

Apex

Indian Mountaineering Foundation
Newsletter * Volume 1 * January 2015



Photo courtesy Sujoy Das : North face of Siniolchu (6891m)



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Presenting 'Apex' - the Newsletter of the IMF

On behalf of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation I have great pleasure on the launch of Volume 1 of 'Apex', the IMF Newsletter.

Over the years, the Indian Mountaineer has played an important role in recording reports of key climbs in the Indian Himalaya. The expectation is that the IMF Newsletter will support this effort by conveying recent developments and news of interest to the adventure community. Apart from recent expedition and trek reports, 'Apex' will carry news from the IMF, general news of interest to the adventure community, a section on future climbing focused on a particular area and information on recent book releases. The ongoing focus of the Newsletter will be the Indian Himalaya.

The key role of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation continues to be to encourage mountaineering expeditions, exploration, allied adventure activities and sport climbing in the Indian Himalaya. At the IMF we feel that the Newsletter will support this objective, as it will reach a larger audience of adventure enthusiasts in India as well as around the world who can now be connected with the IMF.

Wish the readers a Happy New Year and safe climbing.

With best wishes,

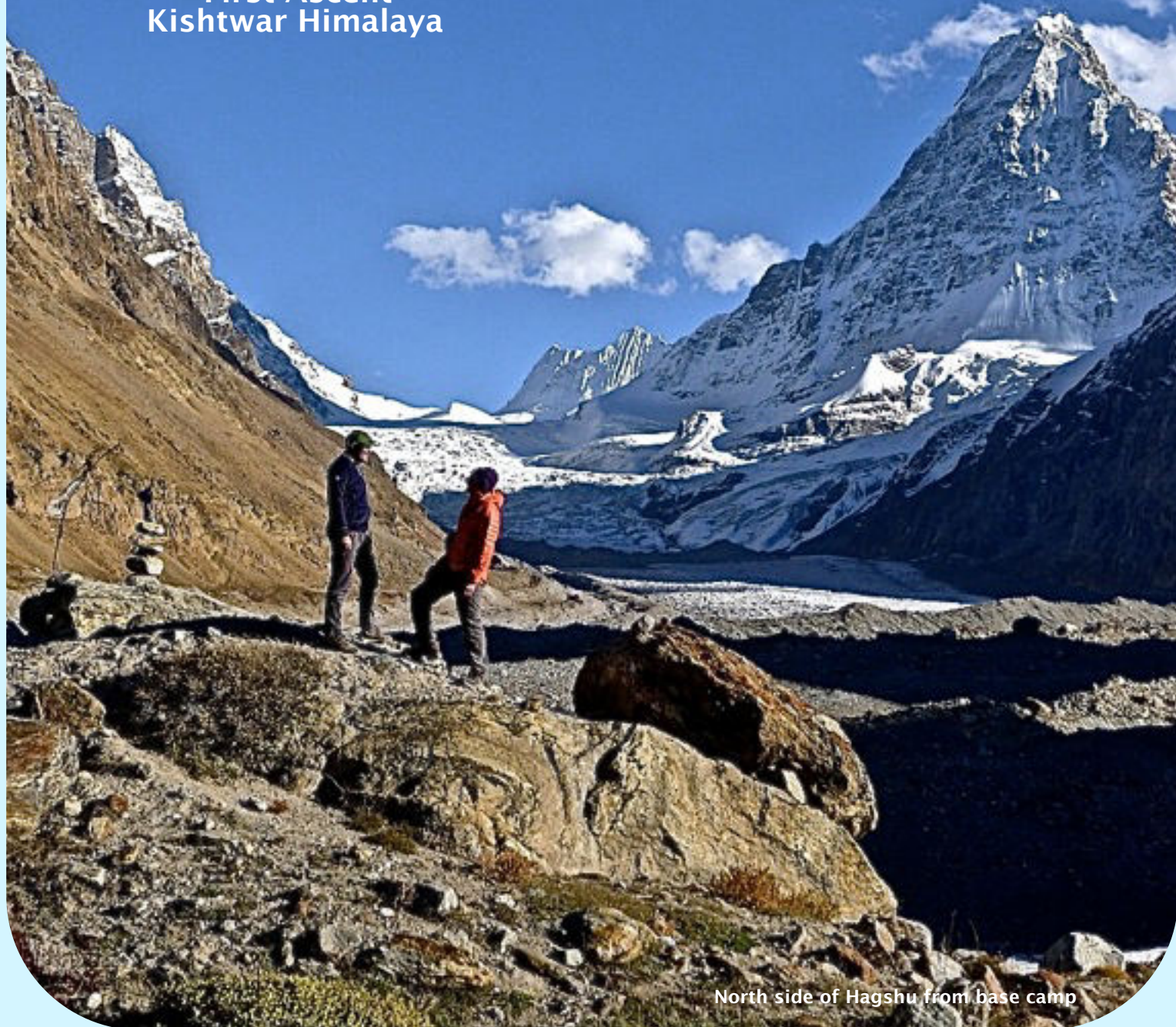
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Indian Mountaineering Foundation

Hagshu NE Face (6515m)

First Ascent
Kishtwar Himalaya



North side of Hagshu from base camp

Mick Fowler gives an account of his ascent of Hagshu (6515m), the highest peak in the East Kishtwar region of J&K. This was a first ascent by the northeast face of the peak and Mick talks about the many aspects of this challenge.

