



# Apex

Indian Mountaineering Foundation  
Newsletter \* Volume 12 \* November 2021



Shoshala (4,700 m) : Bhupesh Patil climbing Summit Pitch (pitch 19) with Yogesh Umbre on belay.  
Image Courtesy: Bhupesh Patil.





Baihali Jot (6,294 m).  
Picture taken from Trilokinath Temple Complex, Udaipur,  
Lahaul & Spiti, Himachal Himalaya.  
Image Courtesy: Shiv Kumar



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## President's Note

Dear Reader,

The year 2021 is indeed a special year, as the Foundation formally completes 60 years of its existence as the IMF. In the Diamond Jubilee year, we look back with fond nostalgia, the steady journey of the IMF since 1961, as a reconstituted organization which was formed from the earlier Sponsoring Committees for Expeditions to Mt Cho Oyu and Everest. As we take stock of the present and re-dedicate ourselves to achieving the founding objectives of the Foundation, we need to plan for the future and adapt suitably to the changing times.

While the routine activities of the IMF were impacted, largely due to the covid, the Ministry of Youth Affairs Sports nevertheless sponsored the Everest Massif Expedition 2021, which was successfully conducted by the IMF. This historic Expedition in its scope, successfully scaled three of the four climbing objectives in excellent shape and form. Despite the outbreak of the covid pandemic on the Everest Massif in Nepal, which affected many teams, the IMF team safely returned home.

As the tragic events of the pandemic unfolded in the first half of 2021 leading to an exponential loss of life, it was heartening to see resumption of mountaineering and allied activities in the Indian Himalaya, especially in the post monsoon period. 64 Indian expeditions have been launched in the current year. I do hope that this is a prelude, to return to normalcy in 2022 and onwards. IMF covid advisories must be scrupulously followed, to make mountain outings safe and sustainable.

The year 2021 has seen a spate of unfortunate accidents, which merit serious introspection by Mountaineers, Trekkers, Adventure Tour Operators and indeed by all stakeholders. Loss of five climbers on Trishul, two trekkers in Lahaul & Spiti, injuries on other climbs, and more recently fatalities on Lamkhaga and Kanakata passes is a s gory reminder that we need to prepare well for all outdoor adventures and not take our Mountain Safety for granted. IMF remains fully committed to make our mountaineering and allied activities safe and sustainable.

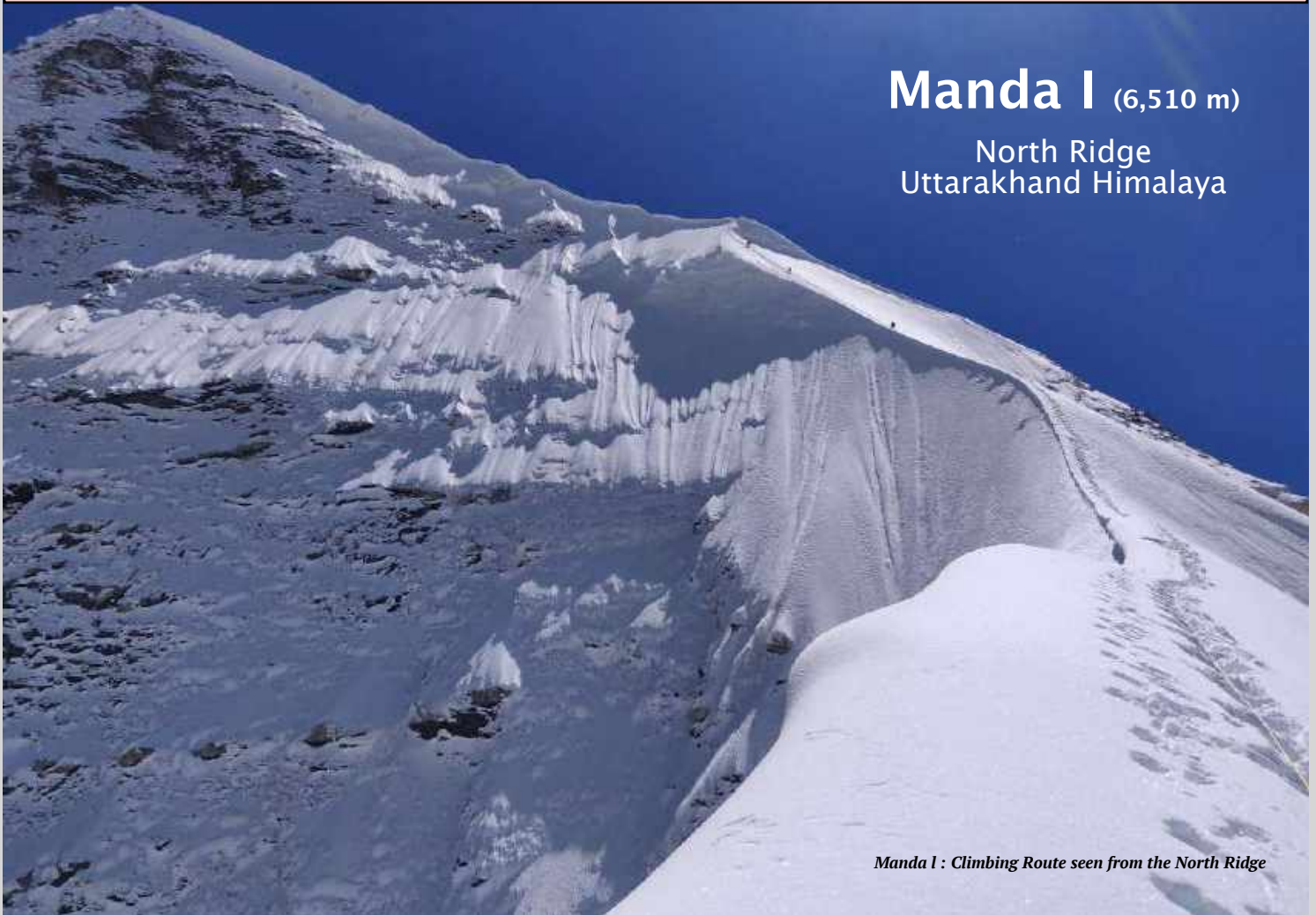
Another rising issue of concern is climbing without permission of the IMF or clandestine climbing in the Indian Himalaya. Not only is this a reflection of a callous attitude and irresponsible conduct, but this also jeopardises the safety of all concerned. The situation is worrisome, as some of the senior mountaineers and responsible organisations have also violated this simple protocol inspite of the fact that permission today can be obtained today online from the IMF in minimal time.

Volume 12 though delayed, covers climbs undertaken in the challenging times of the pandemic in the Indian Himalaya. Some notable Indian climbs, including to Manda-I, Kullu Pumori & a winter expedition to Baljuri, big wall climb of Shoshala, as also journeys to Traill's Pass and Kalindi Khal have been covered in this volume apart from other aspects.

My compliments to the Chairman and the Hony. Editor for bringing out this interesting volume.

Happy Reading!

**Brigadier Ashok Abbey**  
**President IMF**



### Manda I (6,510 m)

North Ridge  
Uttarakhand Himalaya

*Manda I : Climbing Route seen from the North Ridge*

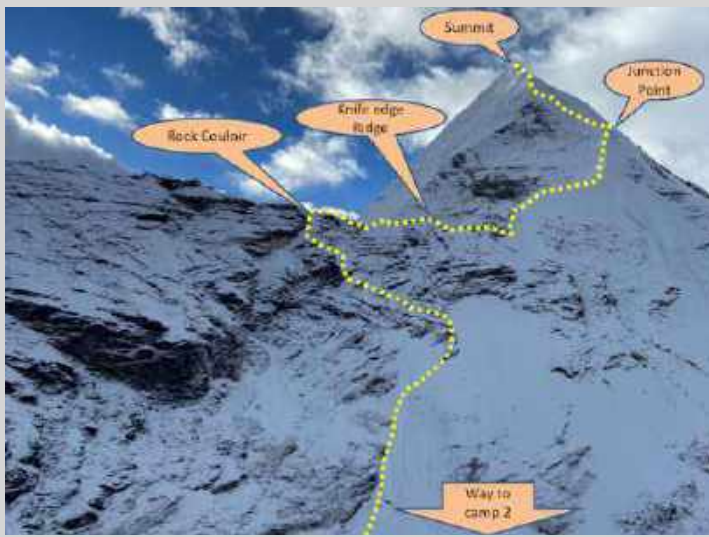
**Three attempts over a period of 32 years and finally success!**  
**Vivek Shivade recounts the first Indian ascent of Manda I peak from the North Ridge route by a 9 member team from the Giripremi club. 5 climbers summited by this difficult route, becoming only the second successful team internationally.**

Mt. Manda I (6,510 m) is one of three peaks in Manda massif in Kedarganga valley, Gangotri region of Garhwal Himalayas. Giripremi had planned an expedition to this peak in 1989 but didn't succeed due to lack of detailed knowledge of the region. After studying the region and the possible climbing route, researching the 1981 expedition reports by Mark Udall's ascent and Japanese ascent, they attempted the peak again in 1991 failing a second time. 30 years later, as the Covid-19 outbreak gradually abated, Giripremi decided to take up the challenge once again, under the mentorship of Umesh Zirpe to guide us.

