

ARJUNA AWARD FOR EVEREST TEAM

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The 19-member Indian Mount Everest Expedition, is to be the recipient of the Arjuna Award, the Ministry of Education announced here today.

This award, instituted in 1961 as the highest national recognition in the field of sport, will be given to the expedition as a team.

The award is in recognition of the success achieved by the Indian Mount Everest Expedition as a team, in putting nine men on top of the 29,028-ft. summit of Everest in four successive attempts last month. This is an unparalleled achievement in mountaineering history.

The Arjuna award, being given for the first time collectively to the whole team, instead of either to the leader or to individual members of the Expedition, represents national recognition of collective effort of a very high order.

During the past four years, there have been 43 recipients of this award, and each awardee has been an individual sportsman for having distinguished himself the most on and off the field in that particular game during the year.

Such collective recognition has been a traditional practice in the USSR and other countries where towns and Armed Forces formations have been given national honours.

The Arjuna awards which are presented by the President at a special investiture ceremony every year, have hitherto been in the form of manuscript scrolls. The Education Minister, Shri M.C. Chagla has recently approved the design of a bronze statuette and the Indian Mount Everest Expedition will perhaps be the first recipient of this metallic symbol of the Arjuna award.

It is understood that miniature replicas of the Arjuna award will be given to all the members of the expedition after the investiture.