

Apex

Indian Mountaineering Foundation
Newsletter * Volume 4 * November 2016



Photo courtesy: Sankar Sridhar, Nelang Valley



Photo courtesy :Malcolm Bass, Descending from Mt. Gangtang



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Sersank Peak (6050m)

First Ascent North Buttress
Himachal Pradesh Himalaya



North buttress of Sersank with the bivouacs marked

Award winning British mountaineer Mick Fowler talks about his and Victor Saunders' climb of Sersank peak (6050m) in the Himachal Pradesh Himalaya. This was a first ascent from the virgin North Face of the peak.

Our last Himalayan climb together was the Golden Pillar of Spantik in 1987. Since then we have had a memorable boxing match in an East London pub and kept in touch but essentially we pursued different lives; Victor Saunders as a mountain guide based in Chamonix and me as a taxman based in Nottingham. This year though, after being brought back together by the successful joint publication of some of our memoirs, we decided it was time to again experience the pleasure of Himalayan north face climbing together.

It was all down to Martin Moran that we ended up on the spectacular north face of Sersank. My interest was stirred having viewed it from a distance but it was his writing enthusiastically about a 'tremendous north face of linked white spiders' that motivated us to have a go. We decided that the easiest access would be to trek across the difficult and rarely used 5,000m pass of the Sersank La and descend the far side to the foot of the face. Fresh powder covering the rocks made this exhausting but after overcoming the usual array of Himalayan hurdles (including an unfortunate mix-up of pee and drinking bottles – Ugh! Thanks Victor) we set off up the face on 28th September.



On Day 5, Mick and Victor aided and cut through the cornice to emerge onto the south side.

Heavy snowfall on dry cold rock made for challenging conditions. For two days we swept away snow and inched up the disturbingly blank rock below. By the end of the second day a lower buttress and sharp crest had been overcome and we were firmly established on the cold confines of the north face proper. Here the conditions were better but bivouac 3 on the face brought uncomfortable spindrift, a precariously pitched tent and a night-time emergency which saw Victor urgently but unsuccessfully trying to discard five layers of clothing plus a harness. His favourite Calvin Klein underpants took the brunt of the flow and had to be cut off and abandoned. But such minor problems are nothing to a man of Victor's stature. Day four was a particularly great day – fantastic white ice climbing with several pitches just within our limits.

Superlatives abounded as we ended the day lying on separate small ledges cut in the ice. Actually Victor appeared to be more suspended in a web of rope than supported by a ledge but

such inconveniences are minor in the grand scheme of a Himalayan experience.

At 18.30 on our fifth day on the face, we aided and cut through the cornice to emerge onto the south side. After another cold bivouac on narrow ice ledges, the previously unclimbed 150m summit block was dispatched and it was time to head down the complex glacier systems of the south and west face. Two days later we had abseiled through a never-ending icefall, stumbled down disturbingly steep loose rock and been met by our cook and LO bringing tea and biscuits.