Hagshu has fascinated me ever since 1989, when I first saw its striking profile on the horizon while climbing in the Kishtwar region. After sighting it on three further trips to Kishtwar and Pangi Valley, the unclimbed north face finally rose to the top of my and Paul Ramsden's list of objectives in 2014.

In January we booked the face for the post monsoon season, but shortly before departure we learned that a Slovenian team had just been granted an overlapping permit for the same face. They were a week or so ahead of us and were already acclimatising when we reached base camp.



Mick Fowler leading during the difficult technical climb on day 3, Hagshu NE face

Ultimately, when we were ready to climb, they were already established on the unclimbed face we had dreamed of. Naturally we were disappointed. After months of looking forward to a specific climb, it was difficult to build enthusiasm for a new objective. After much deliberation and binocular gazing, we decided we would attempt the northeast face. It looked a fine climb even though we would compromise the sense of adventure, inevitably having to join the Slovenians' footprints for our planned traverse of the mountain over the north summit and down the south east ridge.

We left base camp on October 1 and started up the face the next day. Hard ice meant that we climbed one at a time from the start, but we enjoyed excellent and

unexpected bivouac sites, which enabled us to pitch our little tent every night but one. A steep band at two-thirds height gave the most difficult technical climbing. Thereafter, we had an exposed sitting bivouac on the edge of the north face and joined the Slovenian's tracks in the morning of our fourth day, above the bergschrund.

The weather was perfect as we rock-climbed the summit buttress in the sun and continued to the north summit. We camped for one night here before continuing along the, easier than expected, ridge to the main summit of Hagshu and then down the, harder than expected, south east ridge taken by the Polish first ascensionists in 1989.



Paul Ramsden, climbing partner of Mick Fowler on the ridge between the north summit and the main summit of Hagshu peak.

The weather finally gave out as we dropped onto the huge expanse of the upper Hagshu glacier, which we descended in a white-out for some way, before arriving back at our base camp on October 7. We discovered that a Himalayan Brown Bear had been regularly visiting base camp. Much as it was a pleasure to see such a rare and beautiful animal, its attention became a nuisance and, with Hagshu climbed, we decided to gain credit at home and work by leaving a few days earlier than planned.

We found the Hagshu base camp to be an idyllic spot giving access to several interesting unclimbed objectives. For us though the trip was marred by the difficulties, stress and potential danger caused by overlapping permits being issued for the same unclimbed, technical objective.

It is to be hoped that the Indian Mountaineering Foundation can introduce changes so that this kind of situation does not arise again.

- Mick Fowler

IMF Newsletter Editorial Team Comment :

The IMF has conducted an enquiry into the permit overlap issue raised by Mick Fowler and has implemented a new process to ensure no overlapping takes place between expeditions in the future.

Cheepaydang (6220m)

First Ascent Kumaon Himalaya



Cheepaydang at dawn from Kuthi

Martin Moran recounts his team's first ascent of Cheepaydang (6220m) – the Peacock Peak, in the Adi Kailash range, Eastern Kumaon. Adding to the overall challenge was the bad quality of the underlying rocks, rising steeply as crack-less slabs. The team concluded that despite these drawbacks, the range presents excellent prospects for further exploration.

A multi-national team, led by British mountaineer Martin Moran, visited the Adi Kailash range of Eastern Kumaon in September–October 2014. This massif is wedged between the Kali Ganga, Darma Ganga and Kuthi Yankti valleys, and between the Nepalese and Tibetan borders. The range contains eight peaks exceeding 6000m in altitude.

Although a road is slowly being driven up the Kali Ganga gorge, the approach trek takes three days. The team set a base camp at 3990m in the Nama valley 5km SW of Kuthi village. From here they reconnoitered the extensive Nama Glacier cirque. The weather was fine but conditions on the south sides of the peaks were abnormally dry. Fierce séracs and icefalls deterred many approaches, and their interest focused on the impressive peak on the north side of the glacier, known to the local Kuthi people as Cheepaydang – which means Peacock Peak.

