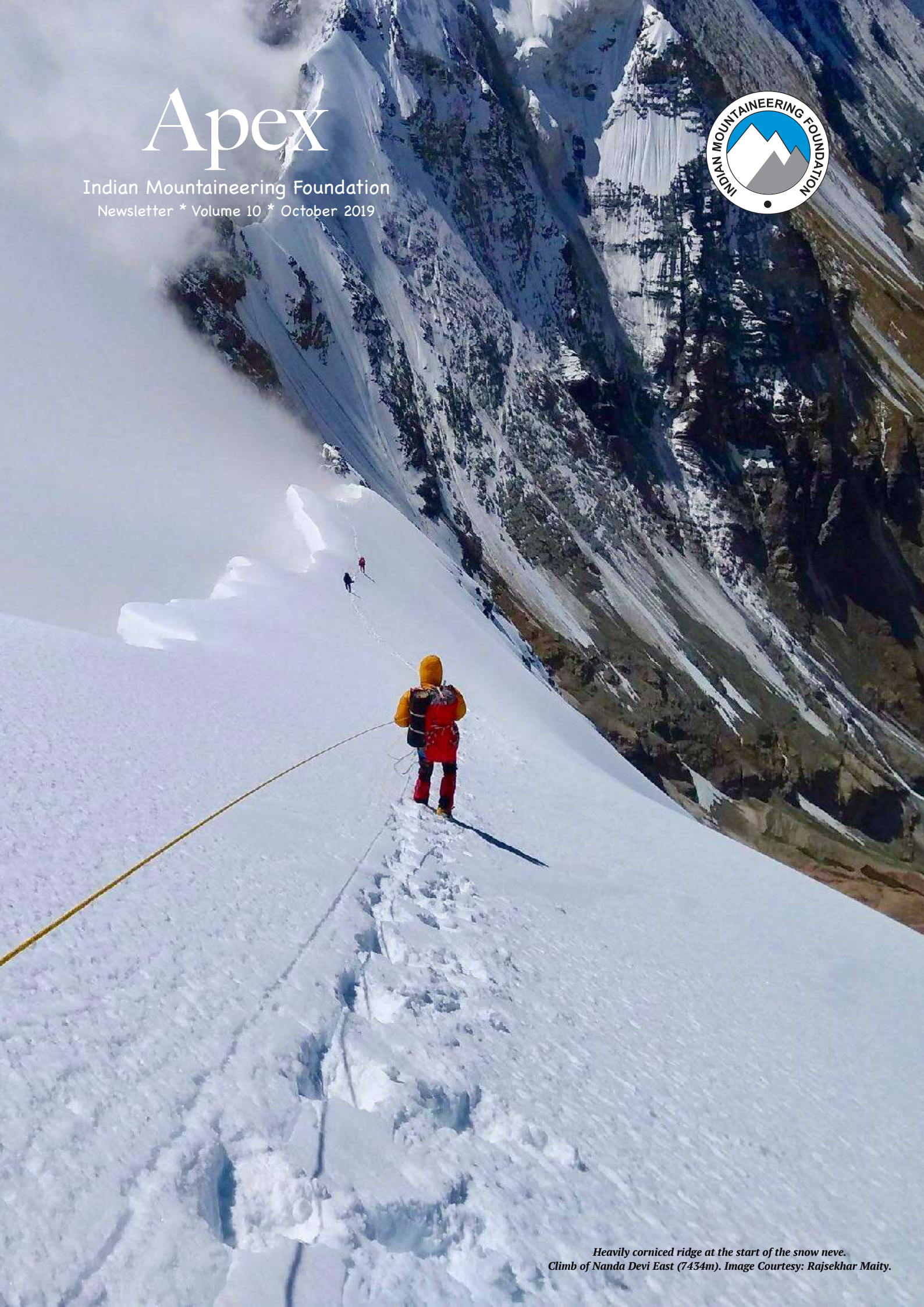


Apex

Indian Mountaineering Foundation
Newsletter * Volume 10 * October 2019



Heavily corniced ridge at the start of the snow neve.
Climb of Nanda Devi East (7434m). Image Courtesy: Rajsekhar Maity.



Barafsar lake Panorama with the mighty Mt. Kolohai, Mt. Innominate, Mt. Whalehead in the backdrop. Peaks of Amarnath and Kishtwar in the distance. Image Courtesy: J Ramanan



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Menthosa (6443 m)

First Ascent, South Ridge
Himachal Himalaya



View of Menthosa from the approach.

In August 2019, Spencer Grey and Rushad Nanavatty climbed the South Ridge of Menthosa in the Lahaul region. this was the first ascent of the South Ridge and first traverse (over about 8 km) of the mountain.

We had come to India to climb an objective in Ladakh, within the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Indian government had changed the state's special status and our climbing permit was revoked. We were directed to find a new objective in another state. On the strength of a photograph of Menthosa's impressive south pillar, its location near the outer limit of the monsoon, and a bedrock map that suggested the presence of granite along a large fault, we picked Menthosa as our new objective.

Menthosa is downstream of the well-known granite walls of the Miyar Valley that have received sustained attention from climbers for over 25 years. It is regularly guided via a variation of the first ascent route. Our basecamp (4,470m) was in an alluvial side-valley full of pink stalks of fleece flower and mats of rock jasmine, blue forget-me-nots, and the occasional spiny blue and violet poppies. We first faced a week of unusually heavy monsoon storms that deposited a meter of wet snow on the upper mountain and snapped the poles of our cook tent.

The Indian meteorology agency reported that, at lower elevations, this storm caused the highest recorded rainfall for a 24-hour period in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Meanwhile, our third teammate, Alex Marine, unfortunately experienced symptoms of serious altitude sickness and was forced to descend from basecamp before the climb.

On Menthosa, warm, intermittently sunny conditions quickly caused the new snow to slide or settle, but snow stability and rockfall associated with snowmelt remained our biggest concerns during the climb. We left basecamp in the dark, reaching the base of the south ridge at dawn. A hot morning of wallowing uphill through deep snow and through a jumbled icefall led us to a roomy saddle on the south ridge (5600m).

Three days of tricky pitched-out mixed climbing followed, first on the east face under a series of prominent gendarmes, then traversing along the western aspect of the south ridge. We had one open, hanging bivouac (6220m) on our third night when fog obscured the way forward.



Day 2 of tricky pitched-out mixed climbing on the South Face.



Traversing along the western aspect of the South Ridge, on Day 3.



Descent on Day 6 – along the glaciated standard east ridge route.

The following evening, as we climbed perfect neve and ice to a bivouac spot just below the summit, a lightning storm in the foothills illuminated the glacier beneath us, flashing neon white between the Milky Way above and a cloud inversion below.

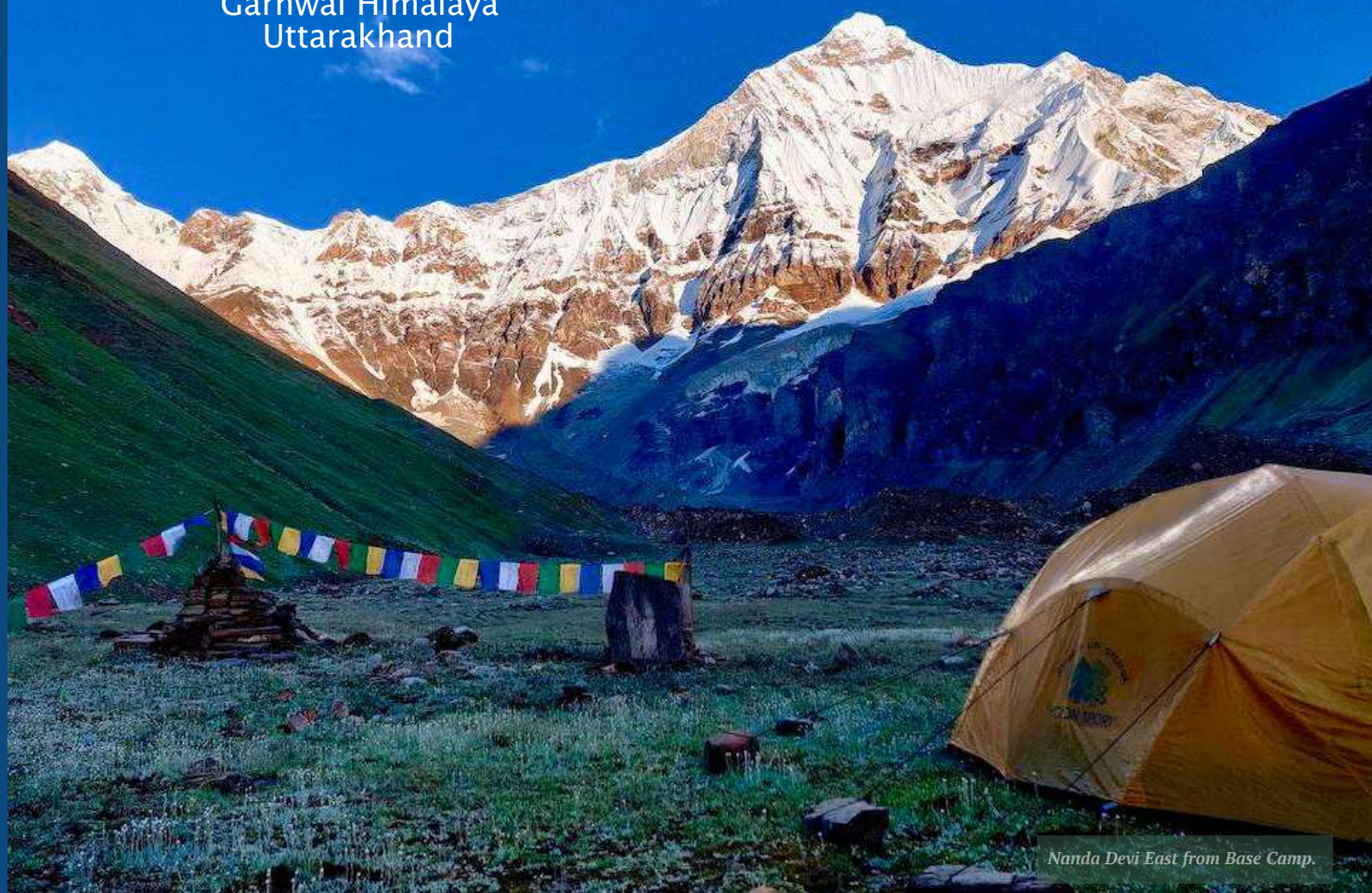
We summited on the morning of August 26, then spent another day on the summit ridge waiting for a white-out to clear. The next morning, the sunlit peaks of Zanskar and Kishtwar shone along the rim of a steely overcast sky as we started our descent, spending one long day navigating the glaciated standard east ridge route to basecamp.