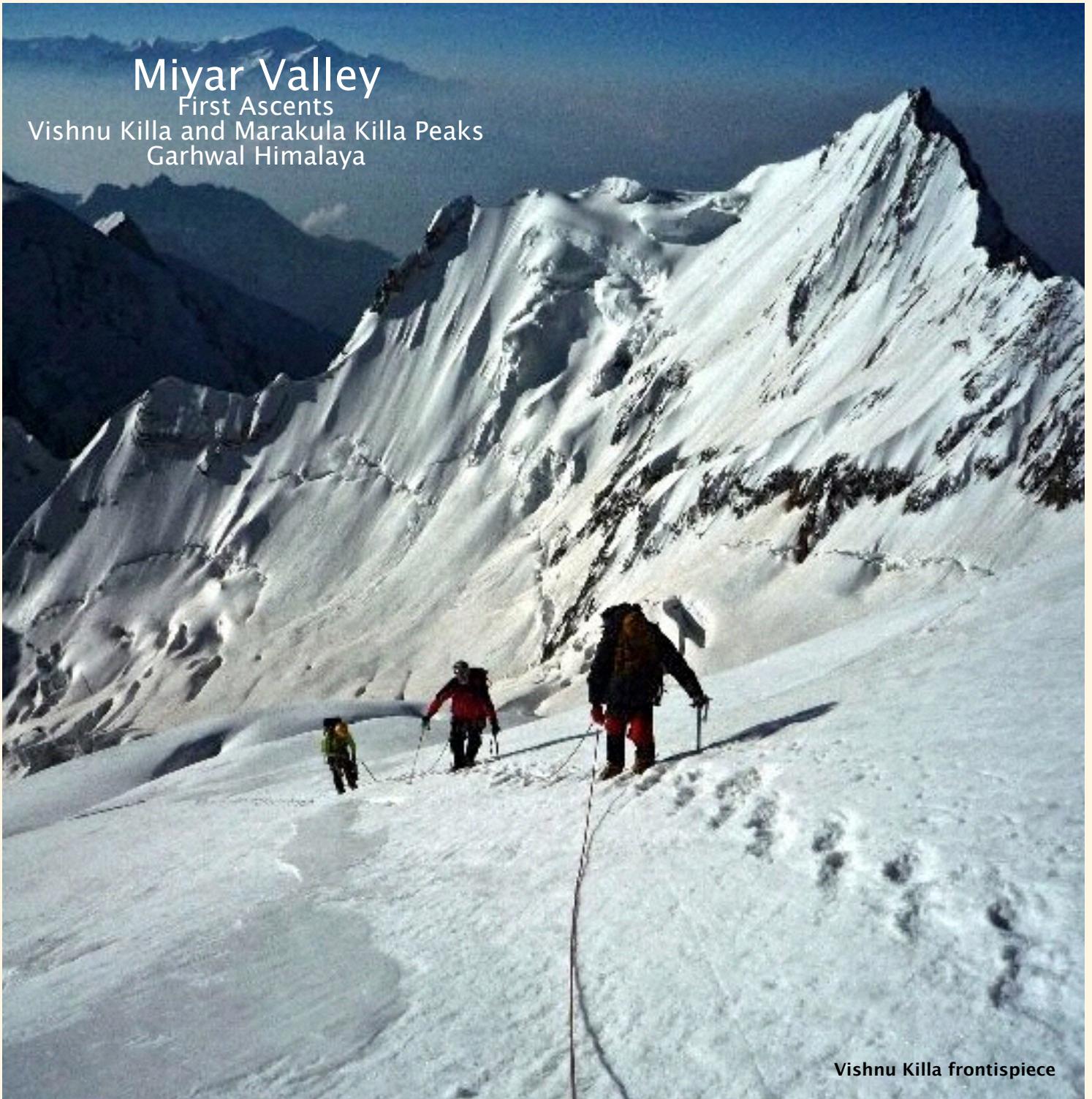
The climb ticked just about all the boxes for us: interesting area, great company, unclimbed face, unclimbed summit, striking line, visible from afar, leading straight to the summit, challenging and with an aesthetically pleasing different descent route. And it all gave us old men so much pleasure that we are already thinking about plans for next year.

– Mick Fowler

Miyar Valley

First Ascents

Vishnu Killa and Marakula Killa Peaks
Garhwal Himalaya



Vishnu Killa frontispiece

Martin Moran, the acclaimed British mountaineer and Guide talks about his team's climbs in the Miyar Valley, Garhwal Himalaya. These included First Ascents of Vishnu Killa (5968m) and Marakula Killa (5755m) peaks.

First Ascent of 5968m Vishnu Killa, 6th – 29th May 2016

The name "Peak 5968" hardly stimulates the romantic juices, but I spotted it on an old Survey of India map, highest of a cluster of ridges on the southern fringe of the Chaukhamba massif in Garhwal Himalaya. The range is called Vishnu Ghar Dhar – the ridge of Vishnu's abode – and I had previously seen it from the north. The peaks looked complex, serrated and heavily glaciated. The north flanks drop to the Panpatia Glacier into broken icefalls, so we would go in from the south. There are a dozen 5000m peaks here, but only one ascent had ever been recorded. Pk 5968 itself appeared to be virgin.

We journeyed from Delhi by train to Haridwar and then by minibus up the Alaknanda valley, as the resurgence of springtime signalled by the purple blossom of jacaranda trees on the roadsides. Turning off the highway 15km before Joshimath, we entered a peaceful world of pastoral harmony at Urgam.



