

Apex

Indian Mountaineering Foundation
Newsletter * Volume 3 * May 2016



Photo courtesy Matija Jost : Descent from the summit of Khumchu Ri.



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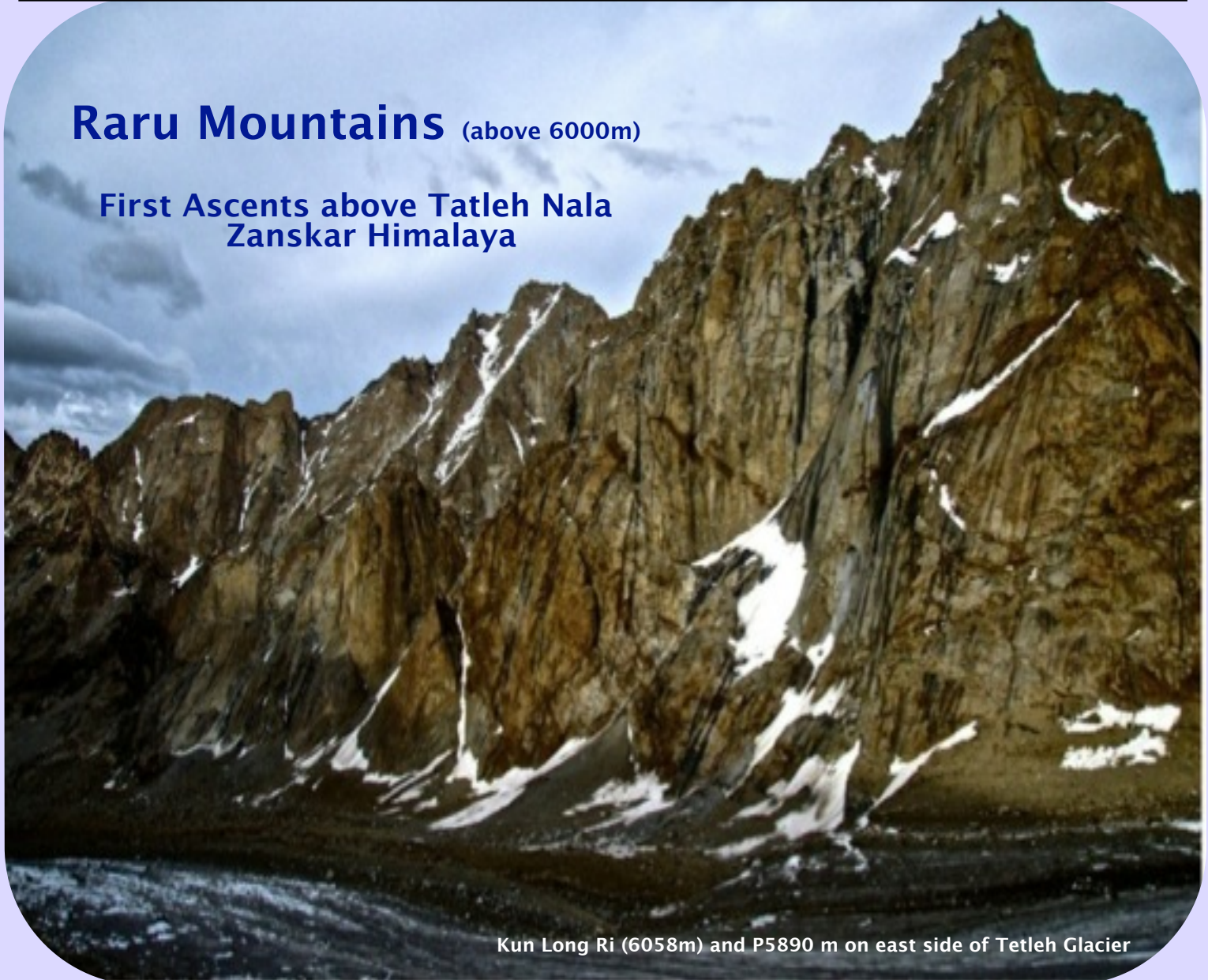
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Raru Mountains (above 6000m)

First Ascents above Tathle Nala Zaskar Himalaya



Kun Long Ri (6058m) and P5890 m on east side of Tathle Glacier

Slovenian alpinist Matija Jost gives an account of his and Anastasija Davidova's ascents of Khumchu Ri (6064m), Kun Long Ri (6058m) and Ri Pok Te (6210m) in the Raru valley, Zaskar region of J&K. All three were first ascents of the peaks and Matija talks about the many aspects of this challenge.