Future parties may be drawn, like we were, to Menthosa's unclimbed south pillar. The pillar is cleaved diagonally by a dike across its south face. This attractively prominent weakness can only be accessed after crossing about 300 vertical meters of loose rock at its base. In its center it also crosses several sections of overhung flakes arranged like guillotines. The combination of the heavy snowfall and variable rock quality eliminated the south pillar as a reasonable objective for us, but it likely has sections of worthwhile granitic rock.

– Spencer Grey & Rushad Nanavatty

Nanda Devi East (7434 m)

Garhwal Himalaya
Uttarakhand



Nanda Devi East from Base Camp.

Rajsekhar Maity recounts his team's historic ascent of the daunting Nanda Devi East (7434m), during August–September 2019. This was only the third successful ascent of the peak, out of the 13 attempts made in the last 22 years.

Mt. Nanda Devi East (7434m), the twin sister of Nanda Devi, situated on the outer rim of the Nanda Devi sanctuary, has witnessed very few successful ascents. Various difficulties of this peak, including a long approach, brittle and precipitous rock pinnacles, sharp corniced and exposed ridges, unpredictable weather pattern, prolonged stay above 6000m, have made this mountain an extremely challenging climb.

Our team of four members along with 5 Sherpas started from Munsiyari on 20th August and reached the basecamp (4300m) at Bidalgwar in Lawan valley on 26th of August. The first major obstacle of this peak is the 3300 ft high approach towards the Longstaff's Col (5910m) on the South ridge through a couloir of rotten loose rock and thin layer of snow, making the load ferry a hugely tiresome process. Interrupted by frequent downpour and thick whiteout, the team spent 11 nights at BC (4300m) and ABC (4900m), during which we fixed ropes on the couloir and ferried loads to Longstaff's Col.

Deviating from our planned itinerary, we forced our path through intense whiteout and frequent rockfall towards Longstaff's Col and established C1 (5910m) on 8th September. Surprisingly clear weather greeted us at Longstaff's Col and thereafter we witnessed two microsystems of climates separated by the high South Ridge of Nanda Devi East behaving just the opposite. While the Western side over the inner sanctuary showed clear skies with no clouds, the Eastern side over the Lawan valley, on the other hand, remained cloudy and rain-washed for all those days. And the ridge witnessed strong winds from West.



C1 at Longstaff Col with the first pinnacle. Main & east summit in the background.



At the top of the third pinnacle.



Corniced arete section between rock buttresses.

After Longstaff's Col came 3 pinnacles of 300 ft, covered with dry and loose rock with very narrow and overly exposed ridges in-between. After descending from the 2nd pinnacle we climbed a small pitch till the top of the 3rd pinnacle where we put up C2 (6000m) on 10th September. A short vertical descent through a rotten rock section from the 3rd pinnacle brought us to a steep rock buttress of 100 ft. The ridge thereafter was of mixed climb – snow arete and snowed-up rock steps with exposed drops on either side. One major crux of that section is a 25 ft high rock wall with overhang near the top. We set up C3 at 6140m, beyond the overhung rock wall.

From there the ridge becomes corniced snow arete with rock steps in-between, merging into a wide snow neve, part of the huge ice-field enclosed between the two peaks of Nanda Devi. Cutting platforms on a 45° slope, we put up C4 at 6510m altitude. The neve becomes steeper afterwards and extends to the main summit pyramid of the East peak. The traditional summit route goes through 3 rock bands across the summit pyramid. Though many of the earlier attempts started the summit push from the location of our C4 and few from them got success too, but considering the length and physical condition we decided to place one more camp before the summit.



Camp 5 at 6900m before the final summit block.



Climbing the final summit block of east summit.



Pradeep Bar on the top of Nanda Devi East summit. The main peak can be seen in the background.

Accordingly, we put up C5 above the 1st rock band on the summit pyramid at an altitude of 6900m on 14th Sep. 2 members and 5 Sherpas cramped into two small tents placed on a slope of around 60° gradient. On the full moon night of 14th September the temperature went down 20°C below freezing point accompanied by strong wind of approx. 25 km/hr, when Pradip Bar, Phurba Sherpa, Lopsang Sherpa, Dawa Ongchuk and Palchen Sherpa stepped out of the tent at 1:30 AM for the final summit push. Climbing along a narrow and corniced ridge the team reached the foot of the 2nd rock band, a 80–85° mixed pitch of rock and snow gullies.

After sunrise the wind got even fiercer and gained about 40–45 km/hr mark. The team even thought turning back thrice, but anyway held the spirit high and continued to push further. After negotiating the 3rd and final rock band the team found a small cornice barring their way. They broke apart the cornice and put the 1st step on the vast summit field at 10:36 AM. A strong gust of wind was blowing furiously at 55 km/hr but the sky above was clear and so was the main peak of Nanda Devi at the West, though the horizon below was covered with clouds, only to give space for the pick of higher peaks rising above.

That night we came back to the summit camp (i.e. C5) and the next day to C1 and came down to BC the day after. As per records, this was the 1st successful ascent of the peak by a civilian Indian team.

– Rajsekhar Maity

Dibibokri Glacier area & Ice Sail (5900m)

Himachal Himalaya

Three of us in our early to late 50s, albeit, young at heart viz. Cyrus Shroff, Bhupesh Asher and Vinay Hegde, ably supported by Rakesh (Keshu) and Kiran, and accompanied by Hussain Zaveri (till the Base Camp), decided on a quick foray into the infrequently visited Dibibokri Glacier in the summer of 2019.

Dibibokri is a major feeder to the Parvati basin in Himachal Pradesh. Time was short and we had the opportunity to attempt just one peak amongst the vast plethora of peaks scattered in the Dibibokri Nalla, which included the impressive Dibiboki Pyramid, Parvati Peak, Ratiruni Pyramid, Kulu Makalu and Ice Sail. Though our initial objective was to attempt the Dibibokri Pyramid, we gave it up, realising that the logistics involved would be impossible in the limited time we had. We settled on the very shapely “Ice Sail” and were able to reach its top on 31st May 2019, after almost giving up hope due to series of setbacks.



Our daredevil mini-bus driver dropped us off in Bhuntar on 19th May. We hardly felt the craters in the road as most of the time we were simply flying over it. Keshu along with Kiran joined us on 20th morning and we started off for the road head – Barshaini via Manikaran. Barshaini, located at the junction of Tosh Nalla and Parvati was bustling with youngsters, most of whose destination was Kheer Ganga camp ground where it seems, Nirvana was easily and abundantly available in the form of marijuana. We spent the first night at a campsite, little ahead of Rudranag after about 7 kms of gradual climb.