Vishnu Killa route – Panpatia flank



Vishnu Killa Pk 5882

Our trek climbed the trail to Bansi Narayan temple then traversed the dissected flanks of Acchari Dhar. From a shoulder where at 4200m we could turn into the Kalpa Ganga valley, and found a basecamp site under the snout of the Gimme Glacier at 3830m, a beautiful boulder-studded meadow fed by vigorous freshwater streams from the melting snows.

The glacier curved up into an impressive icefall and at its head lay a 5300m col. A training climb to 5100m on the ridge bounding the west side of the glacier revealed excellent corrugated gneiss rock on the crest. This was a super-alpine paradise.

While good weather lasted it was essential to make a decisive bid to climb Peak 5968m. We needed to climb the icefall, cross the 5300m col and to descend a hundred metres on the north (Panpatia) side before we could commence the summit climb. For sure, this was a climb to be done in the frozen conditions of night, but the icefall proved feasible with an acceptable margin of safety. From a high camp above the icefall at 5200m.

We started the summit bid at 10.30pm on 20th May in three ropes of four, led by the guides

Francis Blunt, Adele Pennington and me, and including our Indian members Heera Singh and Mangal Singh.

The descent from the col was the psychological threshold. Now we were committed. The night hours passed in a serpentine ascent of the glacier, weaving round huge crevasses and ice walls. Adele and I met the dawn at 5700m on the upper slopes. The eastern skyline was punctured by the spears and obelisks of the great peaks of the Nanda Devi range. The sunrise came slow but at 6.00am the sun burst forth in glory. Soon after, Francis and his team passed us on their descent, close on two hours ahead of us.

From the summit, the views of distant giants like Kamet were tempered by intriguing prospects of nearby glaciers and surrounding peaks. The name Vishnu Killa – Vishnu's citadel – was mooted. The only disappointment was that our GPS recorded the altitude as a mere 5960 metres rather than the 5968 we expected! Next morning, we all returned safely to base camp in the shadowed hours after dawn and celebrated success with a tot of malt whisky and a feast of pakora.



Marakula Killa N Spur

First Ascent of the North Spur of 5755m Marakula Killa, 26th September – 2nd October

Peak 5755m is the rock bastion lying immediately north of Dali Got base camp and bounding the junction between the Miyar and Jangpar Glaciers. The North Spur of the mountain is an eye-catching line guarding the entrance to the Jangpar Glacier. The spur, which I had spotted in 2011 while leading a group up the Miyar Glacier, rises in a series of sweeping steps to a cluster of pinnacles, then disappears in misted summit buttresses – 1300 metres from toe to top. Surprisingly, this striking and accessible line appeared to be unclimbed. When I fished out my picture and sent it to my climbing partner Ian Dring he was enthused.

From Dali Got we followed a shepherds' trail to the Jangpar Glacier to find a site for an advance base camp at 4320m. The foot of the spur is at 4450m, 2km up the south side of the glacier. Our ascent was facilitated by a light snowfall two days before commencement of the climb. This could complicate the climbing on the crux pitches high on the spur.

On our first day we made a bivouac in a roofed recess at the first step of the spur. By the middle of day two, Ian and I could already be confident that our spur was in virginal state. Loose blocks formed the greatest hazard and every step had to be protected and measured.



Ian leading the crux slab below the Flaming Tower

We swapped leads on the lower buttresses which gave some sustained grade IV and IV+ free-climbing. An excellent bivouac ledge materialized at the next levelling. With a couple of hours of afternoon sunshine at our disposal we decided to climb the first pitch of the third step – the “Badile” (spade) after the peak in the Alps.

A smooth vertical step barred access to the wall, with a thin hand-crack right in its centre. Ian jammed up the step and fixed our ropes. We returned to our sacks confident of a quick start in the morning.

The Badile was my leading day. From our high point four rope-stretching pitches of IV and IV+ took six hours. I reached the top of the Badile at 4pm. The north wall of our peak plunged beneath in a sweep of compact slabs broken here and there by a smear of watery ice. We hacked out another stone plinth for our third night at the rock-face and got sat down in time to see the sun set behind the prodigal spear-head of Shiva peak 20 miles away in the Pangji valley.

The next day’s climbing featured exposed bulges up the side of a spear-headed gendarme, a crude battle up a rude chute of perched blocks and steep jamming up a crack line beneath the most prominent pinnacle of the climb, which we had named the Flaming Tower. We were now into the austere realm of grade V+. Then we were abruptly shut down by a belt of hoovered slabs, devoid of protection cracks and coated with slivers of snow.