Inspired by the 2009 Kyoto Zaskar expedition, we traveled to Raru Mountains in summer 2015. The Raru valley is located in the Ladakh region of northern India. Raru village lies south of Padam (capital of Zaskar) and can be reached by car. South of the massif is Miyar Glacier. In this rarely visited area we set our base camp in the most western valley of the massif in Tathle Nala. We were second team in the valley after the Imperial College Expedition in 2011.

For acclimatization we climbed the virgin mountain (6064m) on west side of the valley. The shape of the summit looked like a bird's beak, so we named the peak Khumchu Ri (Khumchu means beak in Ladakhi language and Ri means peak). We graded the climb on rocky

southeast ridge and higher up snowy east ridge alpine D+. The attractive peak on east side of the Tathle valley seemed an appropriate goal for us after we felt acclimatized enough. Left part of the west face of the peak looked safe, rocky part of the north ridge above it was a riddle, and continuation to the summit supposed to be straightforward.

In changeable weather, it took us 4 days (from August 13 to 17) of climbing up our route and one more day for walking back to our base camp. We believe we made the first ascent of the peak and named it Kun Long Ri (6058 m). Length of the climb is 1500m, height difference from beginning of climb to



Ri Pok Te 6210m : From east to west, VI-, TD+ED-, 1200 m)

the summit is 750m, grade is about TD+ (rock up to 5+ UIAA grade, ice up to 65°).. We thought overall We named our route “Happy Journey” as an answer to common question in India, when you communicate with locals. After Anastasija’s troubles with toothache and her return to base camp, we still had plenty of time to try another objective. The east face of Ri Pok Te (6210 m) attracted us, which was safe and suitable even though the pillar didn’t lead directly to true summit.



Kun Long Ri 6058 m (TD+, 1500m)



Looking down the west face of Kun Long Ri

Climbing was on very high quality rock up to the southwest ridge, then we traversed into west face to avoid difficult ridge section, regain southwest ridge and continued to the summit. We bivouacked twice, once on our way up and again during our descent.

We believe we made first ascent of the peak. We think that overall grade of the climb is TD+/ED- (rock climbing up to VI- UIAA grade). Length of the route is 1200 m, height difference from beginning of climb to the summit is 1000 m. We named our route "From East to West", the beauty of climbing was 5 stars.

We climbed entire route in rock climbing shoes in perfect weather. Local people at Raru village know the mountain as Ri Pok Te. You can see the summit of it from some part of the village

and it means 'the mountain that hides other mountains or the mountain from which you can see backside.

Mountains above Teteleh Nala and valley itself are great. Upper part of the valley is very rarely visited and therefore nature is pretty much unspoiled and fragile. In the valley there is still enough nice mountaineering potential varying from one day walk to unclimbed 6000 meter peaks to very hard looking rock climbing objectives in faces up to 1000 m leading to unclimbed 6000 meter peaks. We hope that future parties visiting area will respect high ethical standards and operate in small teams in simple alpine style.

– Matija Jost and Anastasia Davidova

White Needle (6600m)

IMF Mixed Expedition Zaskar Himalaya



Approach to Mt. White Needle (seen in the centre)

Tarun Saikia relates his team's expedition to White Needle (6600m) jointly organised by the IMF, in September–October, 2015. This arduous climb had last been climbed 26 years ago, in 1989. Seven climbers out of this 14 member team were able to summit.

Mt. White Needle (6600 m) is situated in Zaskar region of Jammu & Kashmir, adjacent to Mt. Nun (7135 m). It has remained unclimbed since 1989, being very arduous with many carnies and steep climb over ice. The 14 member expedition was jointly organised by the IMF and Department of Tourism and sponsored by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt. of India.

After the flag-off at Srinagar on September 19, 2015, we reached Kargil, and thereafter Gulmatang by bus and pitched our tents near the Suru River. Next day we trekked to Chasmis, crossing Shapath Nala, and halted there. Next morning, after our breakfast we started the trek for Base Camp (14907ft). It took us around 6 hours to reach base camp. Snow started falling and continued for two days. Almost 1–2 feet of snow had fallen at our Base Camp.

Due to bad weather and heavy snowfall all the members returned back to Gulmatang. On 24th September weather became favourable again and three of our climbing members along with 2 HAPs returned back to the base camp in the snow.