In the past 30 years, the mountain has changed a lot. When we compared the photos from the 1991 expeditions with the current scenario, we found out that the glacier had retreated massively, A huge chunk of Serac on the South shoulder of Manda I had vanished. 1991 and previously attempted lines, which were relatively gradual in slope, had only loose rock and a pile of debris at their bottom. Hence, we decided to send a party of only 3-4 to Manda I while others to Mt. Bhrigu. From camp 2, Anand would monitor the team movement and coordinate with Umesh Zirpe at basecamp. Nikunj was to assist Umesh Zirpe at the basecamp.

The North ridge had serrated so much due to landslides that we had to find a new line altogether to reach up to the ridge. Basecamp to camp 1 route was a lot safer with little or no rockfall incidences in previous attempts. However, in 2021, there was not a single day, when we didn't hear any thundering cacophony from the snout and icefall region below the camp 1. Unlike the previous attempts wherein the teams could pitch camp 3 on the ridge, and a bivouac near the junction; feasibility of any additional stay beyond camp 2 (5,500 m) was out of question.





**Climbing route with landmark locations.**



**Negotiating steep sections of North Ridge.**



**Rappelling from the junction. Knife edge North ridge is seen in background with sheer drops on both sides.**



**Dr. Sumit on the summit of Manda I.**

Along with Migma Sherpa and Nim Dorje Sherpa, three of us – Pawan, Sumit and I departed for the ascent. After crossing the cwm, the formidable wall with the initial route length around 300 m ice climbing was followed by 150 m near vertical rock climbing, the entire section notoriously rockfall prone. We had spent the previous two days fixing the route till the junction point (The point where North ridge and West ridge of the mountain meet) at 6,000 m. We climbed up the face and reached the North ridge of Manda I, with the magnificent views of Garhwal mountains. We marched forward on that serrated-edged rocky ridge, hardly 2ft in width and full of ups and downs. Anchor placement was a tremendous task, but we managed seamless safety with fixed rope. The North ridge connected to the Junction with near vertical 80–90 m ascent under the impeding cornice of the west face of Manda I. By 2:30 AM, we were at the bottom of the junction.

Above the junction on the west face of Manda I, the route was yet to open. The slope of the face looked treacherously steep, no where less than 60 degrees. As we opened the route further, the cold was bone chilling with gusty winds, numbing our toes and fingers. From the junction (6000 m) the route was nearly upwards till 6350 m. There, the route turned Southward. We crossed a snow bridge, a small ice wall of 80–100 ft. And at around 9:30 AM on 18th Sept 2021, one after the other, all five of us reached the top of Mt. Manda I (6510 m), a quest lasting 30 years.

This was the first Indian ascent of the peak from North ridge. Three days before the Manda I summit, Anand, Varun, Rohan, Ruturaj, and Ankit scaled Mt. Bhriugu (6,047 m). It was the second successful attempt of the peak.

**– Vivek Shivade**

# Kullu Pumori (6,492 m)

Lahaul Spiti  
Himachal Himalaya



*View of Mt. Kullu Pumori (6,492 m) from Camp - II.*

**Lieutenant Colonel Jay Prakash Kumar, SM, recounts the climb of Mt. Kullu Pumori in Lahaul Spiti by the “Snow Saboteurs” team of the Indian Army. This self-sustained expedition put 14 climbers on the summit in poor weather conditions, with low visibility and fog.**

Mt Kullu Pumori lies in the Bara Shigri Glacier in Lahaul & Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh (Lat-32° 08' 13" N and 77° 46' 22" E), being one of the most favoured climbing peaks in the region. Our 21 member expedition to the peak was completely self-sustained, without any external support or guidance. Flagged Off on 28th July 2021 from Sumdo, the team moved to road head camp near Batal on 01 Aug 2021 and established the camp near Chhota Dara (close to the mouth of Chhota Shigri Glacier) along the right bank of Chandra river at an altitude of 3,815 m.

The suspension bridge on Chandra river near the campsite reduced the travelling distance and time for basecamp (3,919 m), which the team sited close to the snout of Bara Shigri glacier. The route till base camp is easy with moderate climb along the left bank of Chandra River upstream. The route to Camp-I (4,313 m) from here was completely through the glacier, where the dangers of rock fall, scree, boulders and crevasses awaited at every step. It took four hrs for the team to reach Camp-I, which was tactfully sited on a table top lateral moraine.

Camp-II (4,730 m) was another four hrs trek on the medial moraine of the glacier, which the team occupied on 08 Aug 2021. The route to the final Camp-III (5,391 m) walked through the massive white glacier and arriving on the south-west face of the mountain. Making it the Summit Camp, the team arrived here on 09 Aug 2021. All vitals were checked for the final assault on the very next day.





**The Summit ridge of Kullu Pumori as seen from Camp 2.**



**Opening route on rock wall before Summit.**



**Team on Summit ridge.**

14 climbers of the team moved from the summit camp at 0630 hrs on 10 Aug 2021. We initially climbed at sheer 200 ft vertical ice wall on its southern face to reach the spur line, which had boulders and moraine. The team then traversed onto its southwest face and climbed a sheer vertical rock cliff with fixed rope to clear the initial 500 mtrs of the climb. The team then traversed again on its south face to pass through a narrow rock gap gulley and then traversed again on to its SW face. It was a complete boulder area with loose rocks and scree.

Fixing the rope through the rock gaps and climbing vertically along the route, the team finally reached the summit of Mt Kullu Pumori at 1400 hrs. Weather got packed up as we approached the summit, which was a rocky patch with very little snow on the top. Visibility was poor and the surroundings were not visible because of low clouds and fog. The team collected photographs from the top and took the GPS of 6,492 m, and descended from Kullu Pumori.

**- Lt. Col. Jay Prakash, SM**



# Baljuri (5,922 m)

Alpine Style Winter Expedition  
Kumaon Himalaya



*From left to right- Baljuri (5,922 m), Panwali Dwar (6,663 m), Nandakhat (6,611 m).*

**Anindya Mukherjee gives an account of his team's Alpine style Winter climb of Baljuri (5,922 m) in the Kumaon Himalaya. Their challenges included freezing weather conditions and loose & deep fresh snow. Unfortunately, the team had to turn back 100 m from the summit.**

During the 2nd and 3rd week of December 2020, a team of 4 climbers made an attempt to climb Mt Baljuri 5,922 m in Him-Alpine style by the Baljuri col-North ridge route. The expedition did not use the services of any HAP or local guide beyond the traditional base camp of Baljuri and adopted a fast and light 'carry, camp and climb' style. The team reached Dwali (2,610 m) on 12th December and used two alternate ferry days via Phurkia (3,189 m) to station themselves at the traditional Base Camp (3,600 m) site of Baljuri on 16th December.

During the approach march, the team encountered fresh new snow from a kilometer below Dwali and half way up to the Zero Point (3,750 m) the team found the trail covered in 6 inches to 1 foot of snow. On 17th December, 3 climbers (Aniket, Rivu and Anindya) started climbing the spur that leads one to the traditional Camp-1 site of Baljuri. The spur was a mixture of frozen grass, mud and boulders under a thick and deceptive blanket of soft new snow. The trio reached the traditional Camp-1 (4,160 m) area after 6 hours of climb. The camp 1 site itself was comparatively free of snow as it faces East and gets a lot of early morning sun.

On 18th December, the three started pushing higher and very soon they found themselves between knee-deep to waist-deep snow on a gradient that ranged between 35 to 45 degrees. Signs of loose snow avalanches (sluffs – both dry and wet) could be seen in number of places. The going became increasingly slow as a result and finally after 5 hours of trail breaking and route finding through unconsolidated powder, the three could climb only 500 meters.