The next day took us through one of the lushest forests I have been in, to our next staging camp on a beautiful meadow a few hours short of Thundabhuji our originally intended camp. That night, disaster struck me in the form of a severe case of food poisoning and the climb the next day to Thakur Kuan, our third staging camp, though enchanting was lost to me as my focus was on making my dehydrated body to just take one step after the other. Thakur Kuan is the junction of Parvati river and Dibibokri Nala. We established Base Camp the next day (23rd May) at an altitude of 3700m, a short way inside the Dibibokri system.



The Dibibokri is a complex glacier system with four branches, the predominant being the Main and the West glaciers. An additional offshoot in the system is the Ratiruni Glacier with its own set of shapely mountains. After losing 24th to snow storm, we moved to Camp I at the junction of the West and Main Glacier on the 26th. Though the peaks in the main glacier were striking and alluring, the broken narrow passage and the abysmal snow condition to reach the base was sure to be a nightmare and we simply did not have the time necessary for it. In contrast the west glacier was wide and inviting and we quickly decided on attempting Ice Sail, which did not seem to pose too many complications.



Though it was end of May, the snow was unconsolidated through out the route and would refuse to freeze even at 1.00 AM, making the going very difficult with the constant sinking feeling. Being the heaviest, I was relegated to the end of the line as no one else wanted to sink (at times waist deep) in my steps. The journey to Camp 2 though was simply glorious with mind blowing mountains scape.



Ice Sail had the recorded height of 6250m. Our Camp II was at 4700m and we thought it not very prudent to attempt a climb and decent of nearly 5000 feet in a single push, given the unstable snow conditions. After another snow storm on the 29th and our window of opportunity getting smaller, we moved upto Camp III on the 30th at 5000m. Even this 300m climb was harrowing in thigh deep snow.



31st May at 3.00 AM, was windless and cloudless when we set off. The snow even at this freezing hour was soft and malicious, though it did cover all the crevasses and made our progress unhindered, if you don't count the abrupt sinking every few steps. We however made steady progress over 45 to 55 degree slopes to reach the summit and the most astounding views at 9.00 AM. The sun was bestowing us with all its glory and there was not a single cloud to mar the view in any directions. The altimeter however recorded, with some variance amongst all three of us, the average height of 5900m as compared to 6250m recorded height on some maps. However we did not grudge the height difference, as what's a few hundred meters between mountains and mountaineers, especially after it had treated us so well and offered us the most memorable vistas.



We reached Camp III by 12.00 PM and after an uneventful journey, back to Bhuntar on the 4th after a fabulous time in the mountains.

– Vinay Hegde

Trek to the Frozen Barafsar Lake (4605 m)

Kashmir Himalaya



Barafsar Lake with Kolahoi peak in the background.

From the land of Kanyakumari to the valley of Kashmir

Our group of 8 members from The Science and Adventure Club, Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu, undertook this trek to the Barafsar Lake (meaning frozen lake), the highest Alpine lake of the Kashmir valley situated at 4605m, on July 17th 2019, organized by Rahul Ogra and Mr. Arif.

Starting from the pretty hamlet of Sarbal, near Sonamarg, located on the banks of the River Sindh, we hiked up to the Durinar meadows to reach the Durinar lake, a crystal-clear blue lake that is safely concealed among giant granite spires.

The Neelnag lake lies further up in the Thejwas range. From hereon, trudging over steep snowy slopes and ice fields we reached Barafsar. Although, L. Watts discovered this lake in 1933, it was brought to public notice only in the year 2017. From this vantage point one can see the fascinating 5425m. tallest peak of Kashmir, Mt. Kolohai (Gwash Brari or the Goddess of light), the Sindh Valley, the Lidder Valley, Zoji La, Whalehead, Crystal Peak, Innominate and many more.

These water bodies and glaciers feed the Sarbal Nallah, which connects with the Sindh before uniting with the River Jhelum, the lifeline of Kashmir.

**– Images by J Ramanan
Text by Vrinda Ramanan**



The Durinar meadows where the sheep graze greedily on the lush green cover. There is no dearth of food and water at this point and the Gujjars stay here with their livestock during the summer months lasting from early May to late August. The streams gushing down from the mountains are on their way to feed the Sarbal nallah below.



We had to tread on snowy slopes to reach the Durinar Lake at 4171m. The Crystal Peak can be seen from here.



The medicinal plant *Rheum emodi* or Himalayan Rhubarb on the way to Durinar lake. It has been used as a laxative, a diuretic, to treat fever, cough, cold, indigestion, menstrual disorder since ancient times.



As it suddenly started raining we pitched our second camp on a location midway between the Durinar meadows below and the next assigned campsite. Durinar Lake (4171m), a picturesque, crystal clear blue waterbody, concealed among giant granite spires, lies a little further ahead.



The night sky from our meadow camp. The spiral arm of the Orion in the dark sky with the Crystal Peak in the background is ethereal.



The gorgeous Durinar Lake, safely protected by the giant spires all around.



Our team crossing over the snowy trail to Neelnag (4269m), that lies further up parallel to the Innominate Glacier. We also spent a night on the banks of the Neelnag, pitching our tents on the snowfield.



At the banks of the Neelnag lake, with Crystal peak in the background.

- Vrinda & J. Ramanan

Trans Himalaya 2019 : 120 Passes in 4 months

After my initial foray into the high passes of the Himalayas last year (covering 40 passes in 75 days) I had set a new challenge for 2019: spending the entire summer in the high mountains exploring as many new passes as possible. The highlights of my journey are as follows:

Number of Passes traversed : 120 passes

Duration: 4 months (or roughly 1 per day)

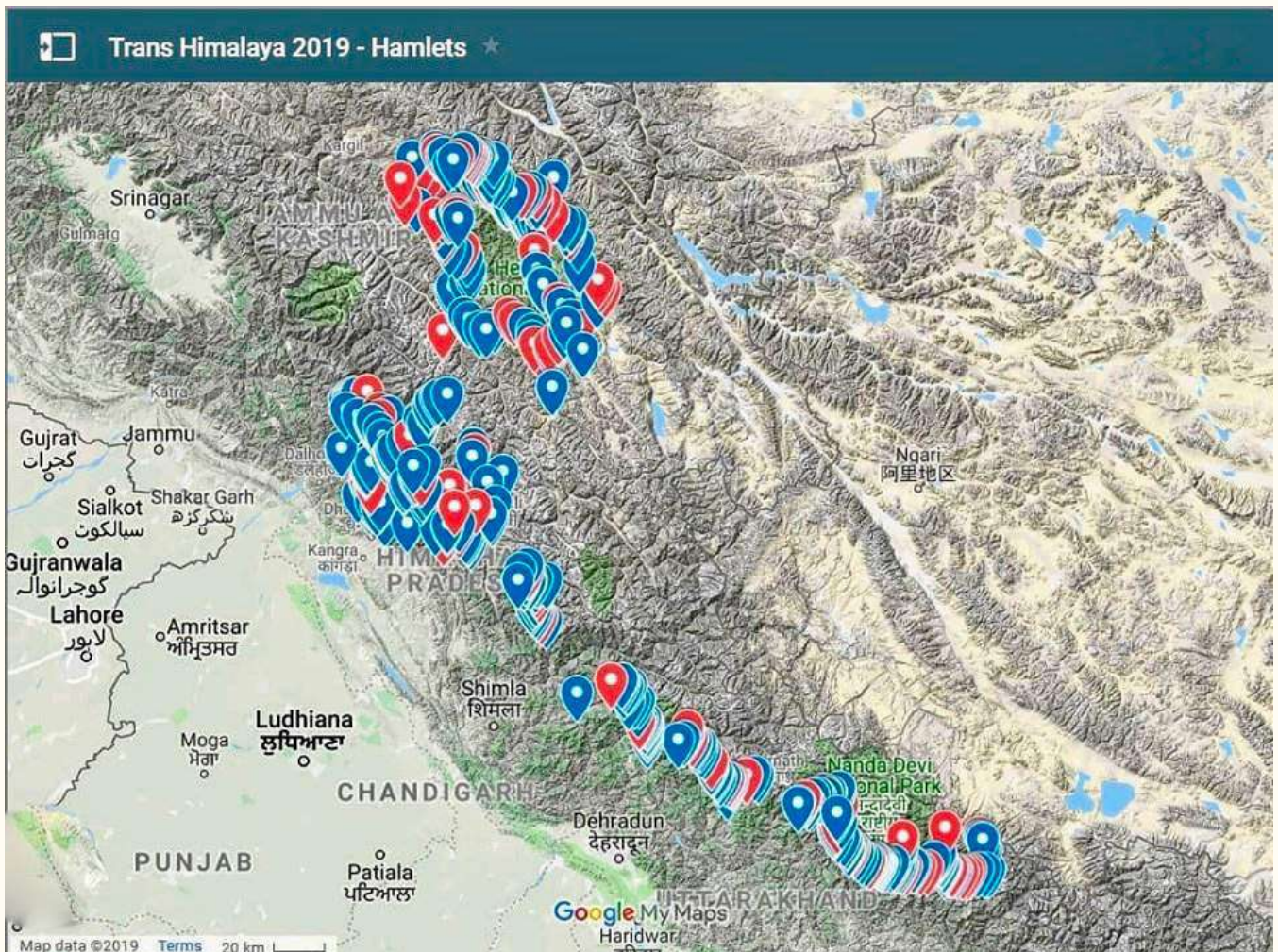
Total kms covered: 3000+ kms

Elevation Gain: 175 thousand meters

Remote Hamlets visited: 341 remote hamlets.