Next day also the weather was quite favourable, so I along with 3 HAPs decided to load ferry to Camp 1. We took 5 –6 hours to reach Camp-I (17232ft). The rest of the members of Gulmatang also reached Base Camp. The next two days we loaded ferries for Camp 1. After a rest day, we moved to Camp I.

On September 30, 2015, we started load ferry for Camp-II. The way towards Camp-II was very difficult and steep with mixed ice and snow. After nine hours of steep climb (1500m)



On the way to the summit of White Needle

through rope/jumar, we reached Camp-II (19140 ft) and erected our tent on snow. There was a rope fixed which was around 1400 meters in its length on a 65-70 degree Ice Wall. From Camp II we could see Mt. Kun (7035m) the 2nd highest peak in Kashmir Himalaya and Mt. Pinnacle (6930m) from our right and two unknown peaks. After depositing our load at Camp 2 we came back to Camp 1 and took rest for a day.

Next day all the members moved to occupy Camp-II, which was the Summit Camp of Mt. White Needle. After a steep climb of ice wall, we reached the snowfield of Camp-II. The weather was good the next day and we started our journey towards the summit of Mt. White Needle Peak (6600 m) at around 03:00 am on

October 02, 2015. The entire route towards the top of Mt. White Needle was very arduous. It was covered with ice and snow. We climbed up a snow ridge approximately 800m (climb like needle) through jumar/rope, leading towards top of Mt. White Needle. Six of the team were able to summit. Suddenly the weather started deteriorating and the visibility became poor.

We returned to Camp-II, deciding not to climb Mt. Pinnacle (6930m) due to bad weather conditions and so moved down to Camp-I. We reached base camp next day and thereafter back to Kargil and New Delhi.

- Tarun Saikia

Khimling Top (6200m)

First Ascent
Kumaon Himalaya



View of Khimling Top (6220m)

Bhanu Pratap Singh, 2nd-in-command, Indo Tibetan Border Police, recounts his 17 member team's first ascent of Mt. Khimling Top (6200m). Two climbers and two HAPs summited in this challenging expedition to this virgin peak.

In October, 2015 the frontier level ITBP team conducted the most challenging and daunting expedition to Khimling Top (6200m), a virgin peak till then. The peak is located in Darma valley ahead of Goh village (3340m) in the Kumaon region of the Greater Himalaya.

We reached Urthing village (2340m) by road on September 19th and from there our approach march to Base Camp began. The route passing through the small villages of Darma valley, like Baling (2800m) and Datu (3520m), became wider with gradual ascent beyond Khimling Ground (3880m), along the river Darma Ganga. On September 28th, after 2 days of recce, we finally established the Base Camp (4242m) on a flat open ground patch on the banks of the Darma Ganga river.

The next day we conducted a recce of Camp-I

(4874m) and decided to occupy the camp next day along with our load. The route was along a dry nala with rugged terrain and stones. It was a steep and difficult ascent with all the load.

Two days later, on October 2nd, we started moving to establish the Summit Camp. Climbing up, we encountered the base of a huge ice wall/glacier which was 150-200m wide and 450-500m high. There was a gradient of 75 degree and more above the ice wall/glacier with wide and deep crevasses, icefall, hanging glacier wall. The team felt extreme difficulty in negotiating this feature and decided to establish an unplanned Camp-II (4904m) at a rocky patch near the base of this ice wall, so that subsequent route opening could be done as the weather window available was short.



Negotiating an ice wall during the climb

The ice wall ahead of Camp-II was quite tough and required technical climbing. Some ice/snow ridges, with deep crevasses on both sides, were the only available route and the lead climber negotiated them by climbing horse saddle style and then rope was fixed for the others. After two days of continued load-ferry the Summit Camp (5112m) was finally established on October 4th, at the flat ice/snow field with a cluster of crevasses above the ice wall/glacier ahead of Camp-II. Later that day the weather deteriorated with light snowfall on the peak and around, resulting in drastic dropping of temperature.

At 0130 hrs next day the summit team started out for the summit. After four hours of negotiating crevasses, soft snow and other obstacles, the team reached very near the summit of Khimling Top (6220m). Final summit team was split up into two ropes. At sunrise, due to the earlier snowfall, small avalanches

started triggering. Another hurdle appeared in the form of an 80 to 90m high ice wall with fresh snow and a gradient of almost 85 degree to 90 degree at the summit. 02 lead climbers and 02 HAPs negotiated this last ice wall with extreme caution, using crampons and ice axes only, and finally summited at 0631 hrs.