Cheepaydang has three summits, the central being the highest, with a knife-edge linking ridge and a tremendous 1000m north wall. Examining the south face from the Nama Glacier, the team discovered a slanting snow-ice couloir, which offered a line of weakness. Martin Moran, Michael Page and Gordon Scott ascended the gully system with snow/ice to 60deg and mixed climbing to Scottish IV, and established a summit camp/bivouac at 6160m, on the crest of the SW Ridge.

On the following day, they made a short ridge traverse of Alpine AD standard to the summit, which was measured at 6220m in height. The team descended the gully system the following night, making eight abseils of 60m from ice threads to gain easier ground. They returned to base camp on October 6. The ascent rated as Alpine Difficile (D) in overall difficulty.



Holy Mt. Kailash (6638m) and Sangthang (6480m) at sunset



**Final pitch to summit looking down
Rama Glacier to Panchchuli (6904m)**



**Martin on the summit of
Cheepaydang**

Apart from administrative complexity, a significant deterrent to mountaineers is the bad quality of the underlying rock. These mountains are composed of crumpled sediments of the Tethys series, pushed up from the Tibetan plateau to form the top layers in the building of the Himalaya. These rhythmically layered mudstones, shales and dolomites dip steeply at

angles, as steep as 40 or 50°, and present crack-less slabs to the north, while their south flanks are shattered and loose. Notwithstanding this drawback, the range offers much challenge for further exploratory climbing.

- **Martin Moran**

Manirang (6593m)

Ascent from South Ridge Spiti Valley



Sunset on Mt Manirang

Sayantan Dutta recounts his climb of Mt Manirang (6593m), the highest peak in the Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh. The 6 member team chose to climb from the challenging South ridge of the peak.

Manirang peak (6593m) lies on the border of Lahaul & Spiti and Kinnaur districts of Himachal Pradesh. Our expedition to Manirang began by first reaching Maane village (3500m), our road head from Manali via Kaza. On August 17, we trekked onwards to Sojana (our Camp-I), and from there to Yong Lake (4000m), our transit camp on the way to base camp. It was a gradual ascent, fit for the first day's trek. Next day we reached Sopana (4550m), our base camp. The route was more of a ridge-to-ridge climb. Base camp was beside Manirang nala and we could see a grand view of Mt. Manirang from the base camp.

On August 21, we started the steep climb for Camp-I. The entire route was scree zone and full of broken loose rocks. The next day we went for load ferry to Camp-II, which

was on the Manirang Pass. The route was through a boulder zone with a glacier patch at the end.

On August 24, we ferried loads to summit camp. The last part was a gradient of almost 75-80 degrees. We had to jumar up the entire stretch. It was full of loose rocks, which were falling every now and then. In fact Pradip was hit by one such falling rock. Fortunately the injury was not that severe.

Our plan was to occupy summit camp the next day, but it was very windy and clouds were coming up from the Ropa Valley. Fortunately the wind reduced and we decided to move. There was hardly any place to pitch the second tent and we had to cut ice to make room for it.



On the south ridge of Manirang, heading towards the final rock tower



Jumaring up to summit camp through broken loose rocks

We started for the summit early next morning. The ice was perfect for crampon movement. We then jumared up on fixed rope. Soon we reached the south ridge and the final rock tower looked so close! We crossed three crevasses on the way. Climbing the rock tower was the biggest challenge for us. There was possibility of getting hurt by loose rocks. But we managed to climb at a steady pace, unhurt. At around 11 a.m. Riju, Ashish, Pradip, Phurba, Passang and Dawa reached the summit of Mt Manirang.

Wind was blowing at a very high speed and clouds were coming up from the east. From the summit we could recognize Leo Pargial (6816m) and Reo Pargial (6794m). Towards north we could see Gya (6794m), Gyaga (6400m) and other peaks. We quickly started our descent to Camp-II. Next day we returned directly to base camp and onwards to Kaza to celebrate our success.

- Sayantan Dutta

Green Lakes (4935m)

North Sikkim



Porters walk towards the Zemu galcier (5600m) with the huge wall of Simvu (6812m) in front

Sujoy Das relates his team's trek to the magnificent Green Lakes(4935m) in North Sikkim. The rest camp presented them with spectacular views of Kangchenjunga, Siniolchu, Little Siniolchu, Simvu, the Twins and Nepal peak

Controlled by a rigid permit system that sometimes takes months, the northeast base camp of Kangchenjunga in the Zemu Valley, North Sikkim, has remained off-limits to trekkers and climbers for many years now. Our group of seven was lucky to get a permit to visit in autumn this year.