**Between Camp 1 and Camp 2 (bivi)**



**Our Bivi (Camp 2) at 4,600 m**



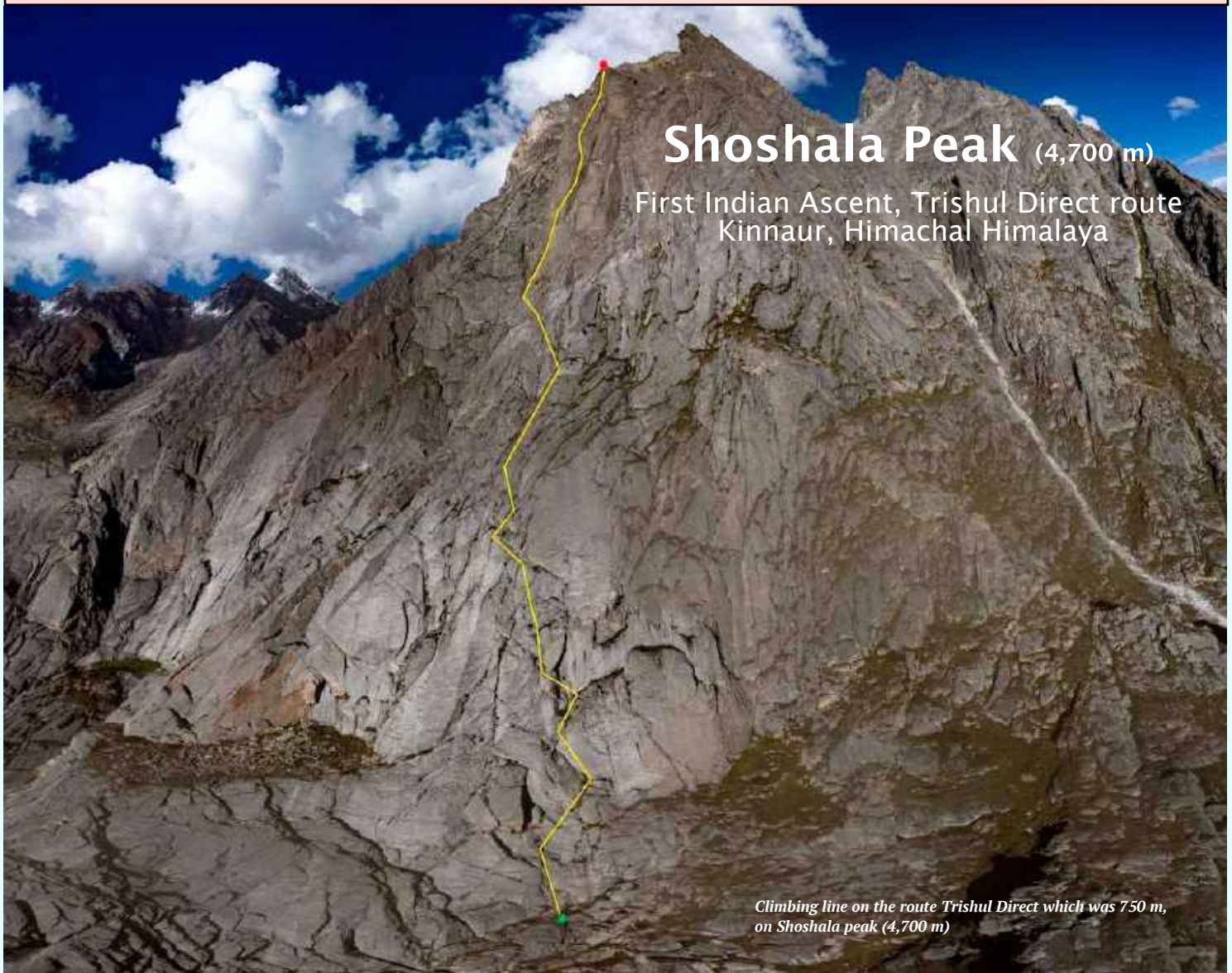
**On the Spur looking down towards to the moraine ridges of Pindari glacier.**

The team decided to make a Bivi (Camp-2) at around 4,600 m and dug out a platform accordingly on the NE face of point 4,800 m (located approximately 800 m SE of Baljuri col). On 19th December, as the three started climbing further up, to their surprise they found no change or improvement in snow conditions as hoped due to overnight freezing.

As the team was getting very close (100 m) to reaching a comparatively easier angled N  v   of the Buria glacier, they encountered slab formations big enough to sweep them off the face. It is then the team decided to turn back immediately. The team cleaned the Bivi site and started a long and slow descent to the valley floor. They reached the traditional Basecamp by 5pm that very day and over the next two days hiked back to the road head Kharakiya (2,253 m). Every protocol related to Covid-19 was maintained while the team traveled through cities, towns and villages en route.

**- Anindya Mukherjee**





**Bhupesh Patil gives a fascinating account of his team's climb of Shoshala (4,700 m) by the Trishul Direct route. This was first Indian and only the second overall ascent of the formidable rocky peak.**

Shoshala is a rocky peak located near Rakchham village, in the Baspa Valley of Kinnaur district. Rakchham is the second to last village before the Indo-Tibet border, just before Chitkul. The wall is about 750 m at an altitude of 4,700 m. The route Trishul Direct on Shoshala peak, was established by Elie Cheuvieux, Yannick Boissenot and Goivanni Quirici, who hold the first and only ascent. The route has 19 pitches with 39 bolts. The grade is 7b and with a bit of A2. The rocky peak is a massive granite slab which looks like an arrow head. The ridges of the peak are very sharp.

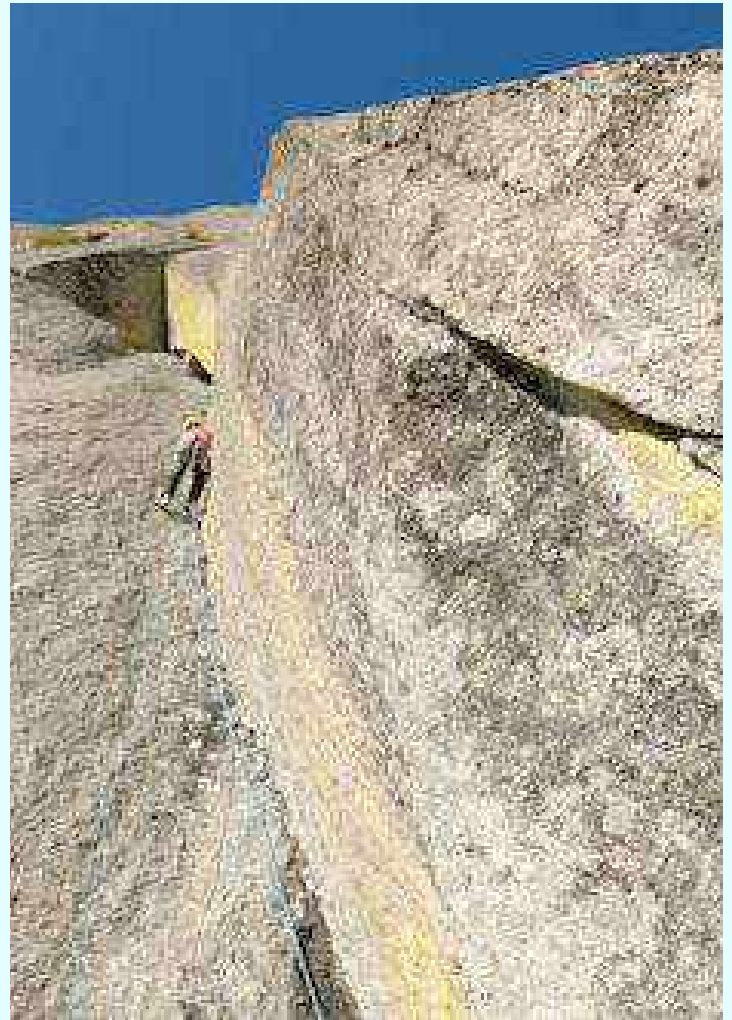
7 climbers from Team Shivdurga – Sachin Gaikwad, Rohit Vartak, Yogesh Umbre, Onkar Padwal, Samir Joshi, Bhupesh Patil and Shivam Aher were part of the team for the expedition to climb the same route. We were acclimatizing and preparing for the expedition, when our team leader, Sachin Gaikwad, came down with a bout of food poisoning and altitude sickness, and had to move to lower ground. He returned to Pune in a few days, while the rest of us continued.

Our first challenge even before attempting the climb was to reach the base of the peak and set up our base camp. In the village, we couldn't find a local guide to take us immediately. But time was of essence given that the forecast predicted bad weather soon. So, we started off by ourselves. It took us 3 days to find a viable route to the base and then another two days to haul our gear up with the help of porters.





**Rohit Vartak cruising up a thin hand jam crack on pitch 3 (40 m pitch) with Bhupesh Patil on belay.**



**Yogesh Umbre on Pitch 4 (7b), one of the hardest pitches on the route with a 35 m crack.**

Our team finally reached the base on 07th September 2021. We had to wait out the rain and could only start our climb on 14th September. We had a clear weather window for a week after that. The plan to ascend the wall was using a siege style of climbing, where we would climb and open pitches, and fix ropes till that point before heading back down at the end of the day. The next day, we would jumar up the fixed ropes and then open the next pitches on the route.

The team's plan was that Rohit, Yogesh, and I would climb and open pitches, while Onkar and Samir would manage and fix ropes on the wall below for us to ascend the next day. Shivam, our filmmaker for the expedition would stay at the base or ascend to shoot. The team rested after the journey from the bad weather window and we were ready to start the climb after a small pooja ritual.

We opened our first pitch which was led by me, followed by Rohit and Yogesh opening the next pitches. The rock was still wet from the rains. Progress was slow, considering we had to jumar up every day and open up new pitches. At times, we ascended all the way up and after climbing just a pitch, it started raining and we were forced to wind up for the day.

On pitch 13, we encountered loose rocks that led to rock fall which in turn, damaged our fixed line. Upon inspection, we found that 10 m of rope was damaged. Our clean weather window lasted 8 days, in which we covered 14 pitches, with only slight rain. Then, we had 3 days of bad weather again. We got some rest and used that time to harvest some drinking water.

The weather somewhat opened up, but it was still a little cloudy with intermittent rain. We were only 5 pitches away from the summit and had to keep up the pace. Also, we were jumaring up 500 meters every day to start the climb, and it took us 3 days to summit.





**Rohit Vartak, Yogesh Umbre, Onkar Padwal, Bhupesh Patil standing on the summit of Trishul Direct on Shoshala.**



**Team at the base of Shoshala after the ascent.**

On 27th September, after jumaring almost 650 m and climbing the last two pitches the team (Rohit Vartak, Yogesh Umbre, Onkar Padwal and I) reached the summit. Finally, after 20 days we climbed the route Trishul Direct and were on the summit. Unfortunately, after all the efforts during the expedition Samir couldn't make it to the summit as he had fallen sick that day.