Due to bad weather and the danger of avalanches, the team decided not to make a second attempt. The peak was summited from southwest (left) side, the only negotiable approach, and so the team could only photograph the left side view of the surrounding peaks, which included major known peaks like Mt Rajrambha (6537m) and Mt. Chaudhara (6510m). Other teams could consider exploring a possible approach from the eastern side, from different valley i.e; from the Jolinkong side.

- Bhanu Pratap Singh

Rijul Gill, from Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh, developed a keen interest in adventure at a very young age. The Gaddi shepherds who would come down to Dharamshala in the summer months became his friends and he spent three years trekking through the traditional Gaddi routes along with them. "Living with the Gaddis" is a pictographic view of the fascinating and extremely tough life of the Gaddis, as experienced and recorded by Gill.



Glimpses - of the Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal ranges.

The Mon peak (4650m) can be seen clearly from Dharamshala and lies bang in front when one is undertaking a small hike to Triund. Though not a very high peak, it is challenging for even the most seasoned climbers. The approach to this peak is from Laka, as well as from the Chamba side of Indrahara Pass (4342m) but all the recorded and known ascents to this peak are from the Chamba side only. No climbing parties have been successful to summit it from Laka.

The Gaddis - life on the move.

The Gaddis cook inside a DERA (shelter) made of rocks piled one over the other and a plastic sheet placed on top to prevent rain from entering inside. A simple Gaddi meal comprises of goat's milk and Maize flour bread.

Smoking tobacco in a hookah (Hubble - Bubble) is their favourite pastime. You will see a Gaddi spinning wool and smoking tobacco whenever he is free.





Crossing Chobia pass - in very hostile conditions without any equipment.

Every April the Gaddi shepherds reach the upper pastures of the Dhauladhar valley and cross the passes by mid or end of May. The Pir Panjal range is the second barrier separating the Ravi/Chamba valley from Lahaul/Pangi. The Gaddis cross these high-altitude passes in early/mid June to enter the Lahaul valley. The ascent to these passes is very steep from the base. In this picture the Gaddis are seen crossing the Chobia pass from Bharmour side in early June. They start early in the morning around 3 AM with their flock to reach the grazing ground 'Alyas' on the other side (Lahaul) by evening 5 PM.

Lake Lam Dal - one of the many beautiful and mysterious lakes that dot the crest of the Dhauladhar Range.

The Gaddi shepherds, who make an annual pilgrimage to these lakes in the months of August and September, consider all these lakes sacred. Lake Lam Dal is the longest (1.5 kms) and the most beautiful lake of Dhauladhar range, also considered as the holy abode of Lord Shiva. There are innumerable other beautiful lakes like Nag Dal, Chanderkup Dal, Dham ghuri Dal and Dehnasar, to name a few.





Makori Peak.

At an altitude of 4,800m, Makori may not be a very high peak but it is surely most difficult to climb in Dhauladhar range. This peak lies near the Makori pass which serves as a crossing separating the remote Chotta Bhangal from Bada Bhangal. It is a very rarely used pass and only a handful of Gaddi shepherds cross it to enter Bada Bhangal.

Toral peak (in the background) - as seen from the top of Toral pass connecting Dharamshala with Bharmour.

Toral is a very difficult and rarely used pass of Dhauladhar region and unlike other passes of Dhauladhar this pass opens up in late June (the other passes open around May end). Only a few Gaddis use this pass. During our trek across Toral pass the Gaddi shepherds told us that they had seen an outsider for the first time in many decades crossing this pass and they were surprised that we had chosen such a difficult route to cross Dhauladhar.





Pir Panjal range.

The Pir Panjal range forms the second divide of the Himalaya and primarily separates Chamba, Kangra and Kullu from the Lahaul and Pangi valleys. The peaks of Pir Panjal range are more jagged and inviting. There are many virgin six thousanders in this range, which have not been climbed due to high level of technicality and also owing to the limited knowledge of the area. The Laluni 1 & 2 peaks on the divide of Lahaul and Kangra are two such 6200+ meter peaks, for whom there are no records of a summit attempt till date.

Pangi valley

- Cheni pass.

High passes on all sides bind the mysterious Pangi valley. Entry and exit across this valley is over the high passes of Pir Panjal and Great Himalayas. In the picture is the Cheni pass connecting Churah valley with Pangi valley. This pass is seldom used, and then only by locals and Gaddi shepherds.





The gateway to heaven – Chobia Pass (above and below).

