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## Liquid Crystals Today

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## Liquid Crystals on top of the World!

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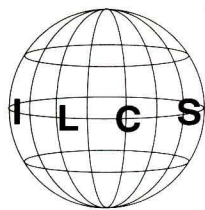
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# LIQUID CRYSTALS Today

Vol. 3, No. 1 March 1993

## Liquid Crystals on top of the World!

On May 12th 1992 Professor Alexander A Gerasimov from the Institute for Single Crystals, Ukrainian Academy of Sciences made a successful ascent of the world's highest mountain — Mt Everest (8848 m).

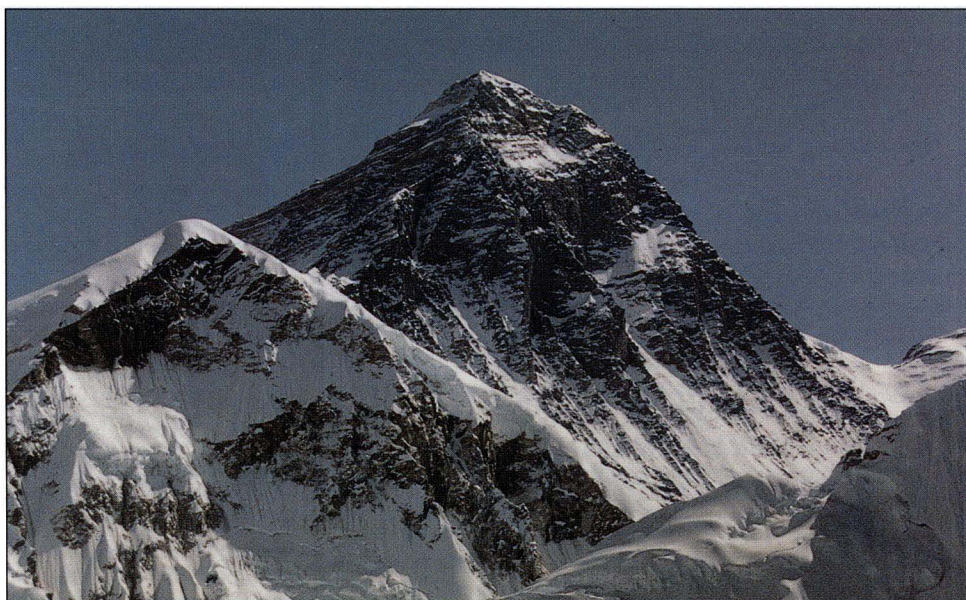
He became the 281st Everest summiteer in the chronicle of the conquerors of the mountain, beginning with Sir Edmund Hillary and Norgey Tenzing in 1953.

The first Russian expedition after the dramatic political events that changed the former USSR was sponsored by the AvtoVAZ Bank, Togliatty, one of the most prestigious banks in Russia. Alexander Gerasimov was invited to participate in this expedition because of his great experience of extreme conditions in high mountains. He

has climbed more than three hundred summits in the Caucasus, Alps, Pamirs and the Tien-Shan mountains, including 22 ascents of the 7,000 m high peaks by the most extreme routes.



On Everest at 8600 m



View of Mt Everest (8848 m) from Mt Kalapatar

The expedition started from Kathmandu at the beginning of March and after some pleasant trekking via the Sagarmatha National Park, base camp was established on March 25th near the Khumbu Icefall (5400 m). Members of the Russian expedition were working to establish intermediate camps and prepare a safety route until April 20th. After a short rest in a picturesque spot near the Thiangboche Monastery, climbers made the first attempt to reach the summit. However very cold weather ( $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and strong winds halted the first attempt. After two nights on the South Col (8,000 m) they returned to base camp. Here they waited until the weather improved. The summer monsoon was expected in the middle of May, so the second attempt was undertaken before this, on May 9th. After two days, at 4.30 am on May 12th, four climbers started from Camp 4 on South Col, and by 10.40 am they had reached the summit of Everest where they spent more than an hour. The weather was not par-

ticularly good, but even in these extreme conditions all their electronic equipment using liquid crystal displays such as video and still cameras, watches and their radio were working reliably. The summit party made a video on the way up as publicity for their sponsors and the institutions they are connected with. It goes without saying that the first issue of "Liquid Crystals Today" accompanied Professor Gerasimov up to the summit — thus indicating the highest level reached by the ILCS!

After returning from the expedition Professor Gerasimov presented a thesis on "Molecular models of mesomorphism" to take an academic degree of Doctor of Sciences (Phys-Math). At present he is continuing his research on molecular theory of liquid crystals, and his experimental studies of the electrooptical effects in new types of cholesteric materials used in front-lit liquid crystal displays.

Dr Gerasimov is planning a new expedition in extreme conditions — from the South Pole to the North Pole via the Cordilleras with ascents of the most interesting summits on the Antarctic continent and in South and North America. ■