Format:

- Pure alpine style – self-planned and self-guided with no support, mostly solo.
- Most passes were new and undocumented, used only by shepherds and mountain tribes.
- In ultra-running style: minimalist and fast paced, carrying minimum gears (5 kgs) and doing 12 hours / 30–40 km long days with no rest in between.



– Peter Van Geit

Peter Van Geit's entire extraordinary journey is documented through photos, videos, daily blog posts and maps on the website: ultrajourneys.org.

Also on:

[Instagram.com/petervangeit](https://www.instagram.com/petervangeit)

[facebook.com/petervangeit](https://www.facebook.com/petervangeit)

Remembering Hillary

- Capt. M S Kohli

I have had the privilege of close association with Sir Edmund Hillary for several years until his death. The smile and glitter in his eyes at the slightest provocation, his refreshing simplicity and sense of humour reflected the true essence of a lovely human being who was universally respected. Ed, who was 88 at the time of his death on 11 January, 2008, was undoubtedly the greatest mountaineering legend of our times. More than any achievement he would be remembered for changing the face of Sherpas and the Sherpaland.



My first recollection of Sir Edmund was way back in 1953, on return of the successful British Everest Expedition to Delhi. Ed and Tenzing were almost mobbed and I could not even shake hands with them. Twelve years later, in 1965, when our first Indian team climbed Everest, I was thrilled to receive generous comments on our success from him. Ed was delighted at the spectacular growth and development of Indian mountaineering in which Tenzing of course had played the most crucial role.

The year 1975 was a remarkable year in Nepal, with the coronation of King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev. Also Sir Edmund's biggest project of Paphlu Hospital was getting ready. In the midst of it all, an unprecedented disaster took place. The pilatus porter carrying Louise and Belinda Hillary crashed. Any broken hearted man would have normally gone home but not Sir Edmund. Louise had been accompanying Ed every year to Nepal for the Sherpa schools and hospitals. Ed decided to go straight to Paphlu to complete the hospital. Such was his dedication to the Sherpas.

His Jet-boat Expedition up the Ganges, which received unprecedented world publicity, was my happiest expedition. At Ed's request, Harish Sarin and I also joined the expedition which heralded white-water rafting in India. Here I witnessed Ed's great leadership qualities. He enjoyed every moment of it. At Haridwar he did not mind an hour long ritual by the local priests. For almost a week we battled through mighty rapids and narrow rushing gorges. Ed took some momentous decisions in overcoming these unusual challenges. At the end of every day we had wonderful evenings, Ed relishing whatever drink we could lay our hands on.

In regard to Ed's deep regard for the Sherpas, I recall an important incident in Chamonix. During the 50th anniversary celebrations by Maurice Herzog, in June 2000, some British climbers, led by Chris Bonington were persuading Ed to visit London on May 29, 2003, for the 50th anniversary celebration of the 1953 British team. Ed had decided to spend this historic day with his numerous Sherpa friends in Nepal. Chris asked me to persuade Ed, as they were planning to invite the Queen to attend this function and Ed's presence was important. When I spoke to Ed, he said firmly, "No Mohan, I will be with my Sherpas in Kathmandu".

Ed, till the end of his life, remained a simple, un-assuming, sincere and a committed man. He had his likes and dislikes but would never show his anger. His contribution to the cause of Himalayan environment will continue to inspire us.

As will his evocative words, "The Himalayas have given so much to mankind. Human beings, wherever in the world they are, owe a debt to these great mountains. It must be repaid with gratitude and a sense of concern and devotion".

Eminent mountaineer Capt. M.S. Kohli remembers the legendary Sir Edmund Hillary, on the occasion of his 100th Birth anniversary.

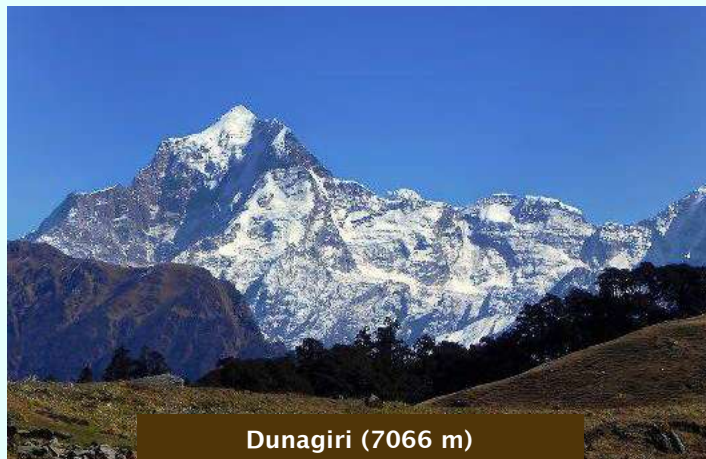
Planning an Expedition in the Indian Himalaya

A Familiarisation for Foreign Climbers & Expeditions

123 New Peaks Opened Up for Climbing

The government of India has declared 123 Himalayan peaks, located in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim, to foreigners "desirous" of obtaining a mountaineering visa for climbing and trekking purposes, in a major boost for the international mountaineering and adventure community.

Foreign climbers and expeditions had to seek permission from the Ministries of Defence and Home Affairs, in order to climb these peaks till recently. Now they can directly apply to the IMF for permits.



Dunagiri (7066 m)
Uttarakhand Himalaya

The list includes 51 peaks in Uttarakhand, 10 peaks in Sikkim, 15 peaks in Jammu & Kashmir, and 47 peaks located in Himachal Pradesh, ranging from above 7000m to trekking peaks, in addition to the peaks already open for climbing. A region-wise summary of peaks is as follows:

Region	New Peaks	7000 m +	6500 m +	6000 m +	Trekking peaks
Sikkim	10	6	1	2	1
Uttarakhand	51	2	14	23	12
Himachal Pradesh	47	0	3	23	21
Jammu & Kashmir	15	0	0	9	6
Total	123	8	18	57	40

Ease of Climbing Initiatives

- The new order issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, also proposes a **Mountaineering Visa (MX)**, in an initiative to simplify the usually tedious and lengthy permission process.
- Time taken to issue a permit by the IMF will be **less than a week**.
- Also rock climbers can now easily get the required **Trekking Permits** for peaks less than 6000m in height, including the newly opened technically challenging peaks, like Kishtwar/ Kalidhar spires and Kullu Eiger.
- Government also proposes to increase the validity of **E-visas** from 1 year to 5 years, and a reduction in **Visa fee**, from 25 dollars to 10 dollars, is also being considered for the peak climbing season.

Peak Fees Exemption by IMF

The IMF will exempt 50% of the Peak Fees to expeditions to the 123 Newly Opened Peaks, for the next one year.

Application forms, regulations and instructions for all Foreign Expeditions are available on the IMF website, on this link :<https://www.indmount.org/IMF/expeapp>.

Select Featured Open Peaks

Dunagiri (7066m), Uttarakhand Himalaya (Kumaon)



Location: Lies in the Nanda Devi group of peaks, at the northwest corner of the Nanda Devi Sanctuary Wall.

Accessibility: Haridwar/Dehradun to Joshimath/Badrinath by road, then trek via Juma, Reeu, Dunagiri village.

Basecamp: Lower Bagni Kharak (4,400m)

Difficulty: Major Mountain Expedition.

Best time to climb: April, May, September, October.

Summit Latitude: 30.515

Summit Longitude: 79.86667

Climbing History:

Not frequented by many explorers, Dunagiri peak is in a way a virgin peak as compared to others in the Uttarakhand Himalaya. The peak was first climbed on 5 July 1939 by Swiss climbers André Roch, F. Steuri, and D. Zogg, via the southwest ridge. In 1975, Joe Tasker and Dick Renshaw successfully climbed a particularly difficult route on the southeast buttress – a significant milestone for alpine-style climbing. In 1978 the first Australian Himalayan expedition by the Australian National University Mountaineering Club made the fourth ascent via the south-west ridge.