Chobia pass is a very difficult crossing in the Pir Panjal range. It is only a narrow passage at the top and looks as though nature has beautifully crafted this gate, which separates the Bharmour valley of Chamba from the Pattan valley of Lahaul. The stunning landscape of Lahaul valley greets one's eyes after one crosses passes of Pir Panjal from Bharmour side.



IMF Establishes Wilderness Risk Management Unit

In recent years India has seen significant growth in mountaineering, trekking and allied activities. An increasing number of Indians are participating in expeditions and treks across the Indian Himalaya. The number of foreign expeditions have also seen a significant rise. Consequently, the count of accidents, both major and minor, have also seen a spurt.

With an objective of bringing down the accident rate, the IMF has established, at its headquarters in New Delhi, a Wilderness Risk Management Unit. The key objective of this Unit is to record and investigate each reported accident taking place in the Indian Himalaya and documentation of the information collected. Another key objective of this Unit is to hold an annual Risk Management Meet where all key stakeholders are invited and information on accidents and an advisory on accident prevention are shared.

Accident details can be shared on : incidents@indmount.org and additional details, including the incident log, are available on the IMF website.

IMF Team wins 4 medals at the Asian Youth Championship in Sport Climbing

A 6 member team from the Indian Mountaineering Foundation participated in the **Asian Youth Championship in Sport Climbing** held at Putrajaya, Malaysia from December 02 to 06, 2015 and secured four medals.

The Asian Youth Championship (AYC) is an annual competition in sport climbing for young climbers organized by the **International Federation of Sport Climbing** (IFSC) and the **Asian Continental Council** (ACC) for member Asian countries. The 2015 edition of AYC had more than 300 participants from 15 Asian countries.

The details of the championship are as follows:

- * **Disciplines** : Lead, Speed and Bouldering.
- * **Categories** : Junior (18–19 years)
Youth 'A' (16–17 years)
Youth 'B' (14–15 years)
Youth 'C' (10–13 years)
- * **Medal Winners from the IMF Team** :

- ◆ **Bharath Perera** : 'Youth B' : **Silver in Speed**
- ◆ **Maibam Chingkhenganba** : 'Youth C' : **Gold in Speed** and **Silver in Bouldering**
- ◆ **Shreya Nankar** : 'Youth C' : **Bronze in Speed** and **Fifth position in Lead**



Announcing the IMF Mountain Movie Festival 2016

With a view to showcase the immense potential of adventure opportunities in the Indian Himalaya as well as to encourage domestic talent in movie making the IMF will launch the first edition of the IMF Mountain Movie Festival in December 2016.

The festival will be a competitive event showcasing the best adventure films, extreme sports and their spirit of adventure in the Indian Himalaya. All films selected as finalists will be screened at the Festival in December at the IMF Campus at New Delhi and subsequently in several locations in India on a nation wide tour.

The theme of this year's festival: **Adventure Sports and Indian Himalaya**. The focus of entries could be on mountain climbing, rock or ice climbing, caving, kayaking, white water rafting and paragliding. The festival would also accept movies showcasing the beauty, culture, flora and fauna of the Indian Himalaya.

The key criterion of the festival is that the movie being submitted should have been filmed in the Indian Himalaya.

The IMF website will shortly carry an announcement on the awards, submission dates and final date of the festival.

IMF Climbathon 2016 dates announced

IMF has announced the dates for the 2016 edition of Climbathon. Conceived by the IMF as a platform bringing together practising mountaineers from India and abroad, Climbathon 2016 will be a 24 day programme with 17 days spent on the mountain, designed for active mountaineers looking forward to enhance their foundational knowledge, skill and leadership through sharing of experience and expertise, structured by a problem based group learning.

Climbathon 2016 will be run along two integrated streams:

- * Climbathon - Foundation
- * Climbathon - Assessment

Dates : 04 - 27 August, 2016

Venue : The Nun Kun massif, Suru valley, Jammu & Kashmir

For more information and to apply:

http://www.indmount.org/FormAdmin/201602150027240772_climbathon%202016.pdf

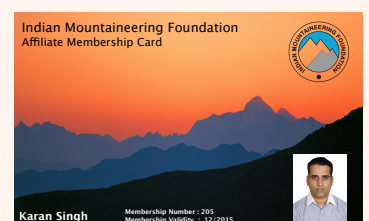


IMF Affiliate Membership Update

The newly opened Affiliate membership category of the IMF has seen enthusiastic response from the mountaineering and allied communities. This category has been instituted to present a platform for adventurers across India to connect with each and in the process help expand the sport. More than 500 applicants have so far been granted.