It took us one whole day to wind up all the fixed ropes the next day. We wrapped up our base camp and walked back to the village safe and sound on the 29th September.

Out of 23 days in the mountains, we climbed the route in 11 days and rest of the days it was raining. In the original route, we added three extra bolts in addition to the previous 39 on the 19 pitch big wall. Two of them were station bolts, as there was a long patch of 100 m with no protection. One intermediate bolt was added on the 7th pitch since the crack was wet and filled with loose rocks and flakes.

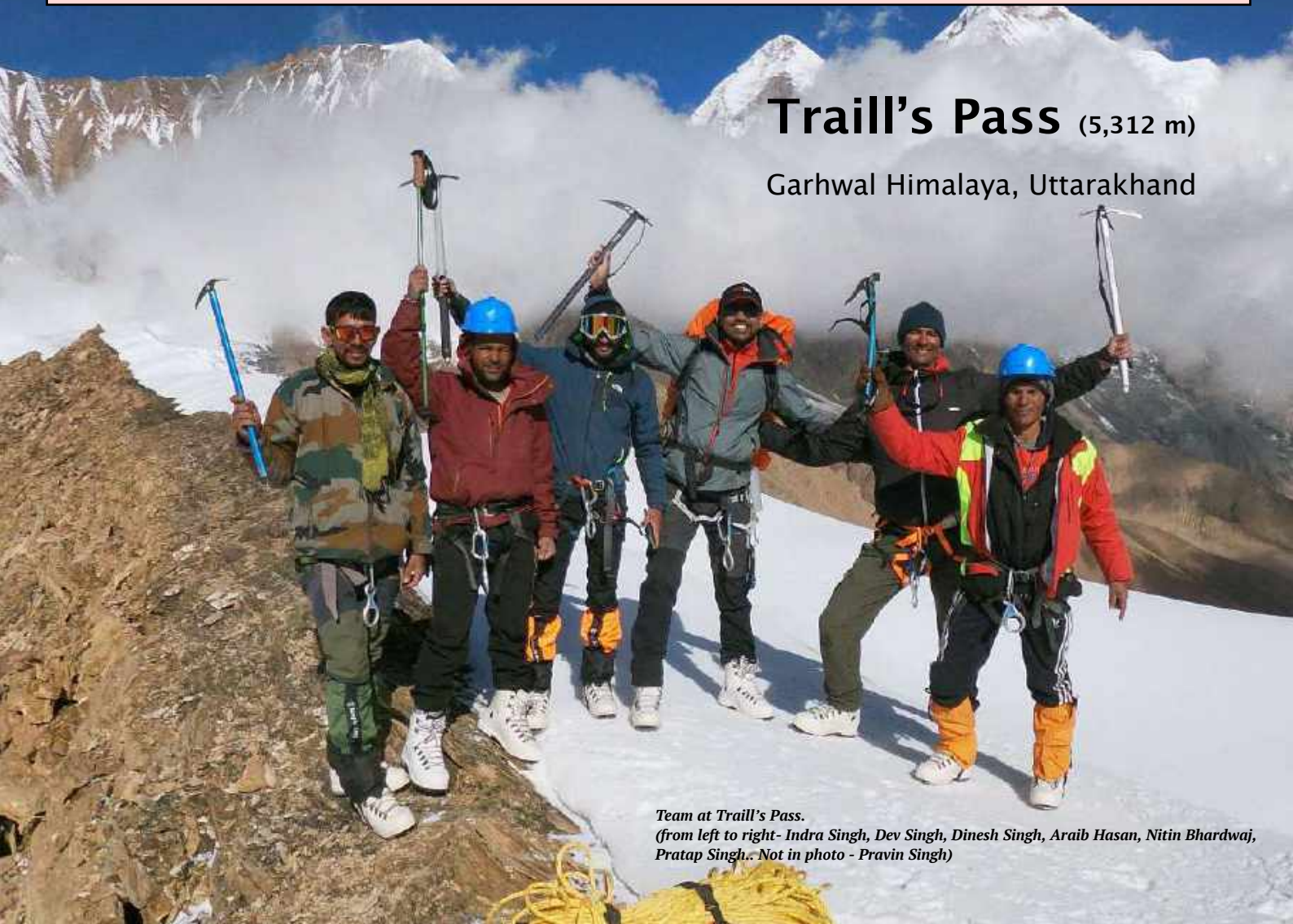
It was the first Indian ascent and the second overall ascent of Shoshala via the Trishul Direct route.

**– Bhupesh Patil**



## Trail's Pass (5,312 m)

Garhwal Himalaya, Uttarakhand



*Team at Trail's Pass.  
(from left to right- Indra Singh, Dev Singh, Dinesh Singh, Araib Hasan, Nitin Bhardwaj,  
Pratap Singh. Not in photo - Pravin Singh)*

The traverse across Trail's pass (5,312 m) to cross into Goriganga Valley is commonly referred to as a trek, which is a bit of a misnomer as the exercise poses serious mountaineering challenges. Located on the ridge that connects Changuch (6,322 m) to massifs of Nanda Khat (6,611 m) and Nanda Devi (7,816 m), Trail's Pass offers spectacular views of Nanda Devi and her distinguished neighbours. The allure of traversing from Pindar to Goriganga Valley (or Johar Valley) has been drawing people for more than two centuries now, yet the crossing of the Pass remains relatively rare feat. Since the first crossing by a local Malak Singh in 1830, it had been crossed only 19 times before our attempt. Above ABC there are a few stretches that pose formidable technical challenges and these bottlenecks become substantially more dangerous in bad weather making Trail's Pass an elusive goal. According to locals, the route above ABC (4,500 m) has also changed significantly since the earlier crossings due to fragile rocks and crevasse laden ice-field.

Our team, that included myself and Nitin Bhardwaj, along with guide Dinesh Singh and HAPs Dev Singh, Pratap Singh, Indra Singh and Pravin Singh, established base camp on the right bank of Pinder river and from there ABC (4,500 m), Camp 1 (5,380 m) and Camp 2 were set up before crossing the pass into Goriganga valley. Fixed ropes were used to climb the rock wall leading to Camp 1 atop the ridge. From Camp 1 we walked beneath Nanda Khat through massive ice-field leading up to the pass. Camp 2 was established just below the Pass. It was an easy approach from the camp to the Pass with the descent from the Pass being the only challenging part left to cross. We rappelled down the pass for a rope's length before using fixed ropes again to descend final stretch to reach into moraines and then further to the valley. Once in Johar valley we used the much frequented route of Lawa - Martoli - Rilkote - Babaldhar to reach Lilam.





ABC with Pindari glacier, Changuch (6,322 m) and Nanda Kot (6,861 m) in the background. ABC was established at an altitude of 4,500 m and was occupied the day after load ferry from Base Camp. ABC was further used for load ferry up to Camp 1 (5,300 m).



Climbing rock wall before Camp 1 (5,300 m). This rock wall poses the first major challenge along the route. 2-3 lengths of fixed rope were required to negotiate the face made up of brittle rocks. We faced rain and snow on the day of climb and there was fresh snow at the top of the wall.





Camp 1 atop the ridge. Camp 1 sits at an altitude of 5,380 m and by our measurement was the highest point. It marks the start of a large ice-field along the slopes of Nanda Khat (6,611 m).



Ice-field between Camp 1 and Camp 2. There is no clearly marked route between Camp 1 and 2, and the whole ice-field needs to be crossed roped up owing to numerous visible and hidden crevasses.





Setting up Camp 2 with Traill's Pass in the background. We had planned to camp as close to the pass as we could so that rappel station could be made on the same day. We camped just below the pass leaving only a couple of hundred meters to be covered the next morning to reach Traill's Pass.



View towards Changuch and Nanda Kot from below the Pass. Traill's Pass lies on the ridge that continues from Changuch to Nanda Khat and Nanda Devi massifs. Changuch and Nanda Kot tower over right hand flank of the ridge and provide a great view from below the pass.





View of Nanda Devi from Traill's Pass. The whole trek offers spectacular views along the way, however, Nanda Devi remains elusive till the very end. The top of the pass affords a rare view of the twin peaks of Nanda Devi which appears to be just a stone's throw away.



Descending the near vertical drop from the pass towards the end. We found a suitable rock to fix pitons and bolstered it with stakes to create another section of fixed rope before a challenging part with fresh snow over hard ice and rocks. Towards the end of the slope we had to negotiate another crevasse-laden part. Beyond that, old ice makes way to moraines which was a welcome change after tricky slopes. We camped further below in the valley next to the river.

– Araib Hasan



# Kalindi Khal (5,950 m)

Alpine style trek  
Garhwal Himalaya, Uttarakhand



*Rohit Mishra and Lalit Yadav at Kalindi Khal (5,950 m). Mt Kamet (7,756 m), Mukut Parbat (7,242 m) and Mana Parbat (7,272 m) can be seen in the background.*

In September 2020, just after the first wave of Covid-19, Lalit Yadav and I (both co-founders of Advait Outdoors) decided to test our skills of Alpine Style trekking by attempting the Kalindi Khal trek (5,950 m). The inherent challenges of the trek, being Alpine in nature (self-sustained in terms of tents, technical and administrative items, food and survival), were accentuated by the aspects of documentation and coordination while moving in the Gangotri National Park, especially being the first one in the pandemic times.