Mountain Information:

One of the main approaches to Dunagiri or Dronagiri is through the various ridges all around the main peak, which rises up to 7066 kms and has slowly become one of the preferred climbs for Alpine-style mountaineers. Dunagiri is famous for steep ice-and-rock style of climbing. The main climbing routes are the Southwest Ridge and the Southeast Buttress, with the south-west ridge being more preferred. The ridge borders a shallow plateau for at least a mile, leading diagonally across several tiers of hanging glacier, and ends with a steep snow and ice slope. This ridge then flares up in an aspiring sweep of red rock to a long iced knife-edge, which leads gradually to the top.

Chomochior (6322m), East Kishtwar, Kashmir Himalaya

Location: Between the Haptal and Chomochior Glaciers, about five kilometers south of Muni La.

Accessibility: trek to Kishtwar via Galhar, Athole, Machail and Sumcham, through the Darlang Nullah.

Basecamp: At the head of Chomochior valley.

Difficulty: Tough technical peak

Best time to climb: June to mid-October

Summit Latitude: 33.37237157

Summit Longitude: 76.58886109



Image Credit: Marko Prezelj

Climbing History:

In 1988, Roger Everett and Simon Richardson made the first ascent along the west ridge. The area was closed to foreigners, till, in 2015, Kennedy, Novak and Prezelj summited along the south ridge of Chomochior.

Mountain Information:

The approach to the northwest spur is blocked by a steep, chaotic, 600-meter-high icefall, lengthening the approach. Two icefalls lead to the upper glacier, with the left branch leading to an ice couloir. A steep line of icy gullies and grooves leads all the way to the summit. The 1400m line has been graded D+, requiring sustained climbing.

Devachan Peak (6265m), Himachal Himalaya

Location: In Tosh valley, Spiti, to the right of Papsura.

Accessibility: By road from Manali to Tosh village near Manikaran, then trek to base camp via Bhudaban and Sharam Thach.

Basecamp: Tos Saram

Difficulty: Difficult

Best time to climb: June–July till September

Summit Latitude: 32 13 12 N

Summit Longitude: 77 32 42 E



Image Credit: B C Baliga

Climbing History:

Information on early explorations is scarce. The first ascent was during the 1977 British alpine-style expedition in the area, when Paul Bean, Tara Chand and Barry Needle made the first recorded ascent of Devachan. In 1991, Rob MacBrearty and Clinton Wadesworth from New Zealand ascended the East ridge, via a gully on its southern flank.

Mountain Information:

Devachan is a tough peak to climb due to difficult glacier conditions and multiple crevasses. Advance Base Camp can be established at the head of the Papsura glacier, beyond a huge icefall. The route goes via the south couloir 50° connecting the west couloir 55° and on to the summit ridge. Grade AD–D.

Virgin Peaks in the Indian Himalaya: Select Featured Unclimbed Peaks

There are some truly exciting opportunities to claim a First Ascent in the Indian Himalaya, which is unexpected in this day and age when almost every nook and corner of this planet has been accessed, explored and mapped. This could be due to sheer remoteness, political obstructions or simple ignorance. The list of unclimbed Virgin peaks, with many of them above 7000 m, can be accessed on the IMF website on this link: <https://www.indmount.org/IMF/getPeaks?type=vp>. Some of the peaks from this list are highlighted below.

Peak 7160, Saltoro Muztagh, East Karakoram



Location: West of Siachen Glacier and east of K12, in the East Karakoram range

Accessibility: Drive from Leh to Siachen glacier base camp, then trek.

Best time to climb: Post monsoon months from April to October

Summit Latitude: 35 18 00 N

Summit Longitude: 77 03 00 E

Mountain Information:

Peak 7160 lies to the east of K12, in the Saltoro Muztagh which is a subrange of the Karakoram range in the Siachen region, near Jammu and Kashmir. It lies near the Line of Control. Peak 7160 is one of the highest unclimbed peaks of the world. There have been no known attempts to climb this peak, partly because of the unsettled political situation and the continued military presence in the area. Now with the opening of the Siachen Glacier area by the military, this peak would be a great opportunity to claim a landmark First Ascent.

6148 m Unnamed Peak, Bara Shigri Glacier region, Himachal Himalaya

Location: In the Bara Shigri glacier region of Lahaul. The peak is located very close to Central Peak (6285m).

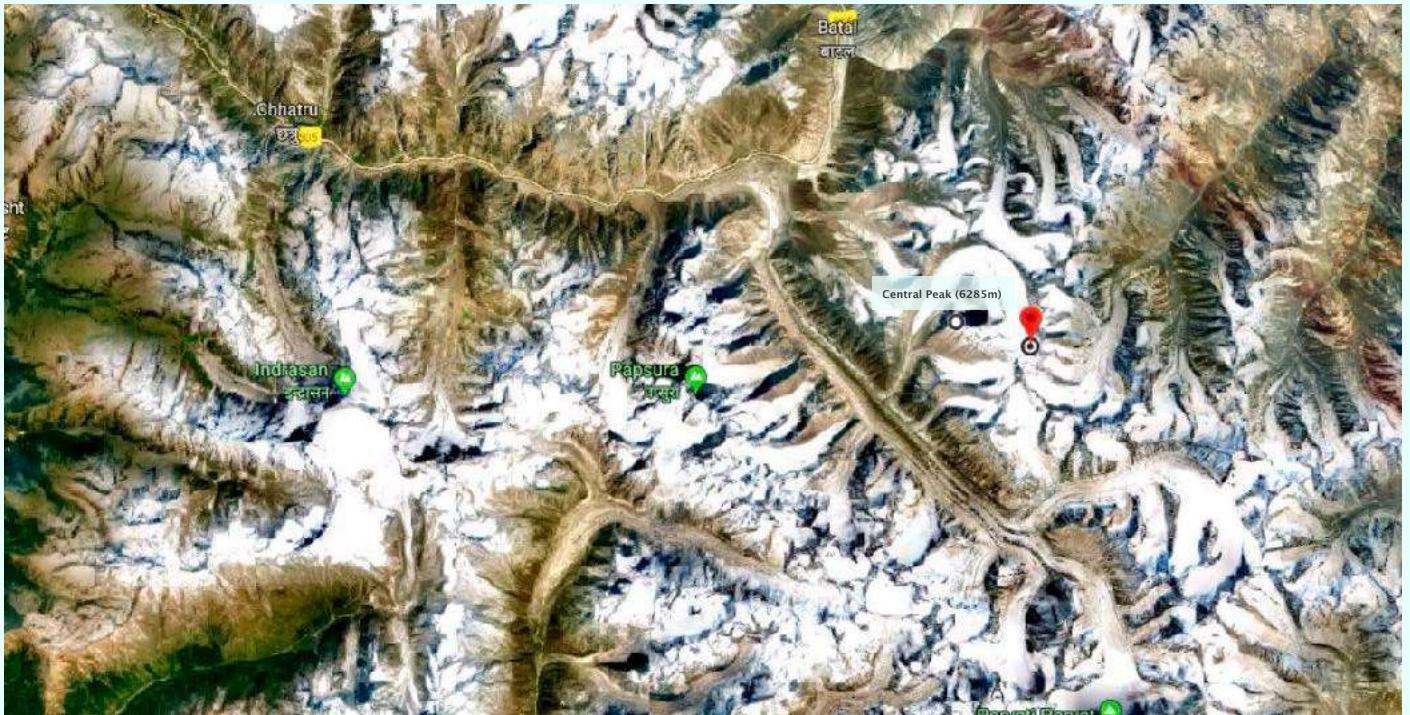
Accessibility: By road from Manali to Batal, over the Rohtang Pass and down into the Chandra River Valley, then trek into the Bara Shigri glacier area.

Basecamp: Bara Shigri

Best time to climb: June to September

Summit Latitude: 32 14 00 N

Summit Longitude: 77 42 00 E



Climbing Information: The Lahaul region is considered as one of the finest and most accessible Himalayan-Alpine regions in the Indian Himalaya. Bara Shigri glacier, a 30-km long glacier, the second longest glacier in the Indian Himalaya after Gangotri, lies within this region, flowing northwards and feeding the Chenab river.

