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Nepali junior racer missing in France

By Eric Williams

Thursday, 30 April 2009

According to Reuters, junior Nepali ski racer Uttam Rayamajhi, 17, has been missing from the team's base in the French Alps since Monday, April 27.

The team's coach and principal benefactor, Englishman Richard Morley, said today that Rayamajhi recently joined a group of Jehovah's Witnesses.

"Uttam Rayamajhi, 17, vanished from the team ski base at Les Arcs on Monday with no money, minimal French and very little clothing. He has not been seen or heard from since and team members fear for his safety," Richard Morley said in a statement. "He was approached by Jehovah's Witnesses and recruited into their church. The day after attending his first service with the sect he vanished from the team's mountain chalet home during a heavy rainstorm."

Morley, Rayamajhi's legal guardian, told Reuters that Rayamajhi had been very upset following the disintegration of the Nepal Ski Team by the Nepal Olympic Committee due to lack of funds. "The whole team is extremely distressed by his disappearance and the events that led to it," said Morley.

In February the team participated in the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Val d'Isere, France, where they openly talked with Ski Racing about their dreams of reaching the Olympics in Vancouver 2010.

"It's wonderful for them to be in the World Championship along side so many other nations and for their nation to be here and properly represented," said Morley at Worlds. "I think any sporting achievement allows a country to have some self-respect. I think this is very important for poor nations who feel very much the forgotten people of the world."

Morley also noted in an email that Uttam "is highly vulnerable to self-harm or immersion into the underworld in order to survive."



Uttam Rayamajhi (r) with his teammate Khatri Subash at the World Championships in Val d'Isere, France.



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