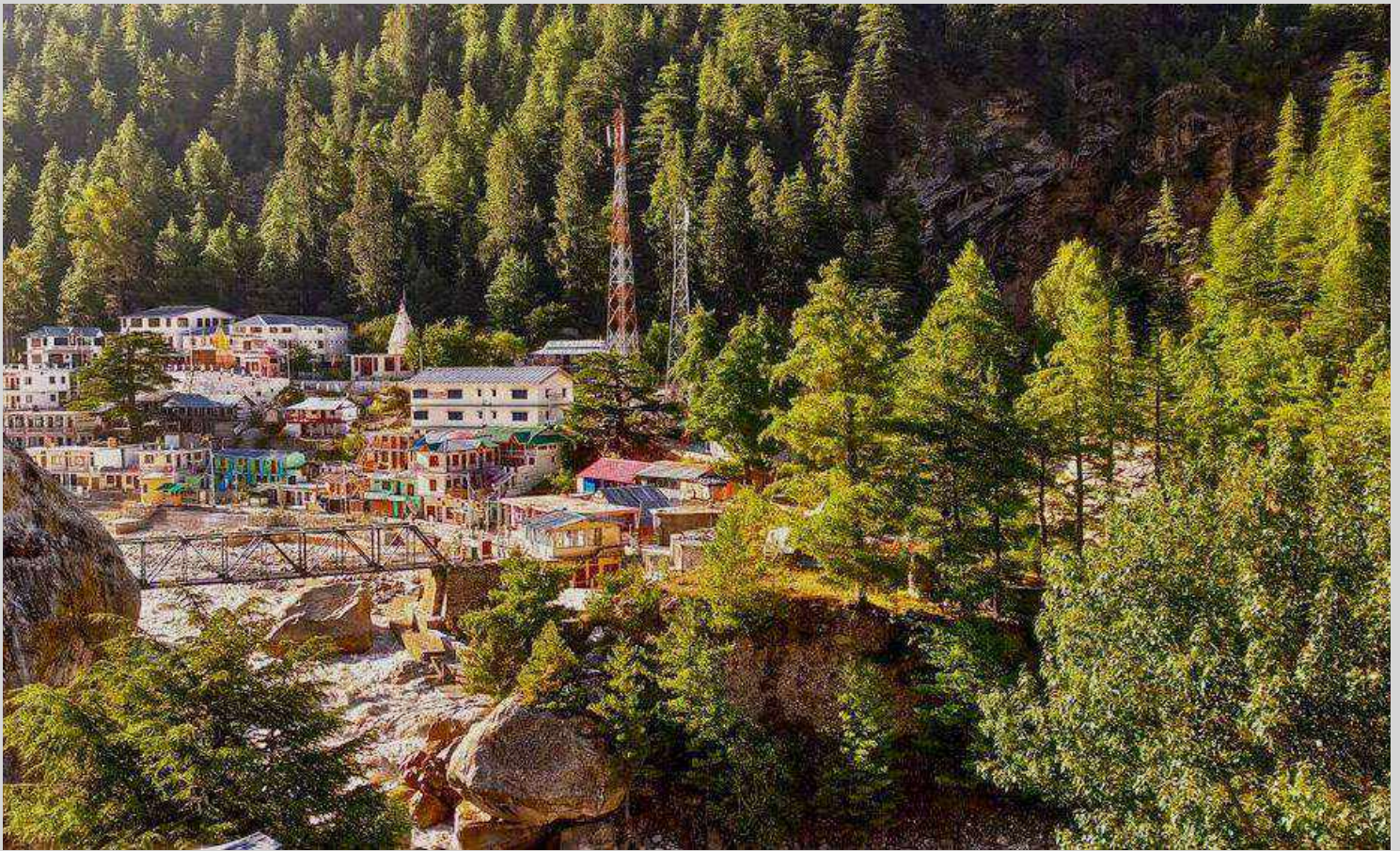
The remarkable first successful attempt of this trek was achieved by six Indian Sadhus with Dileep Singh as guide, who crossed Kalindi Khal on 22nd July 1945.

The Kalindi Khal trek is a strenuous journey mixed with a taste of technicalities, starting from Gangotri and ending at Badrinath covering an approximate distance of 100 kms in 12 days, bringing to the fore some of the most famous majestic mountain peaks of the Indian Himalaya, namely Sudarshan (6,507 m), Manda (6,510 m), Bhagirathi massif, Shivling (6,543 m), Meru (6,660 m), Bhrigupanth (6,772 m), Kedar Dome (6,832 m), Kharchakund (6,612 m), Vasuki Parvat (6,792 m), Chandra Parvat (6,739 m), Kamet (7,756 m), Mana (7,274 m), Mukut Parvat (7,242 m) and glaciers such as Gangotri (6,104 m), Chaturangi (6,407 m), Shweta (5,402 m), Kalindi (5,950 m), apart from a number of other beautiful and unknown features of nature.

The team, being first in its Alpine attempt of the challenging trek, clubbed the footfall with a fellow group attempting Kalindi Khal in guided style for moral support, especially with the nuances brought on by the pandemic.

For the complete story of the trek, read the blog at : <https://advaitoutdoors.com/blog.html>





Apart from the grim railway station of New Delhi and an hour and a half of tiring documentation at Dehradun railway station, the major welcoming factor was turning NEGATIVE in RT PCR test, setting the ball rolling for a serene yet lonely drive to Gangotri (3,100 m). Acclimatisation emerged as an even crucial aspect due to lack of high altitude area exposure for a gap of seven months clubbed with restricted outdoor activity amidst Covid times. A holy dip in the cold current of Bhagirathi river, bag packing and acclimatization walks in Gangotri and we were all set for the ensuing task.



The existing plan of the team to hit Nandanvan was modified as the old direct route was now in a state of disuse due to a landslide and a new route from the left bank of Bhagirathi river was now to be crossed by a trolley bridge to Bhojbas.





Our campsite at Bhojbasa : our investment in the tents of Salewa-Sierra Leone 2, turned out to be fruitful, being compact, light-weight and meeting the Alpiners' requirements.



Climate change is REAL! Our beliefs were re-affirmed seeing the dynamic recession of the Gaumukh snout. As the old route till Nandanvan was washed off because of the landslide, the new route on Gangotri Glacier had to be adopted despite being risky with numerous big and loose boulders.





We pitched our tents facing Mt Shivling (6,543 m) to make sure that one wouldn't miss the satiating view of this beast at the first light. The breathtaking view of Mt Shivling and Kedar Dome (6,832) on the left with the morning breakfast from Nandanvan would have made any trekker's morning a delight.

Our Tip : we would recommend Alpinists to carry dehydrated food instead of MTR ready to eat meals as they are heavy, costly and difficult to digest on repeated consumption, with the former being cheap, light-weight and consumable even for longer durations. We would also recommend Alpinists to take stock of the condition of their shoes as the route after Vasuki Tal (4,978 m) is full of boulders and moraines.



An hour of walking from Khadapathar and one would descend on the Chaturangi glacier. A short span of trek would lead to a munificent, wider and clearer view of Mt Satopanth (7,075 m). Having crossed the Chaturangi glacier and traversed to the next corner of Shweta glacier, one would encounter a number of tarns and crevasses, till one reaches the next campsite located on moraines near a small tarn.





A beautifully crafted unnamed glacier enroute Kalindi Khal summit from base camp. Despite fair weather and a clear sky, it took us about 3 hours from the base camp to the top with a crevasse ridden route to negotiate.



The perfect view of Mt Kamet (7,756 m), Mukut Parbat (7,242 m), Mana Parbat (7,272 m), neighbouring peaks, two lakes and two giant snow fields from the top. The team descended to Raj Padav by crossing a glacier field full of numerous crevasses, having covered the two days route in a single day. The team trekked for about 24 km directly from Raj Padav to Ghastoli in super cold weather, strong winds and snowfall, crossing two streams in between, reaching Joshimath by midnight.



# Lahaul – Spiti Through the Lens of a Forest Ranger

Himachal Himalaya

– Shiv Kumar



**S**hiv Kumar, Deputy Ranger in Lahaul & Spiti, is fittingly a passionate wildlife enthusiast and a highly talented wildlife photographer. He joined the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department (HPFD) when he was 19 years old. Since then, he's had several years of "adventures and challenges". His profession and passion have dovetailed magnificently, as his regular trekking forays into the wild have afforded him sightings of a spectacular array of birds, having recorded around 160 avian species from the region, and mammals, some of them rare and extremely elusive, including the Snow Leopard.

Widely renowned as the Snow Leopard Man, he is the first person to document the Snow Leopard in his range in Udaipur, Miyar Valley, and has been working for the conservation of wildlife, especially Snow Leopards, in Lahaul & Spiti since 2010. From 2016 he even began making professional documentaries of Snow Leopards. He has worked with various institutions including the Wildlife Institute of India, Zoological Survey of India, Nature Conservation Foundation and foreign researchers.

