran next month.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF HEART2CLIMB



I would tell them not to underestimate the mountains. But no matter the outcome, they have already done so much to raise money for charity and it has not been easy to do so.

— The expedition's mentor, Dr Kumaran Rasappan, 31, a surgical resident at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)

Two undergrads throw caution to the wind to raise money for Children's Cancer Foundation

Report by **GAO WENXIN**
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They plan to climb Asia's highest volcano without the help of a high-altitude guide or porters.

But Mr Ashik Ashokan and Mr Ashok Kumar, both 24, are not doing it just for the thrill. They are embarking on this risky expedition next month to raise money for the Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF).

Mr Ashik told *The New Paper*: "We

wanted to mirror the struggles of children with cancer, who have to climb their own 'mountains' every day.

"In fact, the struggles that we will go through on the mountain are nothing compared to what they go through."

The two undergrads, who met while in Innova Junior College and go by the name Heart2Climb, will be climbing Mount Damavand in Iran.

Mr Ashik is a communications and new media student at National University of Singapore and Mr Ashok is a busi-

ness student at Singapore Institute of Management.

At 5,610m, Mount Damavand is 20 times taller than Singapore's tallest building, One Raffles Place.

RAISED \$50,000

On their last fundraising attempt in 2014, the duo trekked 220km on a Himalayan range, hitting a maximum altitude of 5,416m. They raised \$50,000 for the Society for the Physically Disabled.

They chose Mount Damavand this

time for the challenge as scaling it requires good fitness and determination.

It has harsh temperatures of more than 40 deg C at the bottom and subzero temperatures at the peak. They will also face volatile weather conditions, such as snowstorms. And there may be other surprises in the mountains.

"There are wild creatures at Mount Damavand, such as venomous vipers," said Mr Ashik.

But they are no strangers to danger, having climbed Mount Kerinci in Sumatra last year, a highly active volcano with a jungle known for its Sumatran tigers, he said.

Dr Kumaran Rasappan, 31, a surgical resident at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), is mentoring the expedition.

In 2012, he became the first Singaporean to climb Mount Everest for a charitable cause, raising over \$40,000 for needy patients at TTSH.

Climbing without a high-altitude guide can be challenging. Dr Kumaran also said that climbing on a volcano means dangerous terrain, with loose soil and rock.

But he is not unduly worried as they will be climbing a popular route during climbing season, when other climbers will be around.

All donations will go to the CCF. To donate, go to www.heart2climb.com or their Facebook page Heart2Climb.

They have chosen this expedition to symbolise overcoming the 'uphill' challenges that children with cancer face, which come from the stressful experience of hospitalisation and cancer treatments.

— A spokesman for the Children's Cancer Foundation