We drove from Gangtok to Lachen and then to the trailhead Zema (2850m), 5 km from Lachen. Landslides have devastated the old trail from Zema to Tallem (3250m) and the new trail follows the bank of the Zemu Chu river. In parts, there is a lot of landslide debris and crossing these sections, clambering over boulders, can be a difficult task.

The camp in Tallem is in the middle of a forest clearing with an abundant source of water. The next day, we crossed a temporary log bridge over the Lhonak Chu, as the permanent bridge had been washed away by flash floods in September. The forest was exceptionally beautiful in the autumn, with ferns, creepers, moss and other high altitude plants of many colours creating a kaleidoscope on the trail.

Jakthang (3663m) is three hours away and there is an old broken hut there, which was used by our porters to cook and sleep. It snowed heavily at Jakthang, but the next morning was sparkling clear.



**Simvu (6812m), Kangchenjunga (8586m) and Tent peak (7365m),
an hour's walk east of Green Lakes base camp.**

The climb to Yabuk (3950m) continued through rhododendron forests, which must be a feast for the eyes during summer. Yabuk also had a dilapidated two-storey hut, which was again requisitioned for cooking and shelter. The usual afternoon mist funneled its way up the valley and the whiteout conditions cleared only at night.

The first hour of the trail from Yabuk took us to a small pass from where, for the first time, we were able to look at Siniolchu (6891m), Little Siniolchu and Langpo peak (6543m). As we neared rest camp (4450m) at dawn, the valley finally opened up and we were greeted with a spectacular view encompassing Siniolchu, Little Siniolchu, Simvu (6812m), Kangchenjunga (8586m), the Twins, and Nepal Peak (7180m), in a vast amphitheatre overlooking the Zemu glacier (5600m).

From the rest camp, the track to Green Lakes is not always defined and there is a lot of walking along a dry riverbed, over rocks and scree. The trail comes to a point, which overlooks the glacier at a jaw dropping distance, and then swings west to reach the Green Lakes plain, at the edge of the moraine.

Sadly, the Green Lake, which was a fair sized pool when I visited in 1987, has now dried up and, next to it, there is a small muddy pool which is used as the water source. It is possible that, in a few years, no water will be available at Green Lakes, probably due to the effect of climate change and global warming.

Opposite the camp, across the glacier, are two shapely unnamed peaks, possibly around 6500m or so, which would make great climbs from the valley. The northeast face of Kangchenjunga dominates the horizon, along with the long ridge running down to the Zemu Gap (7780m), first climbed by Bill Tilman in 1938. I wondered whether the northeast face had ever been climbed in a direct route.

The rigid permit system discourages climbers and trekkers from venturing into this valley, which would otherwise have been a tremendous base for climbing expeditions and adventure treks in the region.

- Sujoy Das

Future Climbing

Ralam Valley
Kumaon Himalaya



North view from Chaudhara (6510m) – approach from Yangchar glacier area

The captivating Ralam valley in the Kumaon Himalaya presents many interesting possibilities for climbers and trekkers, as Anupreet Borkar, 2nd-in-command, Indo Tibetan Border Police, discovered during his team's ascent of Mt. Chaudhara (6510m), in which ten of the members summited.

In May this year, the Northern Frontier of ITBP conducted an expedition to a very challenging and rarely climbed peak, Mt Chaudhara (6510m). The peak is located in the Ralam valley, ahead of Munsiyari in the Kumaon Himalaya. A total of 10 team members reached the summit of Chaudhara. This expedition gave us an opportunity to see first hand the region around Ralam village, and assess future climbing opportunities.

From the summit of Chaudhara, one can see Spot (6058m) and Rajrambha (6537m) towards the south. Nanda Devi peak (7816m) and Ralam village are visible to the west. Yangchar glacier lies in the north. Sui Tilla (6373m) and, further away, Chering We (6559m) can be seen towards the northwest. Far away towards the east, Adi Kailash (6191m) can also be spotted.

While the nearby Milam valley is most visited due to the popularity of the Milam glacier and Nanda Devi East base camp treks, the Ralam valley presents equally exciting prospects for high altitude trekkers, glacier enthusiasts and mountaineers. Chaudhara and Rajrambha are the two famous peaks in the area. Both the peaks are adjacent to each other and offer various levels of challenges for mountaineers, with the approach to Rajrambha from west face being perhaps easier in comparison to Chaudhara.

Yangchar glacier (also erroneously called Ralam glacier) offers challenges that glacier enthusiasts would love to explore. Sui Tilla has been climbed only once before as per available information and provides sufficient challenge to the climbers.



View of Sui Tilla (6373m), north north east of Chaudhara. A rarely climbed, highly challenging peak in the remote Kumaon Himalaya.



Distant view of Nanda Devi (7816m), west of Chaudhara. The Ralam valley presents just as exciting prospects for high altitude trekkers, as the Nanda Devi east base camp trek.