In May this year, Shiv Kumar was conferred with the prestigious India Biodiversity Award 2021, conferred on him by the Govt. of India for the conservation of Snow Leopard in Lahaul & Spiti.

This photo feature is a glimpse into Life in the Mountains of Lahaul & Spiti, Himachal Himalaya, through his camera lens as he discharges his duties as a Forest Ranger.

You can follow Shiv Kumar on Instagram here : [www.instagram.com/wildlahaulspiti](https://www.instagram.com/wildlahaulspiti)





This is the first photograph I ever took of a Snow Leopard in Lahaul valley. I had committed myself to tracking Snow Leopards in Lahaul region. It took me two years to capture this image with camera traps. After this stroke of good luck, I could get 4 more individual live sightings in Lahaul.



I got this shot of a Leopard Cat on my DSLR camera trap, which was actually placed to photograph a Snow Leopard. This was my first image of a Leopard Cat. Camera trap data revealed that Leopard cats share the same habitats as Snow Leopards.





I captured this male Himalayan Ibex as he was crossing the main nullah (stream) in Miyar valley, Lahaul. The Himalayan Ibex is one of the main preys of the Snow Leopard in Lahaul region. In the last two decades their population has increased in the valley due to collective conservation efforts by the Forest Department and local communities. During winter months one can see large herds of Ibex inside villages and along the roadside.



I captured this image of the Himalayan Blue Sheep at Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary. In Spiti region, Blue Sheep and Ibex, both angulate species, are found in good numbers.





This image is of a male Asian Paradise Flycatcher. I captured this Flycatcher mid-flight in Kullu Wildlife Sanctuary.



I took this shot of the Himalayan Wood Owl in my backyard in Udaipur. They are nocturnal birds of prey and I was able to take this photograph at night.





This migratory shepherd from Chamba is on his way to Alpine pastures. Every year hundreds of shepherds reach Lahaul to graze their livestock for two and a half months – usually from mid-June till end of August, through various passes including Rohtang, Kugti, Chobia, Kalicho, Darati and Madhua Pass. The Forest Department facilitates their movement by issuing permits.



The centuries old Mata Mrikula temple, dedicated to Mahishasur Mardini Maa Kali, is believed to have been built by Vishwakarma himself, the divine Architect. I clicked this image one night during the Halda Festival celebrations as it began to snow, sometime during the second half of January.





The recently discovered C/2020F3 NEOWISE Comet was visible in Lahaul, and indeed the rest of India. Due to rainy weather I missed several chances to capture this comet, but managed this photograph somehow one night.



I took this shot of Kaza as I was returning from Kibber Wild Life Sanctuary, after a Snow Leopard expedition. We reached Kaza and decided to spend the night there. Fortunately it was a beautiful full moon night.

– Shiv Kumar



## Planning an Expedition in the Indian Himalaya

### A Familiarisation for Foreign Climbers & Expeditions

## Climbing in the Indian Himalaya without Authorisation from the IMF : A Serious Concern

**FACT 1 :** The Indian Mountaineering Foundation, New Delhi oversees all aspects regarding mountaineering on Indian peaks. It is the sole national institution responsible for regulating & promoting expeditions in the Indian Himalaya. As one of its functions, the IMF grants permits to expedition teams, Indian or Foreign.

**FACT 2 :** All mountaineers, Indian or Foreign, desirous of climbing a peak in the Indian Himalaya need to seek permission from the IMF regardless of whether you are going on your own or through a tour operator. This includes fulfilling the requisite paperwork requirements, ensuring timely payment of peak fees and getting a Liaison Officer assigned, in case of foreign expeditions.

**FACT 3 :** When a team/individual climbs in the Indian Himalaya without obtaining permission from the IMF, the team/individual are undertaking an **illegal/unauthorised activity** against the directives of the Government of India and the IMF, with the Ministry of Home Affairs placing such violations under the ambit of National Security, as the Indian Himalaya constitute the border regions of India and considered extremely sensitive.

### FACT 4 : Penalty and Caution

Any member of an expedition/tour operators (if expedition is organised through an agency), if found climbing or attempting to climb a peak without permit from IMF or violating the environment protection rules, shall be liable to be debarred from undertaking any mountaineering expedition in India for a period ranging from 2 to 5 years and/or a fine ranging from two to four times the amount of handling charges for the permit or both. In addition, they may be dealt with/prosecuted under the relevant laws.

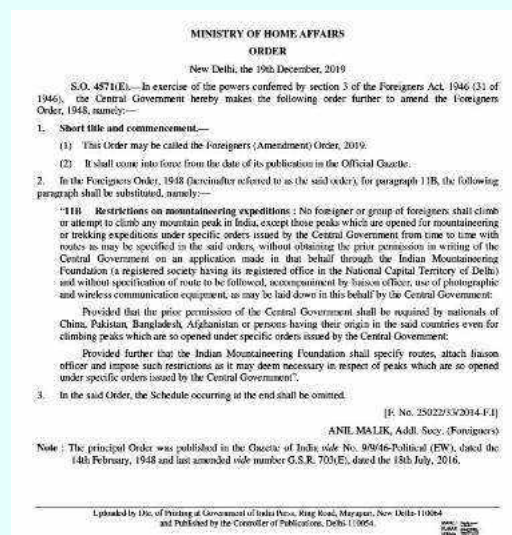
### 2019 AMENDMENT ORDER TO FOREIGNERS' ACT (1946)

***The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued an order stating that no foreigner or group of foreigners shall climb any mountain peaks in India, except those opened for mountaineering, without the government's approval. The order named the Foreigners (Amendment) Order, 2019, states that any foreigner or group of foreigners can climb peaks only after obtaining permission from the Centre by applying through the Indian Mountaineering Foundation. It also says that foreigners have to adhere to all rules set by the Centre with respect to routes, liaison officer, use of photographic and wireless communication equipment.***

***All unauthorised climbing in India by foreigners is a violation under the Foreigners Act and can result in arrest and prosecution.***

**FACT 5 :** Not only is such clandestine climbing illegal, it reflects a callous attitude and irresponsible conduct, as it also jeopardises the safety of all concerned. The situation is worrisome more so as some of the senior mountaineers and responsible organisations have also violated this simple protocol inspite of the fact that permission today can be obtained today online from the IMF in minimal time on the IMF website.

For more details and to apply visit : <https://www.indmount.org/IMF/expeapp>.





## IMF Everest Massif Expedition 2021

### 26th March - 11th June 2021

The landmark Everest Massif Expedition organised by the IMF and undertaken by a select team of 14 young climbers chosen by the IMF for this highly challenging mission, returned victorious having created history.

Braving extreme weather conditions and outburst of Covid in the Nepal Himalaya, this young team of 14 Indian mountaineers (8 men and 6 women hailing from all walks of life) scaled the challenging Pumori (7,161 m), Lhotse (8,516 m) and Everest (8,848 m) during a single expedition lasting two months.

The team also became the first Indian team to attempt the very challenging Nuptse (7,861 m), but had to call off the summit attempt due to dangerous snow conditions and unprecedented weather.



The expedition has been path breaking in many ways :

- The first ever team in the history of climbing in the Everest Massif, to attempt 4 major peaks – Nuptse (7,861 m), Pumori (7,161 m), Lhotse (8,516 m) and Everest (8,848 m) – within a single expedition lasting 2 months.
- This was the smallest Indian team comprising of only 14 climbing members to attempt 4 major mountains, an average of 3.5 climbers per mountain, ensuring minimum environmental foot print and human impact on the already fragile environment of these hard pressed mountains.
- The expedition was undertaken during the very challenging pandemic times of Covid 19 and faced the full onslaught of Cyclones Yaas and an extended fallout of Tauktae. There were no mishaps or injuries. The expedition did not have a single case of Covid.
- First Indian team to attempt Nuptse (7,861 m) and reached within striking distance of the summit from the north face of the mountain.
- First Indian ascent of Pumori (7,161 m) – the ‘Killer Mountain’, from the north west ridge of the mountain. All 4 members of Team Pumori summited, including the first Indian woman.
- Mt Lhotse (8,516 m) was successfully scaled from the West face by both members of Team Lhotse, with the lady climber becoming the second woman to summit.
- Mt. Everest (8,848 m) was climbed from the traditional South East ridge of the mountain with all 4 members of Team Everest summiting.
- Mt Lobuche (6,119 m) was climbed by all team members during the acclimatisation phase.
- The expedition further contributed its bit by undertaking cleaning of the Khumbu Glacier, despite the Covid threat and adverse weather conditions.



Image courtesy: The Himalayan Times

Media reports: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/everest-massif-expedition-bad-weather-triggered-by-yaas-tauktae-forces-indian-climbers-to-abandon-mt-nuptse-summit7355487/>, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/woman-mountaineer-from-himachal-among-first-to-summit-mount-pumori-of-everest-massif-7312744/>, <https://nenow.in/north-east-news/union-minister-kiren-rijiju-flags-off-everest-massif-expedition-2021-mountaineers-to-scale-4-peaks.html>, <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/indian-mountaineering-foundation-team-successfully-scales-mount-pumori>



# Announcing IMF Mountain Film Festival 2022

The IMF presents the 5th edition of the IMF Mountain Film Festival, an opportunity to see a variety of spectacular short adventure films, all originating from India, showcasing the amazing adventure opportunities across India and offer adventure film makers a platform to share their story. The IMF MFF has a competition section bringing the best adventure films shot in India or the Indian Himalaya, as a platform to receive recognition and win cash prizes.