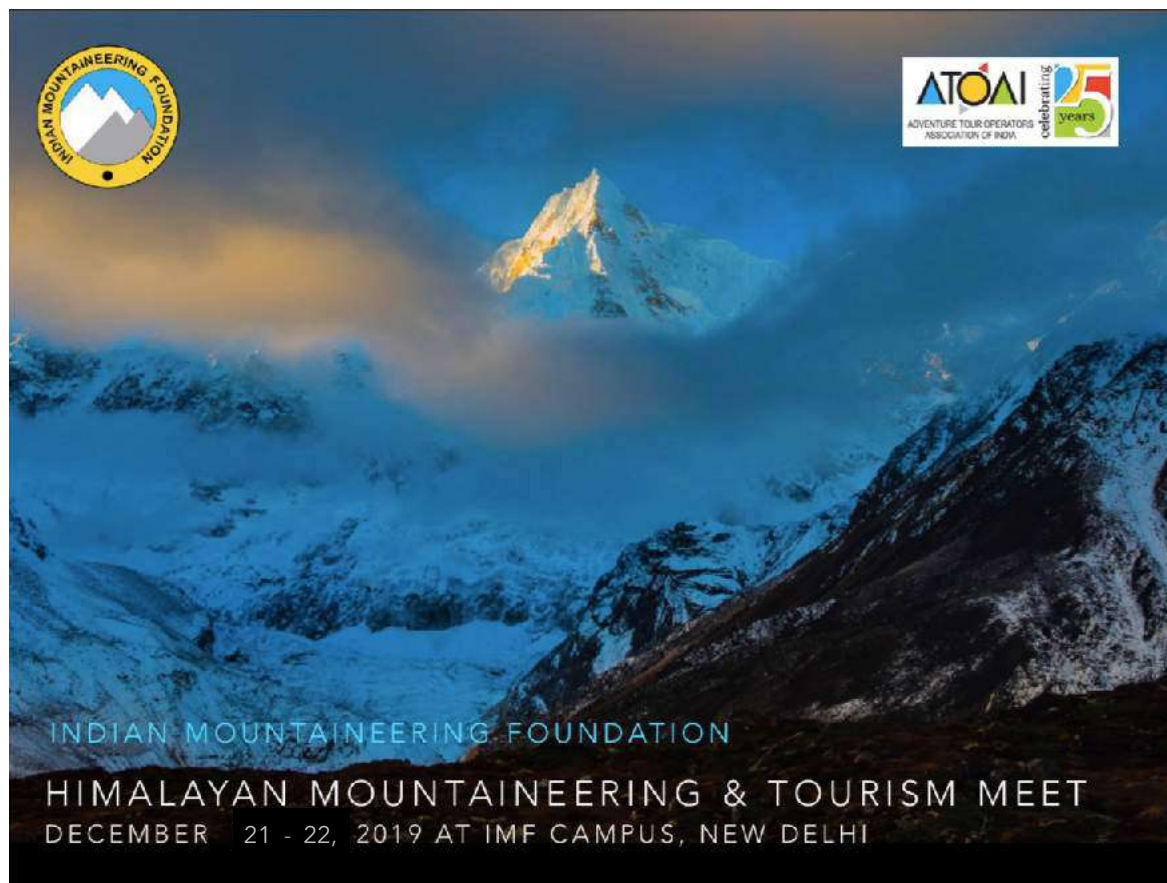
The glacier is located at 3950m, and is home to several peaks. Multiple explorations have been undertaken in the Bara Shigri glacier area, since the early 1900s, with many peaks attracting multiple attempts, including Indrasan, Papsura, White Sail, Dharamsura, and Parbati Parvat.

Many technically challenging unclimbed and unnamed peaks, with elevations of 6000m and above, continue to remain exciting opportunities as First Ascents, including the 6148 m Unnamed peak. The peak lies close to Central Peak, with base camp located in the glacier.



The IMF has been regularly conducting its Climbathon training series in this area, due to the immense and varied possibilities for climbers. Some of the training teams have even managed to make First Ascents during their programme. There are several exciting and unclimbed peaks still available in this beautiful region.

IMF to conduct Himalayan Mountaineering & Tourism Meet in December 2019



The Himalayan Mountaineering and Tourism Meet will be organised by the IMF through 21st and 22nd December 2019, at the IMF campus, New Delhi. The themes for this year will include Mountaineering, Trekking & Exploration, Emerging Mountain Sports, Volunteering and Mountain Life.

During the first session of this Meet, on 21st December, the focus would be Business to Business (B2B) and Mountaineering, and the format would be a blend of eminent speakers, both Indian and international, accompanied with the screening of relevant films. The topics would be Mountaineering Expeditions – Illustrated Reports, IMF Initiatives (including the proposed IMF Museum, IMF Film Festival and IMF permit process), Area Reports (Opportunities for Climbing in the Indian Himalaya) and Risk Management (fatal incidents and Satellite phones in India).

On the second day, 22nd December, the focus would be Business to Consumer (B2C), Trekking and Explorations, Mountain Life, Volunteering and Emerging Adventure including Bouldering, Ultra Marathons and Slacklining. The format would again be a blend of eminent speakers, international and Indian, and relevant films.

The Meet would also showcase equipment with stalls displaying merchandise and gear, with a special focus on Mountain books. Other special activities would include a Mountain Food Festival and performances by bands, playing the traditional music from the Mountain regions of the Indian Himalaya, and a Speed Climbing Competition on the famous IMF Wall.

Announcing Certificate programme in Mountain Medicine

May to October 2020

IMF has announced the conduct of its first Certificate programme in Mountain Medicine, a 6 month long programme to train doctors in recognising, treating and managing illnesses related to mountains and high altitude especially those in mountaineering sojourns and excursions.

Format:

The course has been designed as per the syllabus of UIAA, Medical Commission incorporating requisite knowledge, skills and competencies for a doctor to independently function as provider of medical and healthcare in high altitude areas and during mountaineering expeditions.

Duration:

The duration of this Certificate programme will be 6 months, out of which 5 months will be in distance education mode, with multimedia delivery of course content, and one month's contact programme incorporating didactic & interactive sessions at IMF headquarters and a field visit to high altitude.

Dates:

The program dates will be from May – October 2020. Contact program will be in the month of October 2020. Exact dates will be announced later.

Course Description:

The course is for doctors from India and abroad who have active interest in the field of mountaineering, trekking and other high-altitude activities/sports, those who by virtue of their employment are working in high altitude areas and all those who plan to / will accompany an expedition to high altitude. All participants must hold valid modern medicine degree (In India MBBS or equivalent) and registration to practice modern medicine in their respective country. All participants need to be physically and medically fit for visiting/ working in high altitude.

Registration:

Eligible participant can register by sending an email to IMF at cimm@indmount.org along with a one-page Statement of Purpose, their willingness to participate and qualifications. Later they would need to send self-attested scanned copies of their medical qualification and medical registration to practice. All cases will be screened, and eligible candidates will be informed by email.

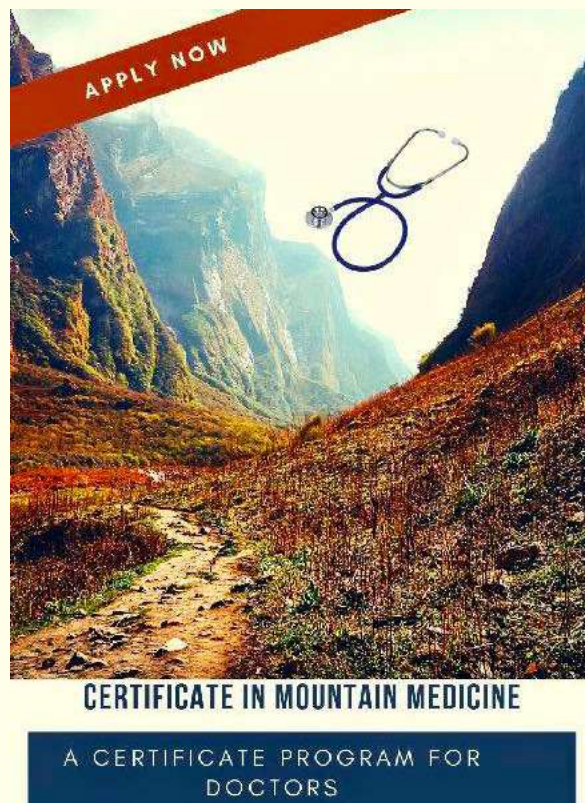
Fee and Costs:

The course is self financing in nature, and the fee covers instruction, course material, evaluations, examinations and logistics of the 4 weeks contact program. Course fee is INR 2.0 Lakhs (or US \$2950) payable in one instalment or two instalments of INR 1.03 Lakhs (or US \$1500) each.

Evaluation:

There will be assessments through the course and a course-end examination. Those not qualifying shall receive Certificate of Participation and those qualifying will receive Certificate of Proficiency.

Last date for registration is 15th April 2020.



IMF Pre-Everest Massif Expedition to Mt. Trishul (7120 m)



Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) is organising the Everest Massif Expedition 2020 sponsored by Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, in an attempt to simultaneously scale all the four peaks in the Everest massif region: Everest, Lhotse, Nuptse and Pumori from a common base camp. This would be a unique expedition never attempted by any country or organisation in the world.