Hasling top near Lingurani is another peak that would interest avid climbers. Also, the inter-valley pass from Ralam to Milam villages is an exciting high altitude trek that would satisfy trekkers looking for more challenging routes to cross.

Ralam valley is scenic and beautiful with the valley opening up before Kildam. The area has rich flora and fauna including the Himalayan bear, Ibex, Brahm Kamal flower, mountain fox, Monal bird, Long Tailed Shrike, Rufous Bellied Niltava, Himalayan weasel, tailless mouse and snow pigeons. The area is also famous amongst the local villagers for Yarsa Gambo or 'keeda jadi', an important source of livelihood for them.

Several other medicinal plants are also available in the area like the 'kooti' herb.

The Indian Mountaineering Foundation recognized ITBP's successful climb of Mt Chaudhara with the IMF Climbing Award for 2014, in the institutional climb category, on November 8. Though ITBP has hundreds of climbs to even higher mountains to its credit, numerous Everesters and ace mountaineers, as well as many distinguished awardees, yet this award is special as it is constituted by the IMF - the apex mountaineering body in India.

- Anupreet Borkar

IMF announces Climbing Awards for 2014

The IMF Climbing awards for the year 2014 were announced on November 8, 2014. These are team awards with three distinct categories. Through these awards the IMF would like to recognise and encourage exceptional climbing, especially technical and alpine style, by Indian mountaineering expeditions and exploratory treks across the Indian Himalaya every year. The IMF would also score expeditions on the standards exhibited in the areas of climbing ethics and ecology conservation, reinforcing the belief that the journey is as important as the destination. Another requirement is the quality of expedition reporting, which needs to be precise and accurate as well as include maps, coordinates and photographs.



Excellence in Mountaineering in the Institutional category

Winner : ITBP Northern Frontier Division

Expedition : Mt. Chaudhara (6511m),
Kumaon Himalaya

Award Recipient : 2nd-in-command
Anupreet Borkar



Excellence in Mountaineering in the Self-supported category

Winner : Rassa Glacier Expedition

Expedition : Rassa Glacier (two first ascents
above 6000m), Jammu & Kashmir

Award Recipients : Divyesh Muni and Rajesh
Gadgil



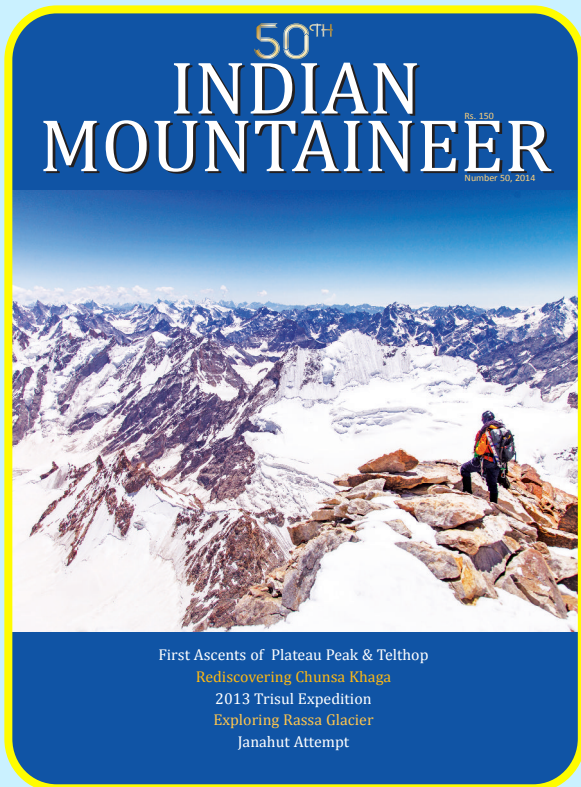
Outstanding Exploratory Trek

Winner : Chunsa Khaga Expedition

Expedition : Chunsa Khaga, Uttarakhand
and Himachal Pradesh

Award Recipients : Ashutosh Mishra and
team

IMF Releases 50th Edition of Indian Mountaineer



On November 7, the IMF released the 50th edition of **Indian Mountaineer**, the Journal of the IMF. This edition contains a host of expedition and trekking reports as well as information on all key developments of the year from the Indian Himalaya. Some of the articles featured include:

Plateau Peak, The First Ascent – Devraj Dutta

Hagshu and First Ascent of Peak 6035m and 6191m – Bryan Hylenski

Nanda Devi East Expedition 2014
– Anindya Mukherjee & George Rodway

First Ascent of Telhop – Chris Horobin

Janahut Attempt – Michael Bass

Exploring Chunsu Khaga – Ashutosh Mishra

The online version of the Indian Mountaineer journal is now available for an amount of Rs. 100/-. Orders can be placed at orders@indmount.org.