***The IMF MFF 5th edition is now open for Entries. You are invited to submit your film for pre-screening consideration.***

**Festival Theme : Adventurous Sports, Wildlife and Culture.**

**Festival Format :** An expert Jury will select a list of films for exhibition. At the end of the festival the Jury will announce Cash Awards and Certificate of Recognition to select films.

**Festival Date & Venue :** 26 & 27 February, 2022 at the IMF Centre at New Delhi.

**Cash Prizes for Winners :** Grand Prize for Rs. 50,000  
Supplementary award for Rs. 25,000

**India Tour 2022 :** All selected movies will be a part of the India Tour for exhibition.

**Last Date for Entries :** 31st December 2021

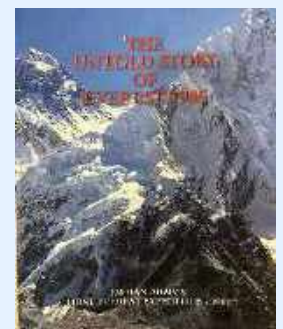
For Queries, contact Festival Director, **Maninder Kohli** at [mountainfilmfestival@indmount.org](mailto:mountainfilmfestival@indmount.org) or [maninderkohli@gmail.com](mailto:maninderkohli@gmail.com) or you can call on +919810009564. For more details and to download the Festival Brochure, visit : <https://www.indmount.org/IMF/oneNews?type=2&newsId=133>.

## Book Release of “Untold Story of Everest 1985”



On 18th October a Book Release ceremony was conducted at the IMF, revealing the book “Untold Stories of Everest 1985” written by adventurer, photographer and author Colonel A. P. Tanwar, a fascinating account of an expedition conducted 36 years ago to Mt. Everest.

It was the first expedition by Indian Army personnel to Everest, undertaken in the post monsoon period of 1985. It was unique as it had 3 different leaders, yet success evaded this team, with 4 of its members resting in eternal peace on the mountain. The expedition’s records, reports and films were confiscated and remained locked away for many decades, to be finally brought out by Colonel D. N. Tankha, then Director, Army Adventure Cell. To quote Col. Tanwar, “In mountaineering expeditions, very rarely is attempt exceeded more than once to attain the summit. And any second attempt is almost always after a first successful one. But here the members launched no less than full 6 attempts to anyhow attain the peak. 25 years on, in its silver jubilee anniversary, a “seminar cum memorial service” was arranged to pay homage to the departed members...it was during that memorial service that the dormant log books surfaced.” The book is based on the log book records and the account of Col. Prem Chand, the leader of the ill-fated expedition.



“Untold Stories of Everest 1985” will be available for purchase on Amazon shortly.



# IMF conducts Clean Himalaya Expeditions in 2021

IMF teams conducted Clean Himalaya Expeditions under the “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” mission in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and West Bengal Himalaya from 08th to 18th January 2021. The expeditions were undertaken on the following three popular trekking routes :

**HIMACHAL PRADESH :** Beaskund Area – Dhundi, Ajani Mahadev, Phatru – Solang Slopes & Hamta Region – Sethan, Pandu Rope, Jabri and Chhika region.



**UTTARAKHAND :** Dodital, Agoda, Manji Sangam Chatti – Dayara Bugyal, Barsu, Barnala, Nagtal, Raithal, Dhinara Camp before Dayara and surrounding villages of Garhwal Himalaya.

**WEST BENGAL HIMALAYA :** Sandakphu – Phalut – the most popular trekking area in West Bengal Himalaya. The team covered 55 – 65 kms trek area.

## Tenzing Norgay Museum Revamped

IMF's Museum Committee, under the direct supervision of the Chairman, Col Anil Goth, with the assistance of Ms Tiya Chatterji, Museologist, has completely redesigned the layout of the Tenzing Norgay Museum, a treasure trove of information on the Indian Himalaya, mountaineering in India, its evolution over the years and the mountaineering heroes.



The museum, currently spread over two levels, includes sections on maps from various Himalayan states of India, climbing & trekking routes, photographs of mountain life, panoramas and dioramas, as well as a display of mountaineering equipment and memorabilia.

This redesigning has been done to preserve the existing theme and exhibits, and to ensure their serviceability and upkeep for viewing, while awaiting the construction of the new museum building. This may take 2 to 4 years for completion after commencement of work since the pandemic.

## Manikandan wins Silver at Para climbing World Cup

The IFSC Para climbing World Cup 2021 was held at the Sender One Climbing Gym in Los Angeles, California, USA, from 9th to 10th October. A total of 57 athletes, representing 14 countries and four continents, participated across 11 categories. The categories were based on type of disability and amount of functionality, the latter being ranked 1–3, 1 being low functionality and 3 being the highest.



Indian paraclimber Manikandan Kumar participated in the men's RP2 category, where he and America's Brian Zarzuela ended with a tie for second position, winning a silver medal. This was Manikandan's 19th medal till date.



## Sikkim bans bottled water effective January 2022

The state of Sikkim has decided to ban packaged mineral water from January 1, 2022. Travellers must take note, and not enter the state with any packaged mineral water bottles.

The Sikkim government has been working towards helping the environment heal, and save its natural resources. The state administration is of the view that Sikkim is blessed with natural resources that provide fresh and good quality drinking water. Packaged drinking water bottles will be replaced with natural resources after the ban, which is a healthier alternative.

The state government is making arrangements so that the supply of packaged drinking water from the outside can be stopped. Sikkim has already banned packaged water bottles in certain parts, such as Lachen in North Sikkim. It is also a 100 percent organic state, hence, all of its farmlands are certified organic.



Image courtesy: WWF India

For credits and information: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/travel-news/sikkim-has-decided-to-ban-packaged-mineral-water-starting-january-1-2022/as86724064.cms>

## World's highest EV charging points inaugurated in Himachal and Ladakh



In a bid to promote sustainable environment, the world's highest Electric Vehicle charging stations have been inaugurated in Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, especially along Manali – Leh route, catering to two, three, and four-wheeler vehicles.

There are now around 18 EV charging stations in the Manali-Leh route, with 15 of them at 10000 ft to 14000 ft, situated on the world's highest motorable passes. The goal of setting up these charging stations is to convert at least 50 per cent of the vehicular traffic to EVs in the next 4 years. With these, passengers will be able to charge their vehicle overnight at key locations.

With increased tourism in Ladakh and Lahaul Spiti, air pollution caused by fossil fuels has significantly increased in the region, leading to a lot of damage to the environment. And since switching to the electric vehicle will help reduce pollution levels, these charging stations will prove to be a boon not only for the travellers, but also for the region.

For credits and information: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/travel-news/ladakh-gets-worlds-highest-ev-charging-stations-at-a-height-of-14000-ft/as86840449.cms> and <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/worlds-highest-electric-vehicle-charging-station-inaugurated-in-himachal-pradeshs-kaza/articleshow/86473978.cms?from=mdr>



## Astronomical Observatory established in Bhimtal, Uttarakhand

Starscapes Experiences Pvt Ltd, a chain of observatories in the country, has launched its second public observatory in Uttarakhand. The Stargate Observatory is located in Bhimtal and has already received rave reviews. Their first public observatory was set up in Kasauni.

The new observatory with state-of-the-art equipment will offer tourists a holistic astronomical experience, with the Night Show being the observatory's main attraction. Experiences on offer also include sun observations and audio visual shows of the night sky. The observatory will also offer merchandise related to astronomy.



From stargazing safari to astrophotography, Stargate Observatory Bhimtal will offer an integrated astronomy experience to travel enthusiasts.

For credits and information: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/travel-news/uttarakhand-is-now-home-to-a-new-astronomical-observatory/as87059386.cms>

## Himalayan Heli Services maps the Himalayan Foothills by helicopter



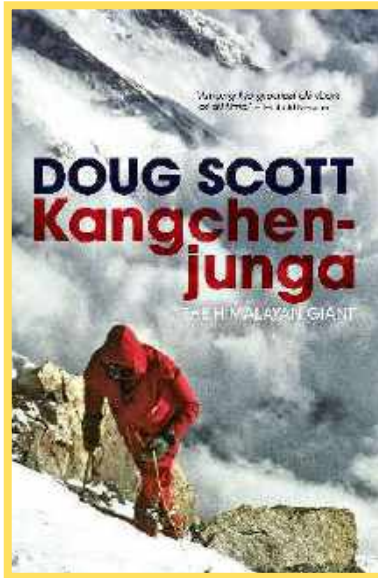
Himalayan Heli Services provides services including airborne geophysical surveys, underslung external load operations, helicopter tours, powerline stringing, aerial filming, search-and-rescue, and disaster response.

The company began performing airborne geophysical surveys in 2010, and has subsequently flown more than 350,000 kms (215,000 miles) at low level performing the operation.