Affiliate membership in various categories. Membership can be applied for online on the IMF website.

For details and to apply please visit: <http://www.indmount.org/About/membership/ApplyforAffiliateMembership.aspx>



IMF conducts 21st National Sport Climbing Championships



Organisers : IMF, New Dehi

Venue : Sport Climbing wall at IMF campus

Dates : 27 to 30 November, 2015

Format : Competitions in Lead, Speed and Bouldering disciplines

Categories: Men, Women, Junior Boys and Girls, Para climbers

Winners Lead Climb : Men – Ajij Shaikh (West), Women – Nehaa Prakash (South)

Jr. Boys – Bharath Pereira (South), Jr. Girls – Thaja Seram (N. East)

Paraclimbers – Afzal, JPM Senior Sec Special School for the Blind, New Delhi.

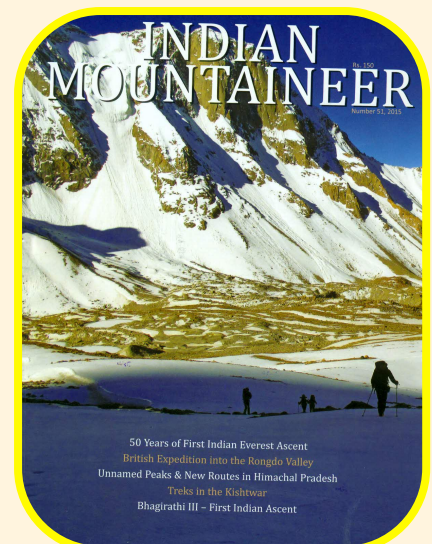
Winners Speed : Men – Abhishek Mehta (North), Women – Chea Amelia Marak (South)

Winners Bouldering : Men – Aziz Shaikh (West), Women – Chea Amelia Marak (South)

51st edition of Indian Mountaineer released

The IMF released the 51st edition of its annual journal **Indian Mountaineer**. The 2015 edition contains a host of expedition and trekking reports, as well as information on key developments of the year from the Indian Himalaya. Some of the articles featured include:

- ✳ 50 years of the First Indian Ascent of Everest.
- ✳ Extensive report on Unnamed Peaks and New Routes in Himachal
- ✳ British expedition to Rongdo valley
- ✳ Trekking routes in Kishtwar, J & K
- ✳ The first Indian ascent of Bhagirathi-III



ONGC sponsors Cleaning Expeditions in the Indian Himalaya

In order to redress the polluted state of popular climbing, trekking and tourist areas within the Indian Himalaya, the IMF has mounted cleaning expeditions to collect trash and bring it back to appropriate locations for disposal. The Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has joined hands with the IMF in mounting these expeditions, under the ambit of CSR.

Four cleaning expeditions were launched by IMF in association with ONGC throughout 2015 and thousands of tonnes of garbage retrieved from the following popular climbing and trekking destinations:

1. Bara Shigri, Chandra Tal and Kunzum La areas of Himachal Pradesh, August–September 2015.
2. Gaumukh and Tapovan areas of Garhwal, Uttarakhand, September–October 2015.
3. Pindari area of Kumaon, Uttarakhand, September–October 2015.
4. Stok area of Leh, Jammu & Kashmir, September–October 2015.

For more information: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/good-governance/centre/ONGC-to-clean-sources-of-water-in-the-Himalayas/articleshow/48464638.cms>

Volunteering efforts to clean up Himalaya



It's perfectly within the capacity of each one of us to pledge to not add a single wrapper to the piles of garbage that threaten to drown the rivers and topple the mountains. Not only that, every single piece of trash picked up and brought back from these pristine environments is a step towards reversing the problem. Sure, it's a baby step, but no marathon has ever been won in any other way than step by step.

Hence our motivation to start giving something back to the mountains that have offered us so much fulfilment over the years. Our first cleaning expedition in October 2015 was to Mt Ladakhi base camp high up at some 4,500m above the sea level in Himachal Pradesh. We cleaned up and carried back as much garbage as we could between the two of us, from discarded plastic bags and wrappers to burnt tin cans and empty whiskey bottles. We aim to undertake at least one of such projects a year, our humble attempt at doing something for the mountains that otherwise need nothing from us.