Climbathon 2015

IMF Announces the 3rd Edition of its Premium Training Program

IMF announced the schedule for the 2015 edition of Climbathon, its Alpine Mountaineering Leadership Programme. Climbathon is a platform that brings together practising mountaineers from India and abroad with the objective of broadening and deepening their **“mountain sense”** through mutual sharing and learning, under the mentorship of experienced instructors.

Climbathon 2015 details:

- 24 day programme from **August 4 to August 27, 2015**.
- Will be conducted at **Bara Shigri glacier** in Lahaul & Spiti, Himachal Pradesh.
- 17 days spent on the mountain.
- Registration begins from **January 18, 2015** and ends on March 15, 2015.

View the brochure and download the application form at the IMF website:
www@indmount.org

IMF launches Affiliate Membership

The IMF has announced the opening of its Affiliate Membership and is encouraging mountaineers, trekkers and adventure lovers from all across India to get connected through this membership. This new platform would help enhance the profile of adventure sports in India, while also adding to the overall skill level associated with the sport and sharing information on important aspects like safety and environment issues. Affiliate members can also look forward to numerous privileges at the IMF.



Affiliate Member benefits:

- ★ Receive copy of the IMF Journal 'Indian Mountaineer' and 'Apex'.
- ★ Join members only platform and share material on recent expeditions and treks.
- ★ Get invited to various talks, events and training programs across location.
- ★ When in New Delhi, access the IMF equipment store, the library and use the accommodation at IMF Centre.
- ★ Avail special discounts on using the IMF climbing wall.
- ★ Receive special offers for purchasing outdoor equipment, books and publications.
- ★ Be a part of IMF committees and regional chapters, and help support the growth of adventure sports in India.
- ★ Receive advisories on safety, environment and subjects of common interest.

Visit the IMF website www.indmount.org to view the detailed membership brochure and apply online.



The IMF East Zone hosts the 20th National Sport Climbing Championship in Kolkata, West Bengal (December 4 to 7, 2014)

Organisers : IMF East Zone Committee, West Bengal Mountaineering and Adventure Sports Foundation

Venue : 17 meter high artificial wall at Salt Lake Stadium Kolkata

Format : Competitions in Lead, Speed and Bouldering disciplines

Categories: Men, Women, Junior Boys and Girls, Sub-junior Boys and Girls.

Winners Lead Climb : Men – Havildar Somnath Shinde (Services), Women – Siddhi S. Manerikar (North)

Winners Speed : Men – Praveen CM (South), Women – Shanti Rani Devi (South)

Winners Bouldering : Men – Vicky Ashok Bhalerao (West), Women – Chea Amelia Marak (South)

Overall Team Champions : South zone

Best Performer of the Meet : Havildar Somnath Shinde (Services)

Most Promising Climber of the Meet : Master Suraj Singh (East zone)



IMF Planning Grand Celebrations for the 50th Anniversary of the 1965 Everest Climb



THE 1965 TEAM EVEREST

Front Row (L to R): Captain (Dr.) A.K. Chakravarti, Captain J.C. Joshi, Mr. Gurdial Singh, Lt. Col. N. Kumar, Captain M.S. Kohli, Mr. Nawang Gombu, Maj. Avtar Singh Cheema, Mr. C.P. Vohra, Maj. B.P. Singh, Mr. Sonam Gyatso.

Rear Row (L to R): Dr. Lala Telang, Havildar C. Balakrishnan, Maj. Mulk Raj, Mr. Bhagirath Rana, Maj. Harsh Bahuguna, Mr. Gurcharan S. Bhangu, Sherpa Sirdar Ang Tshering, Mr. Sonam Wangyal, Mr. Harish Rawat, Asst. Sherpa Sirdar Phu Dorji, Mr. Ang Kami, Captain H.P.S. Ahluwalia.

Celebration plans include : Felicitation functions and receptions in New Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata and Kathmandu, throughout 2015.

Attendees : About 10 members from the 1965 team expected to attend.

Commemorative Releases :

Special volume of the book **Nine Atop Everest** by Capt. M.S. Kohli to be released.

Golden jubilee stamp, souvenirs and collector's items to be released.

Special Issues : **Indian Mountaineer** and **Apex** to release commemorative Golden Jubilee issues.