565 volunteer applications from qualified mountaineers across the country were received, out of which 94 trained mountaineers (68 men and 26 women) participated in the Selection Camps, organised at Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi and JIM&WS, Pahalgam (J&K). Thereafter, 53 mountaineers (40 men & 13 women) were selected for the next phase of selection – the Pre Everest Expedition to Mt Trishul (7120m) from 28 Aug to 24 Sep 19. The expedition was coordinated by instructors from NIM and a team of expert mountaineers nominated by the IMF.



A total of 37 participants (29 men & 08 women) scaled the summit of Mt Trishul between 14th and 19th September along with 8 Instructors & IMF expert mountaineers. The final team for the Main Everest Massif Expedition will be selected based on their performance during the expedition and assessment by the IMF experts and NIM instructors.

IFSC Climbing Asian Youth Championships

12th - 15th December 2019, Bengaluru



The IFSC Climbing Asian Youth Championships, the Asian championships for competition Climbing, will be held at the Sport Climbing Academy, General Thimayya National Academy of Adventure (GETHNAA), Bengaluru, and hosted by the IMF.

The competition will include the Speed, Lead and Bouldering categories, under Junior (18–19 years), Youth A (14–15 years) and Youth B (16–17 years) age groups.

Climbathon 2019

Himalayan Mountain Leadership Training Programme

26th July - 18th August

Bara Shigri Glacier, Lahaul, Himachal Himalaya



The Indian Mountaineering Foundation has been organising Climbathon – a Himalaya Mountain Leadership Training Programme, since 2013 in various areas with a Motto of 'Learn, Lead and Climb'.

Climbathon 2019 was organised with the same motto, by IMF from 26th July to 18th August 2019 under the aegis of Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Govt. of India, in the Bara Shigri Glacier region, which is the highest and the largest glacier located in

Chandra Valley in Lahaul Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh. A total number of 30 participants, 19 Boys and 11 Girls, were selected for the Climbathon – Himalaya Mountain Leadership Training Programme which was led by Col. S P Malik VSM (Veteran), with four instructors, two each from SGMI, Gangtok and HMI, Darjeeling.

The aim of Climbathon 2019 was to climb the following four peaks besides training on glacier/expedition:

Name of peak	No. of summiteers
Cathedral Peak (6,100 m)	14
Shigri Parbat (6,526 m)	05
Unnamed Peak (6,130 m)	18
Jaldi Peak (5,648 m)	08



IMF and ONGC joint cleaning initiatives: An update

As part of their ongoing joint Clean Himalaya initiative, the IMF and ONGC Limited launched an extensive Plastic Waste Management Drive to clean popular trails in the Dehradun and Mussoorie regions. This is under the initiative against Single Use Plastic undertaken by the Govt. of India. The project was launched on 23rd September 2019.

Three cleaning expeditions were launched as part of their CSR initiative during the Swachhta Pakhwada from 1st to 15th July 2019, conducted in Kedarnath, Khaliya Top – Munsiyari (Uttarakhand) and Dharamshala – Mcleodganj – Triund (Himachal Pradesh).

Five Himalayan Cleaning Expeditions were also conducted from 1st to 15th August 2019, under the Swachh Bharat Pakhwada initiative, in the Stok Kangri region (J&K), Chanshal (Himachal Pradesh), Pindari Glacier (Uttarakhand), Dzungri – Go Chala (West Sikkim), Sela – Tawang, Mago & Gorichen Base Camp of West Kameng District (Arunachal Pradesh).



ONGC-IMF PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT DRIVE 2019

MUSOORIE- JHADIPANI FALL TREK

MUSOORIE- BHATTA FALL TRAIL

MUSOORIE- MOSSI FALL TREK

MUSOORIE- VINOOG HILL TRAIL

MUSOORIE- PATTI TIVA TREK

MUSOORIE-CLOUDS END-BHADRAJ

MUSOORIE- GEORGE EVEREST TREK

RAJPUR- MUSOORIE TRAIL

MUSOORIE- KEMPTI FALL TRAIL

LANDOUR-KHATTA PANI TRAIL

MUSOORIE- PANTWARI- NAG TIBBA TRAIL

IMF launches Adventure Travel Escort Course Programme

The IMF has launched the **Adventure Travel Escort Course** as a pilot programme in 2019, in association with the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Govt of India.

400 volunteers successfully completed the first of this 15 day course, organised through the Mountaineering Institutes. The IMF now proposes to conduct training and certifying a total of 1,200 youth under this programme during 2019 – 2020.



The objective is to train people in the geographic areas where they live and may work, create employment opportunities for successful graduates of the programme, enhancing the standards of service providers and also give a huge impetus to the fast growing adventure travel industry in India. Integrating skill development with region specific employment generation using adventure sports as an instrument of economic growth will also have several other value additive multiplier effects in terms of promoting adventure tourism, self employment, entrepreneurial startups and region specific disaster response plans.

Structured training will be conducted within the IMF Zones, with the involvement of Zonal Committees and other training organisations in the Zones/States, under Coordinators organising, conducting and monitoring the training.

Volunteers wishing to undergo the training may forward their names to the respective IMF Zones. Application form and QRs can be downloaded from the IMF website www.indmount.org.

Siachen Glacier to be opened up to Tourists soon

The Indian Army is planning to open up several high altitude military locations such as the Siachen Glacier for Indian citizens, following the recent abrogation of the special status to Jammu & Kashmir by the Government of India.

The Siachen Glacier is the world's highest battlefield and is maintained by thousands of Indian troops round the year where extreme cold conditions and the treacherous glacial terrain are bigger enemies than the enemy bullets.



From 2007, India had started allowing civilians to trek from Siachen Base Camp to high altitude locations in the Siachen Glacier which is around 11,000 feet at the base camp and goes beyond 21,000 feet at the higher reaches.

The Army has not yet decided on the procedures and the particular positions where it would allow tourists.

For credits and information: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/indian-army-planning-to-open-siachen-glacier-for-indian-citizens/articleshow/71273452.cms>

6 new Heliports to come up in Himachal Pradesh



Himachal Pradesh is likely to get six new heliports very soon, in addition to the 64 helipads already in operation.

As per the latest news reports, the heliports proposed to be built are at Banerdu (Snahuli-Dhalli bypass), Rampur and Nathpa-Jhakri in Shimla, Kangnidhar in Mandi, Baddi in Solan and Manali in Kullu district. Although the heliports have the provision to equip landing only one chopper at a time, the Kangnidhar

heliport will be capable of accommodating three choppers at a time.

The detailed project includes fire operation building, passenger terminal building, underground storage tank, chain linking fencing and gates. The heliports are needed to boost tourism in this region, as heli taxi services have become an effective medium of transportation, and this move is expected to add to tourism activity here.

For credits and information: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/destinations/himachal-pradesh-6-new-heliports-coming-up-under-udaan-2-scheme/as70889525.cms>

Saach Pass in Himachal Pradesh to get a ropeway

Himachal Pradesh government is planning to start a ropeway over Saach Pass (located 14,500 ft above sea level) in Chamba. The ropeway is being considered to be an engineering feat and could be emulated in others parts of the country for tough, snowbound, difficult and inaccessible area for round the year connectivity

The 5-stage ropeway is going to come up over one of the most deadliest passes in the country. The 21 km long route is going to extend from Bhanodi to Pregara.



Presently it takes a minimum of 2.5 hours to reach from Bhanodi to Killar, which is a 61.4 km long journey by road. The region also remains cut off from the rest during winter months due to heavy snowfall. With the help of this new ropeway, connectivity will improve round the year in the remote Killar region.

For credits and information: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/destinations/saach-pass-in-himachal-pradesh-is-getting-a-rope-way/as71435457.cms>

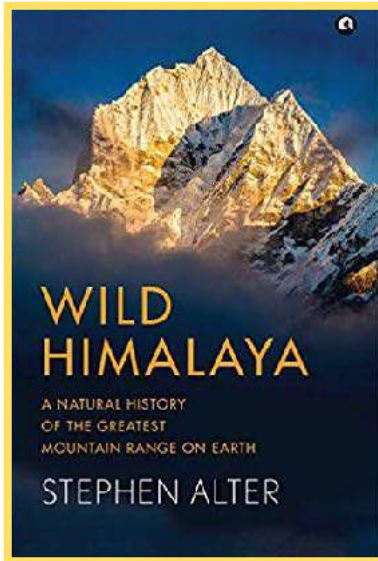
Border Roads Organisation to use plastic to build roads in Himalaya



The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has started a pilot project to build roads using plastic waste and environment-friendly technology, primarily along the Sino-India border. Six roads in the States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura have been identified for construction using waste plastic material and work on this pilot project has commenced.

The BRO constructs roads in many areas that are in ecologically sensitive zones where restrictions have been imposed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on the use of construction materials like local aggregates and sand. To overcome this problem, BRO has adopted innovative modern technology involving use of non-toxic chemicals, polymers, enzymes etc for soil stabilisation to construct road pavements without depending on conventional materials.