– Prem Kumar Singh

Editorial Viewpoint

It is extremely noteworthy that individuals are also undertaking operations to clean-up the Indian Himalaya. Such personal attempts would surely go a long way not only in rendering the Himalaya trash-free, but also in fostering ethical and responsible behaviour. All such efforts must be highlighted and we at 'Apex' will continue to feature similar stories.



Climbing World Cup is coming to India

The IFSC Climbing World Cup 2016, India's first Women's & Men's Bouldering World Competition will be held between 13–16th May 2016, in Navi Mumbai. The competition will be hosted by IMF and organised by Girivihar, Mumbai's oldest mountaineering club. This is the first time that a Climbing World Cup would be hosted in India.

Bouldering is a form of rock climbing performed on boulders without any ropes or harnesses. The climber uses power and technique for an explosive performance of a maximum of 10 movements. It includes spectacular and intense gestures, with a maximum height of 4 meters and a fall back on mattresses.

Categories : Men's and Women's Bouldering

Venue : CIDCO Exhibition Centre, Vashi, Navi Mumbai

Dates : May 13 to 16, 2016

For credits and information: <http://www.giriviharworldcup.com/world-cup-2016>
and <https://www.facebook.com/GVExtreme>



Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner delivers Keynote address at the 7th Mussoorie Writers' Mountain Festival



Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner, the Austrian climber and first woman to climb all 8,000 meter peaks without supplemental oxygen, was the keynote speaker at the 7th Mussoorie Writer's Mountain festival, held from October 22 to 25, 2015, at Woodstock School, Mussoorie.

The literary and cultural festival was themed around 'Women and Mountains' this year. Other eminent speakers included Silvo Karo and Bernadette McDonald who introduced her new book, *Alpine Warriors*.

For credits and information: <http://mwmountainfestival.com/media/>

Orange Festival of Adventure and Music held in Dambuk, Arunachal Pradesh



Every year the quaint village of Dambuk in beautiful Lower Dibang valley in Arunachal Pradesh, comes alive to a unique festival of adventure sports and contemporary music, the Orange Festival of Adventure and Music.

The second edition of OFAM, held from 15–18 December, 2015, hosted the first **JK Tyre 4x4 Off-Roading championships**, among other high adrenaline adventure sports including river rafting, dirt cycling, ATV rides in the forest, bungee jumping, zip lining and a hike in the orange orchards with Tine Mena, the first woman from the northeast to summit the Everest. Traditional tribal sports such as archery and darts were also showcased.

Grammy nominated artist Lama Tashi, American legend Joseph Arthur, Lou Majaw, Neel and the Light Bulbs, Tritha Electric, Guru Reuben, Alisha Bhatt, Ganesh Talkies and many more artists mesmerised the crowds through the four day music extravaganza.

For credits and information: <http://www.orangefestivaldambuk.com/>

Uttarakhand Spring Bird Festival held in Doon Valley



Blue Whistling Thrush
Photo credit: Debojit Deb

The 3rd Uttarakhand Spring Bird Festival was held at five different locations in Doon Valley, from 11 to 14 February, 2016. The locations were the Asan Conservation Reserve, Forest Research Institute - Jhajhra, Rajpur - Sahastradhara, Thano reserve forest - Maldevta and the Rajaji Tiger Reserve. Uttarakhand is blessed with a reported list of 693 species representing more than half of all bird species found in India. Various NGOs and prestigious institutes such as Wildlife Institute of India, Bombay Natural History Society collaborated for the event.

For credits and information: <http://www.uttarakhandbirdfestival.in/>

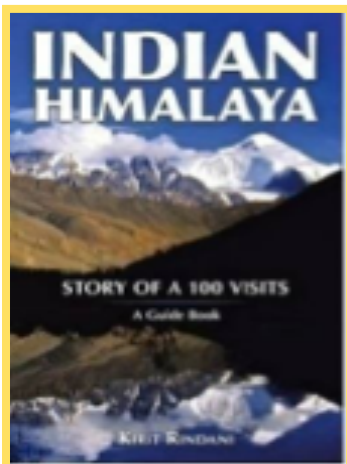
High Court orders ban on plastic packaging in Himachal Pradesh



The Himachal Pradesh High Court has taken a strong exception to the sale of junk food in non-biodegradable packaging and banned the sale of all such items, including bags, sachets and packets. The ban, effective April 1, 2016, also covers industries, importers and distributors of such packaged goods under the Extended Producers Responsibility principle. The state expects to reduce almost 6,000 tonnes of non-biodegradable refuse every day.

In another significant move the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change announced the new Rules of Waste Management which will see nation-wide implementation shortly.