Policy on Satellite Phones Imminent

In response to a long-standing request from the IMF and the adventure community in India, the Govt. of India is all set to announce its policy on the use of satellite phones in remote regions of the Himalaya to coordinate rescue. An in-principle approval has already been given and a policy announcement is expected soon from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

For credits and full article : http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-09-17/news/54024904_1_satellite-phones-adventure-tourism-adventure-tour-operators-association

Road Building Overdrive in the Himalaya

The Govt. of India has decided to ease restrictions and fast-track the construction of roads in the remote Himalayan regions. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is constructing around 80 new roads, translating into 6000 kms, in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The BRO is also working to complete the 8.8 kms long Rohtang pass tunnel, which would make Lahaul-Spiti and Ladakh more readily accessible, regardless of weather.

For credits and full articles : <http://www.newindianexpress.com/editorials/Build-Roads-to-Secure-Himalayan-Borders/2014/09/16/article2432624.ece> and http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/digging-over-in-half-of-rohtang-tunnel-jaitley-114072100724_1.html

Early warning system for River Basins in the Himalaya

The Central Water Commission (CWC) is developing a mathematical model as an early warning system for predicting imminent floods or landslides in the river basins of the Himalaya. The model would be able to assess and predict the extent of damage and, therefore, forewarn residents and visitors to particular areas, as well as prevent unnecessary panic.

For credits and full article : <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Mathematical-model-coming-up-to-forewarn-of-floods-landslides/articleshow/41922889.cms>

HMI celebrates Diamond Jubilee

The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, the premier Indian institute for promoting adventure activities in the Himalaya, celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in grand style, from November 13 to 15. HMI was instituted in 1954 at Darjeeling by the then Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, in commemoration of the summit of Everest by Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary. The diamond jubilee celebrations included cultural performances, workshops and other events.

For credits and full article : <http://www.maamatimanush.tv/articles.php?aid=864>

Adventure@Mechukha

Adventure Festival
Arunachal Pradesh



Mechukha town in the distance

The 2nd edition of the 3 day adventure festival, held annually at Mechukha, West Siang District of remote Arunachal Pradesh, concluded on November 9 this year. Dr. K Romeo Meetei, in-charge Adventure Cell, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, gives a glimpse into the festival and an overview of the Siyum to Mechukha trek.

Adventure@Mechukha was launched last year by the Adventure Cell, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, with a view to promote adventure tourism in the state, one of the least explored and isolated regions in the Northern Himalaya. With undulating grasslands punctuated with waterfalls, snow-capped peaks, and the Yargyap Chu river running through the valley, it is the perfect adventure playground. Also, Mechukha is an ideal window, for visitors and tourists, into the way of life of the tribes of that area.

One of the events organised during A@M was a 120km long trekking expedition from Siyum (in the Upper Subansiri district) to Mechukha (in West Siyang district) over the Tikuk pass (3658m).

Till mid-20th century the Siyum – Mechukha trade route was part of the established ancient barter practice between Tibet and the tribes in the region. But after independence the route closed. A group of 17 people, including Everesters from the state, trekked through this historic and adventurous trade route taking 5 days.

The group was flagged off on November 2, from Daporijo, reaching Siyum that afternoon, where they learnt traditional survival techniques from the village elders. The next halt was at Rai (1280m), the last village on the Siyum–Mechukha route. Rai village which, today lacking even basic amenities, used to be at the centre of all the trade with Tibet before its occupation.



A barely accessible village en route the trek from Siyum to Mechukha, once part of the trade route with Tibet. Villagers depend on ancient survival techniques even today.



Tikuk Pass (3658m) – the boundary between Upper Subansiri and West Siang districts.

Onwards from Rai village, a steep path entered dense jungle area. Within 6 hours of trekking the team had climbed from a height of 1280m to 3048m. The forests transformed from rainforest to alpine as the route climbed higher. Night camp was on the banks of a turbulent river. It rained whole night.

The trek then moved onto a new path, as landslides had demolished the bridge to the old, established route. This path was steep and through a dense jungle, and later merged back with the old route. It started snowing and within a span of hours, the height, the temperature, the flora and fauna changed visibly.

The team split into subgroups for the trek in the snow. Soon they crossed Tikuk pass (3658m), the boundary between Upper Subansiri and West Siang districts, and descended to 1828m, to camp for the night. The view was spectacular and Mechukha was clearly visible in the distance. Next day the team reached Mechukha, to be received by the organisers and officials from Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh.

The team members felt that the Siyum-Mechukha trek is perfect for enthusiastic adventurers.

- Dr. K. Romeo Meetei



Participants of the inaugural Basic Mountaineering Course at NIMAS

NIMAS Announces Schedule for 2015

The National Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (NIMAS) was established in 2013 in Dirang, West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh, by the Government of India. NIMAS is the first and only Institute in India which not only provides training in mountaineering, but also in aero and aqua adventure.