Last year, it performed the first aerial lidar (light detection and ranging) survey in Ladakh, which included a "first", and then Himachal Pradesh. The project was completed using a single Airbus AS350 AStar, which carried the 44-pound (20-kilogram) lidar sensor as well as two pilots (the aircraft was converted into a dual pilot configuration for the flights). In Ladakh the team worked from four different bases: Sindhu Ghat (3,230m), Rumtse (4,360m), Pang (4,510m), and Tsokar (4,815m). The company finished its flying in Ladakh on Sept. 4, after about 60 flight hours. Then work began in Himachal Pradesh on the second half of the project. The project was completed on Sept. 19, 2020, by which time the team had flown about 110 hours with the lidar.

For credits and information: <https://verticalmag.com/features/mapping-the-himalayan-foothills-by-helicopter/>





### **Kangchenjunga** The Himalayan Giant

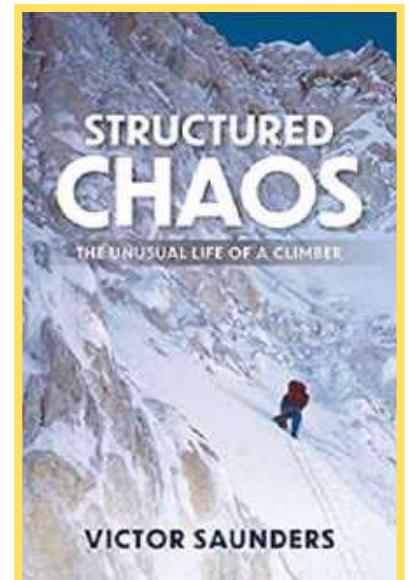
In 1979 the legendary British alpinist Doug Scott made the third ascent of Kangchenjunga from the north, as part of a four-man team featuring some of the greatest mountaineers in history: Scott, Joe Tasker, Peter Boardman and Georges Bettembourg. It was the first time a mountain of this scale had been attempted by a new and difficult route without the use of oxygen and as a stripped-down expedition with minimal Sherpa support, no radios and largely self-financed. Completed before his death in 2020, and edited by Catherine Moorehead, Kangchenjunga is Doug Scott's final book. Scott explores the mountain and its varied people – the mountain sits on the border between Nepal and Sikkim in north-east India – before going on to look at Western approaches and early climbing attempts on the mountain. Kangchenjunga is Doug Scott's tribute to this sacred mountain, a paean for a Himalayan giant, written by a giant of Himalayan climbing.

**by Doug Scott**  
**Vertebrate Publishing \* July 2021 \* Rs. 2,038/-**

### **Structured Chaos** The Unusual Life of a Climber

Renowned British mountaineer and award winning author Victor Saunders follows up his acclaimed books 'Elusive Summits', 'No Place to Fall' and 'Himalaya : The Tribulations of Vic & Mick' with 'Structured Chaos' – an account of his experiences through the early years of climbing, his transition from architect to mountain guide in Chamonix, his climbs in Karakoram and Himalaya, the significant ascents of Chamshen and Sersank, and then follows it all up with issues common to growing older. He tells his stories with a dash of humour, focussing a lot on friendship and the things that really matter in life: being in the right place at the right time with the right people, and making the most of the view.

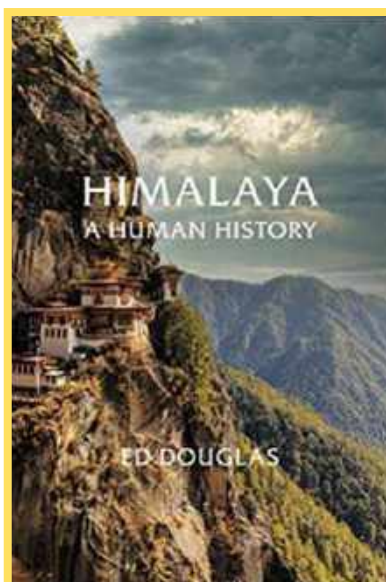
**by Victor Saunders**  
**Lulu Press \* April 2021 \* Rs. 984.34/-**



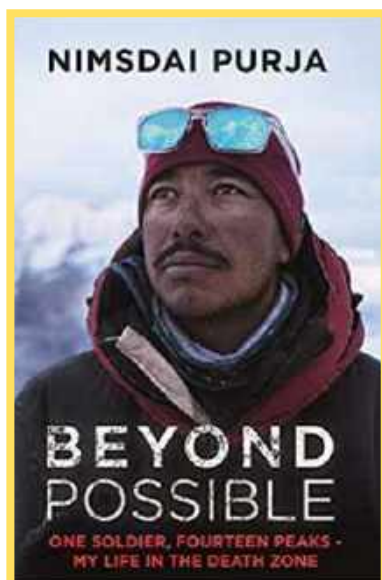
### **Himalaya** A Human History

Award winning writer Ed Douglas has placed his passion for the Himalaya on paper for the last twenty-five years, including a biography on Tenzing Norgay. He now brings out an epic story of peoples, cultures, and adventures among the world's highest mountains. For centuries, the unique and astonishing geography of the Himalaya has attracted those in search of spiritual and literal elevation: pilgrims, adventurers, and mountaineers seeking to test themselves among the world's most spectacular and challenging peaks. In this landmark work, nearly two decades in the making, Ed Douglas makes a thrilling case for the Himalaya's importance in global history and offers a soaring account of life at the "roof of the world."

**by Ed Douglas**  
**Bodley Head \* November 2020 \* Rs. 646/-**







## **Beyond Possible** **One Soldier Fourteen Peaks**

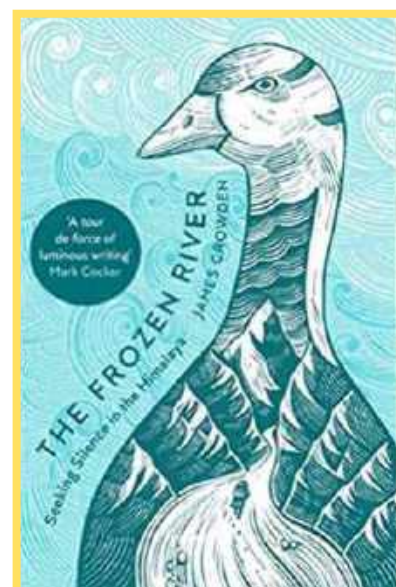
"As a kid in Nepal, I went barefoot because my family had nothing. Then against all odds, I became the first ever Gurkha soldier in more than 200 years of history to join the Special Boat Service.....But elite combat wasn't enough. That's where my next project came in, something nobody thought was possible – to climb all fourteen "death zone" mountains in seven months." In *Beyond Possible* Nimsdai Purja tells the story of his life before his recent epic achievement of leading the team that scaled K2 in winter. He reveals how leadership, a willingness to learn, integrity and collaboration are essential qualities behind the world's greatest mountaineering feats. Nimsdai is the first man ever to summit all 8000m 'Death Zone' peaks in less than 7 months, and this book reveals the man behind the climbs – how his early life in Nepal and Special Forces training made him the person to go beyond possible.

**by Nimsdai Purja**  
**Hodder & Stoughton \* November 2020 \* Rs. 476/-**

## **The Frozen River** **Seeking Silence in the Himalaya**

In 1976 James Crowden left his career in the British army and travelled to Ladakh in the Northern Himalaya. *The Frozen River* is his account of the time he spent there, living alongside the Zangskari people, before the arrival of roads and mass tourism. James immerses himself in the Zangskari way of life, where meditation and week-long mountain festivals go hand in hand, and silence and solitude are the hallmarks of existence. *The Frozen River* is a fleeting glimpse of an older way of life, and the author makes it clear that the last 40 years have not been kind, with global warming leaving nearby peaks devoid of snow in the summertime and villages forced to relocate to new valleys. An important book for its time!

**by James Crowden**  
**William Collins \* October 2020 \* Rs. 974/-**

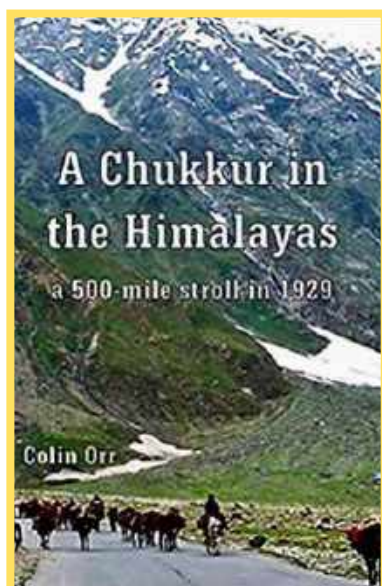


## **A Chukkur in the Himalayas** **A 500 Mile Stroll in 1929**

Colin Orr, the chronicler of the Penrose family, presents the sixth book on the family – an account of an epic trek undertaken by a middle-aged married couple in 1929, Brigadier John Penrose and his wife Elizabeth, based on their diaries.

The couple had walked 500 miles through Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh to Kashmir, climbing mountain passes up to 17,500 feet high. Their old photos are included as well as many modern ones. Welcome to "Dev Bhoomi", the Abode of the Gods.

**by Colin Orr**  
**Lulu Press \* April 2021 \* Rs. 984.34/-**







# Apex

Indian Mountaineering Foundation  
Newsletter \* Volume 12 \* November 2021



*Rappelling down from Traill's Pass with view of valley below.  
Image Courtesy: Araib Hasan.*

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