For credits and information: <http://www.dailypioneer.com/columnists/oped/environment-choking-on-plastic.html>



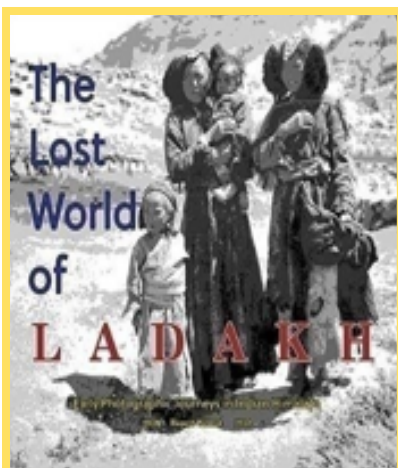
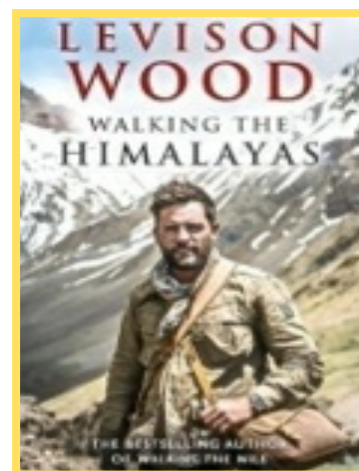
Indian Himalaya : Story of a 100 Visits, A Guide Book
by Kirit Rindani * Partridge India * January 2016 * Rs. 6566.82/-

This beautiful pictorial guide book by Kirit Rindani seeks to arm avid travellers with inside information and travelling tips on the Himalayan regions of Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, West Bengal, Ladakh, and other areas, for family trips, adventures with friends, romantic getaways, and vehicle safaris over Himalayan roads. Mr. Rindani gives details on accommodation, possible health issues and shares over fifty years and 100 visits of stunning photographs and extensive travelling experience.

Walking the Himalayas

by Levison Wood * Hodder & Stoughton * January 2016 * Rs. 699/-

Levison Wood's new book 'Walking the Himalayas' takes us along the Silk Road route of Afghanistan and through five countries. Following in the footsteps of the great explorers, the intrepid writer walks the entire length of the Himalayas in an adventure of survival and endurance. While following the same trails that the locals use, he uncovers stories that might otherwise remain hidden. Along the way he also reveals the history of the Himalayas and two millennia of exploration, and examines a continent in crisis in the 21st century. Walking the Himalayas is a story of personal adventure and striving beyond the limits of convention.



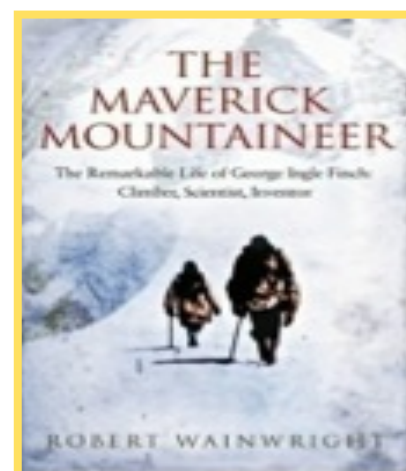
Indian Tibet Tibetan India: The Cultural Legacy of the Western Himalayas

by Peter Van Ham * Niyogi Books * February 2016 * Rs. 2495/-

The first English edition of Peter Van Ham's German book is a rich insight into the isolated regions of Kinnaur, Spiti, Lahaul, Zaskar, Rupshu, Ladakh, Nubra and Dah-Hanu with special emphasis on the Indo-Tibetan and early Indian culture, Buddhist art and ethnicity of the region and peoples. Van Ham looks at the history of exploration of these areas right up to the present days. German author and photographer Peter van Ham is an expert on Himalayan cultures and has written extensively on India's many border regions.

The Maverick Mountaineer : The Remarkable Life of George Ingle Finch
by Robert Wainwright * Allen & Unwin * January 2016 * Rs. 1631.32

Robert Wainwright chronicles the life and achievements of Australian explorer George Ingle Finch in this book. Wainwright follows Finch through his childhood and various marriages, then details his initial climbs and later achievements. Finch had invented the predecessor to the puffer jacket and pioneered the use of oxygen in climbing. A World War I hero whose skills also helped save London from burning to the ground during the Blitz of World War II, he was a renowned scientist who was personally chosen by Nehru, the first Indian prime minister, to help lead India into the modern world.



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Photo courtesy: Jimmy Chin

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