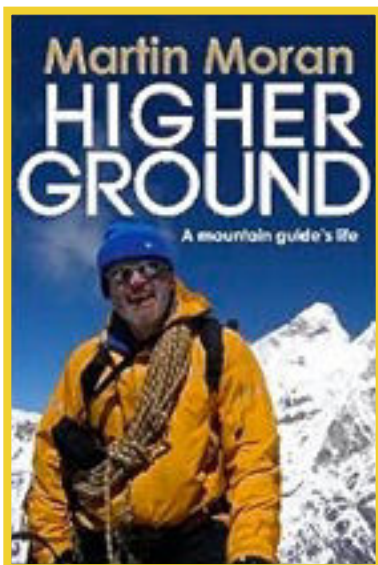
The West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh, with China (Tibet) to its north and Bhutan to its west, lies in the Eastern Himalaya with some challenging peaks like Kangto (7060m) and excellent white water stretches, in one of the most challenging terrains in India.

At present NIMAS has a training team of 20 highly experienced mountaineering Instructors, 10 of whom are Everesters. Courses have been designed to train amateur mountaineers and adventure enthusiasts, as well as to provide innovative training programs for employment in the field of tourism and adventure sports in India.

Through 2015 NIMAS has scheduled several training programs including:

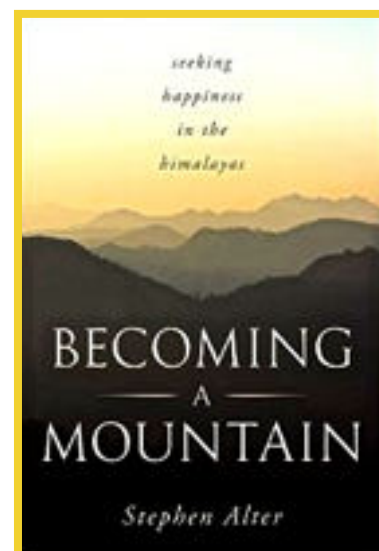
- ◆ Basic Mountaineering Courses
- ◆ Advance Mountaineering Course
- ◆ Basic White Water Rafting and Kayaking Courses
- ◆ Mountain and Trek Guide Course
- ◆ Home Stay and Eco Camp Development Course
- ◆ Basic Paragliding Course
- ◆ Basic Paramotoring Course
- ◆ Adventure Courses for School/College Students
- ◆ Disaster Search and Rescue

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<http://easternskymedia.co.in/tag/national-institute-of-mountaineering-allied-sports/>

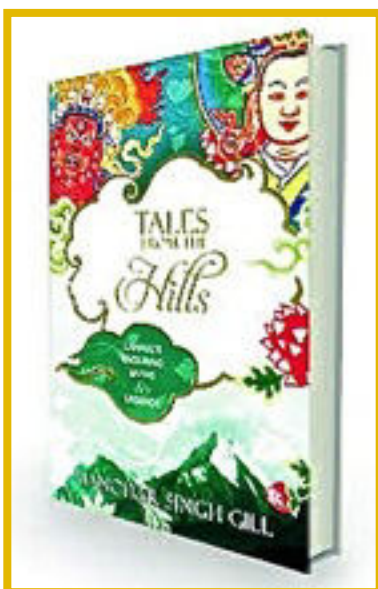


In **Higher Ground** Martin Moran recalls his earlier years when he became a Mountain Guide, and shares details of some of his most memorable climbs, initially in Scotland and later across the Alps. The book also contains details of 6 expeditions conducted by him in the Indian Himalaya as well. One of the many interesting chapters in the book is titled 'Shipton's Lost Valley' which describes Martin and his team's high altitude trek from Badrinath to Kedarnath, which he had undertaken in 1988 with John Shipton, Eric Shipton's son.

Stephen Alter was raised by American missionary parents in the hill station of Mussoorie, in the foothills of the Himalaya, where he and his wife, Ameeta, still live. Their idyllic existence was brutally interrupted when four armed intruders invaded their house and viciously attacked them, leaving them for dead. This book is his account of a series of treks he undertook in the high Himalaya following his convalescence, to Bandar Punch (the monkey's tail), Nanda Devi, the second highest mountain in India, and Mt. Kailash in Tibet. **Becoming a Mountain** describes both a physical and a spiritual journey that explores the healing power of high places.



Dr. M. S. Gill, ex-President IMF, ventures into the rarified world of djinns, witches and rakshasas in his new book **Tales from the Hills – Lahaul's Enduring Legends and Myths**. The isolated barren majesty of Lahaul and Spiti has, for centuries, lent itself effortlessly to stories about such fantastic supernatural beings. Dr. Gill, having spent the initial years of his career as the District Commissioner – Lahaul and Spiti, is enviably one of those very few outsiders with an intimate knowledge of the folklore from that remote region. That, combined with his obvious love of the mountains, makes this book an extremely compelling read.



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