For credits and information: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/border-roads-organisation-to-use-plastic-to-build-roads-along-sino-india-border/article29576392.ece>



Wild Himalaya

A Natural History of the Greatest Mountain Range on Earth

Acclaimed and award-winning author Stephen Alter brings out another definitive book on the Himalaya, based on his extensive travels and in-depth research on the region, incorporating all the five countries that the Himalayan range traverses – India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal and China. The book incorporates geology, climate, botany, insects, animals and human presence, and seeks to reconcile myth and folklore with science, trying to tell the story of how the Himalaya are a vast ecosystem in which they all interact with each other. The book is divided into eight sections which delve deep into particular aspects of the Himalaya, giving us the definitive natural history of the greatest mountain range on Earth. An absolute must-read on the “greatest mountain range on Earth”.

by Stephen Alter

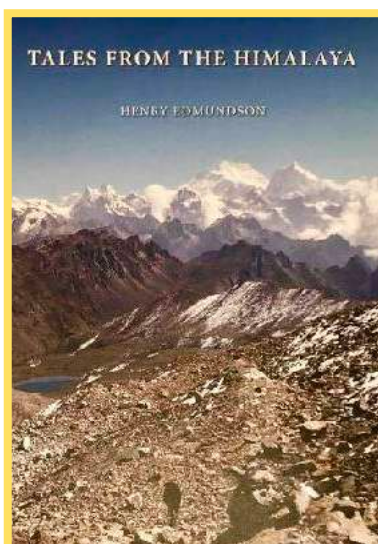
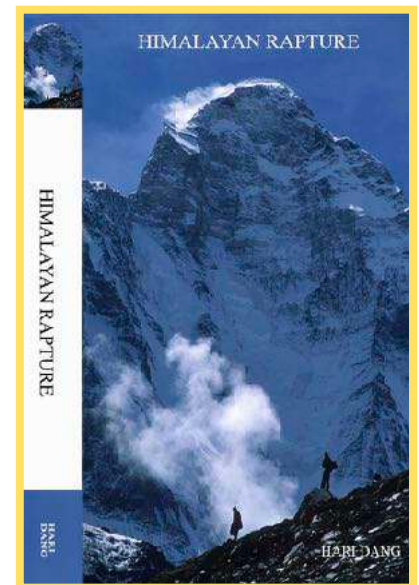
Aleph Book Company * August 2019 * Rs. 640/-

Himalayan Rapture

“Himalayan Rapture” is a compilation of the unpublished mountain writings of the late Padma Shri Hari Dang, renowned mountaineer and wildlife enthusiast. The collection is based on ‘The Himalayan Vision’, which Dang had written in the 60s and never published, and now brought out by his sons. Covered in this book, are his first visits while at college, his later expeditions, Himalayan wildlife and his thoughts on introducing young people to adventure. Also included are his reflections on how we must change our attitude of “heroism” related to climbing Everest and other high mountains, and “unclimb the mountains”, enabling the transformation of these serene regions back to their original state. A poignant and unmissable read!

by Hari Dang

Himraj Dang, Rupin Dang * August 2019 * Rs. 750/-

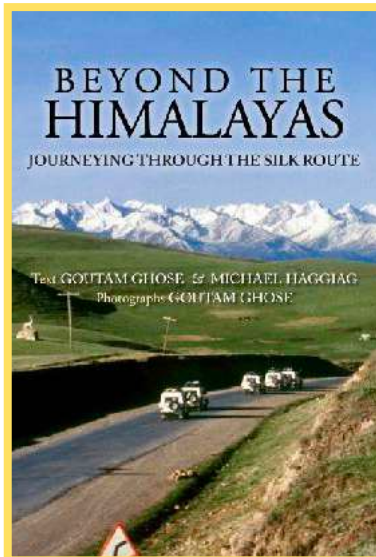


Tales from the Himalaya

Inspired by a lifetime of climbing and exploring the Himalayas, Henry Edmundson’s “Tales from the Himalaya” is essential reading for anyone with a stake in the Himalaya, whether a first-time traveller to the region, a trekker, a mountaineer, or simply someone who is captured by the allure of the high mountains. This book tells epic stories of religion, science, politics, and society that define the lives of every man, woman and child in this highest of human habitats. Lavishly illustrated with an extensive bibliography, “Tales from the Himalaya” is an inspirational journey, a feast for the eye as well as the mind. A must read for adventure lovers!

by Henry Edmundson

Vajra Books * June 2019 * Rs. 3,125/-



Beyond the Himalayas **Journeying through the Silk Route**

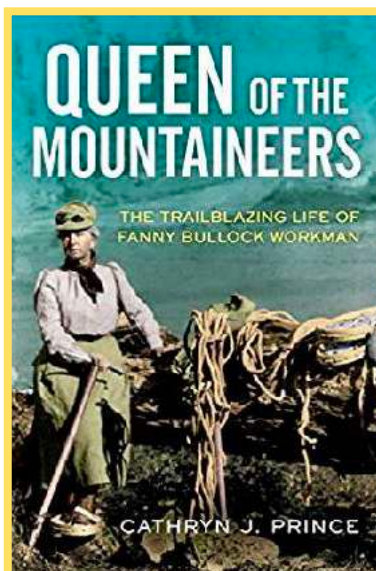
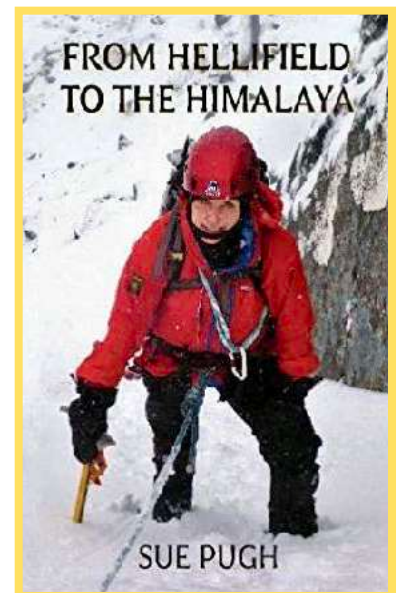
"Beyond the Himalayas", a joint collaboration by award-winning Indian filmmaker Gautam Ghose and British writer – producer, Michael Haggiag, is a pictorial chronicle of Ghose's incredible experiences, as a part of the Central Asian expedition organised by Major H.P.S. Ahluwalia in 1994, the first of its kind, undertaking an arduous 14,000 km journey through Central Asia, tracing the ancient trade route. Ghose had captured this once-in-a-lifetime adventure as a five-part series in his film Beyond the Himalayas (1996). Much of the text is the narration of the original soundtrack of the series. His lens captures breathtaking visuals of a less travelled road. The tapestry of history, travel anecdotes, local legends and titanic characters lend a cinematic quality to the whole fascinating narrative. An absolutely unmissable read!

by Gautam Ghose & Micheal Haggiag
Niyogi Books Pvt Ltd * March 2019 * Rs. 965/-

From Hellifield to the Himalaya

Sue Pugh never set out to conquer the great outdoors but, from enjoying strolls in her native Yorkshire, she progressed to winter mountaineering and evermore challenging adventures. In 2018, she and her husband, together with a group of loyal friends and a highly respected mountain guide, set off to scale the heights in a rarely visited area of Sikkim in the Indian Himalaya. You'll also learn why a lipstick is essential on the Matterhorn, a use for a snowball that you've never even dreamed of, and how to skinny dip in the Scottish mountains. If you want to know the best techniques for belaying or how to tie knots this isn't the book for you. But if you want to experience the excitement, humour, joy – and sometimes sadness – of taking on a great life challenge, then join Sue.

by Sue Pugh
2QT Limited Publishing * September 2019 * Rs. 1,246/-



Queen of the Mountaineers **The Trailblazing life of Fanny Bullock Workman**

Author and journalist Cathryn J. Prince brings Fanny Bullock Workman to life, revealing how she navigated the male-dominated world of alpine clubs and adventure societies as nimbly as she navigated the deep crevasses and icy granite walls of the Himalayas. Bullock Workman climbed more peaks than any of her peers, becoming the first woman to map the far reaches of the Himalayas and the second to address the Royal Geographic Society of London. This book is notable for its bright descriptions of the Workmans' expeditions, including to Pinnacle peak in Ladakh and the Siachen glacier area. Another interesting feature is the story of the climbing rivalry between Workman and Annie Smith Peck, both formidable women and mountaineers. A must read!

by Catherine J Prince
Chicago Review Press * May 2019 * Rs. 1,742/-

Apex

Indian Mountaineering Foundation
Newsletter * Volume 10 * October 2019



Menthosa. Day 1 - Icefall. Image courtesy : Rushad Nanavatty

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