



mountainwilderness Asian Desk

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PRESS RELEASE

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The first week of the three-part training course organised and run by Mountain Wilderness International in the upper Aosta Valley and at the foot of Mont Blanc has come to a close this evening on a resounding high, in collaboration with the CAAI (Italian Academic Alpine Club), the Franco Piovan Mountaineering School of CAI (Italian Alpine Club) Padua section, whose director is Francesco Cappellari, and the Italian Army's Alpine Training Centre. The three novice Pakistani mountaineers, hailing from the Swat and Chitral valleys, were accommodated, along with the teaching staff, at the Fior di Roccia barracks in Val Veny. Their names are Maria Rahim, Mehwish Syed and Mehrosh Akhtar. The practical rock-climbing exercises took place on the bolted crags at Morgex, Dolonne and Val Ferret/Pré de Bar. Training in progression, rescue and self-rescue on ice took place at Colle del Gigante, with an overnight stay at the Torino mountain hut.

A total of 11 qualified mountaineering instructors, seven of whom were women, took turns leading the sessions. Two of them were provided by the Army's Alpine Training Centre.

From tomorrow, the scientific part of the course will begin, organised by glaciology experts from the CNR, the Fondazione Montagna Sicura in Courmayeur and Lorenza Pratali, a specialist in the psychological and physical issues associated with high altitude. The practical sessions, focusing on potential measures to mitigate the dramatic retreat of the glacier, will once again take place on the Colle del Gigante glacier, in the presence of two CAI mountaineering instructors.

According to the entire teaching staff, the three young Pakistani women have exceeded expectations, both on rock walls and on ice, and have absorbed the relevant lessons with unusual speed and precision. It will be up to them, in the near future, to pass on what they have learnt during this intense and exciting week to their fellow countrywomen, who have already received basic training through previous Mountain Wilderness courses.

Carlo Alberto Pinelli

Head of the Asian Desk of Mountain Wilderness International