Martin leading the grade V Off-Kilter cracks on day 5

Ian spent four hours drilling protection bolts and making sketchy grade VI slab moves in between. By nightfall he had gained 15 metres. After a cold night's bivouac I went up to our high point and completed the pitch, followed by some absolutely fabulous climbing over a series of granite pinnacles beyond the Flaming Tower, and finished the day with exciting pitches up a diagonal weakness exposed above the mountain's north face. We were now very close to the junction of our spur with the WNW Ridge of the mountain with spectacular and bizarre pinnacles. Tomorrow was the crucial day to reach the top and begin our descent.

On our 6th day three mixed pitches on snowed-up rock brought us out into blessed sunlight on the WNW Ridge. The spur was complete, but the summit was still 150m above. The climbing was now much much easier but dangerously loose. At 5pm we gained a forepeak and traversed a narrow crest to the summit dome. A simple slabby pitch led to the top and we enjoyed a celebratory sunset. The shadowed trench of the Miyar valley stretched out, and a hundred pointed peaks arrayed the western horizon over Kishtwar.

After a cold and fitful night's bivouac on the forepeak, we made an abseil descent to the WNW ridge to collect our gear. A line down the West Face narrowed into a funnel of powdered white slabs, so we moved to the bounding ridge and made four long abseils to gain the hallowed ground of turf and wild sheep tracks. Ian made a bivouac at the first running water but I marched onwards into the night towards base camp, possessed by dreams of sweet chai and finger chips. Our cook Heera guided me home with his torch and I got my reward!

- Martin Moran

T16 (6431m)

First Ascent South Summit
Zanskar Himalaya, J&K



View of T16 from T13

Romanian climber Cosmin Andron recounts his first ascent of T16 (6341m) in the Zanskar Himalaya, J&K, along with his fellow climber Cristina Pogacean. Prerna Dangi and Karn Kowshik also accompanied him in this alpine style expedition.

Starting from a report by Kimikaze Sakamoto and some Google Earth imagery, with no photos or actual information about the area, we decided for a low budget, self organised and funded summer expedition to the Zanskar range. We were joined for the acclimatisation climb by two Indian friends, Prerna Dangi of Delhi and Karn Kowshik of Pune. Cristina, Prerna and I travelled from Delhi by public transport all the way to the town of Padum where we met Karn, who was driving with some of the luggage.

On 8th of June we set our BC on a moraine at 4900m. Three days later all four of us set off for the Western ridge of P6436/T13 (6436m), our acclimatisation climb and one of the objectives. Lack of information on what was in store as well as tricky snow conditions from mid day made us turn around from the long and complex ridge at

around 5,900 m. The climb however presented us with a good view of the South face of P6431/T16 (6431m) and the obvious line on it – a beautiful, natural line – a couloir running from the bottom to the top: a perfect line.

After 2 days of rest in BC, Cristina and I started early in the morning to set up our ABC at around 5,200m. The couloir was quite straightforward with a couple of 75* sections. We climbed pretty much all of it in one go, with only a short brewing and breakfast stop on a ledge half way up. The snow section of the couloir ended with a constriction. The 5–7 m or so of mixed rock and ice was anything but pleasant: rotten ice and polished rock. By the time we were done, the sun was moving in and we scurried to find a sheltered place where we set up our bivy, as climbing was not possible due to the rockfall until evening.



The long and tricky Ice pitch on T16

Next cruxes were a long, 60m water ice pitch on poor ice and a long, poorly protected 60m mixed pitch, that we dispatched the next day, everything else being moderate. The bivy spot we found and excavated was very small for the needs of two people.

Next day, on the 17th of June, after a few wet and snowy pitches on decent rock, but with fingery moves, we ended up on a beautiful face. We left all the bivy gear at the bivy spot and took only what was necessary. Climbing in rock shoes, we soon passed the fake summit (the white triangle visible from base camp) on the face to its right (by its East side) and carried on. Towards the exit to the final ridge, we both experienced some of the best rock climbing we have done in the higher mountains. At the base of the final arrete, we left behind the backpack, the camera (we only kept my iPhone) and the big boots. The final arrete was the meeting point of several ridges, including the two sides sheltering our couloir.

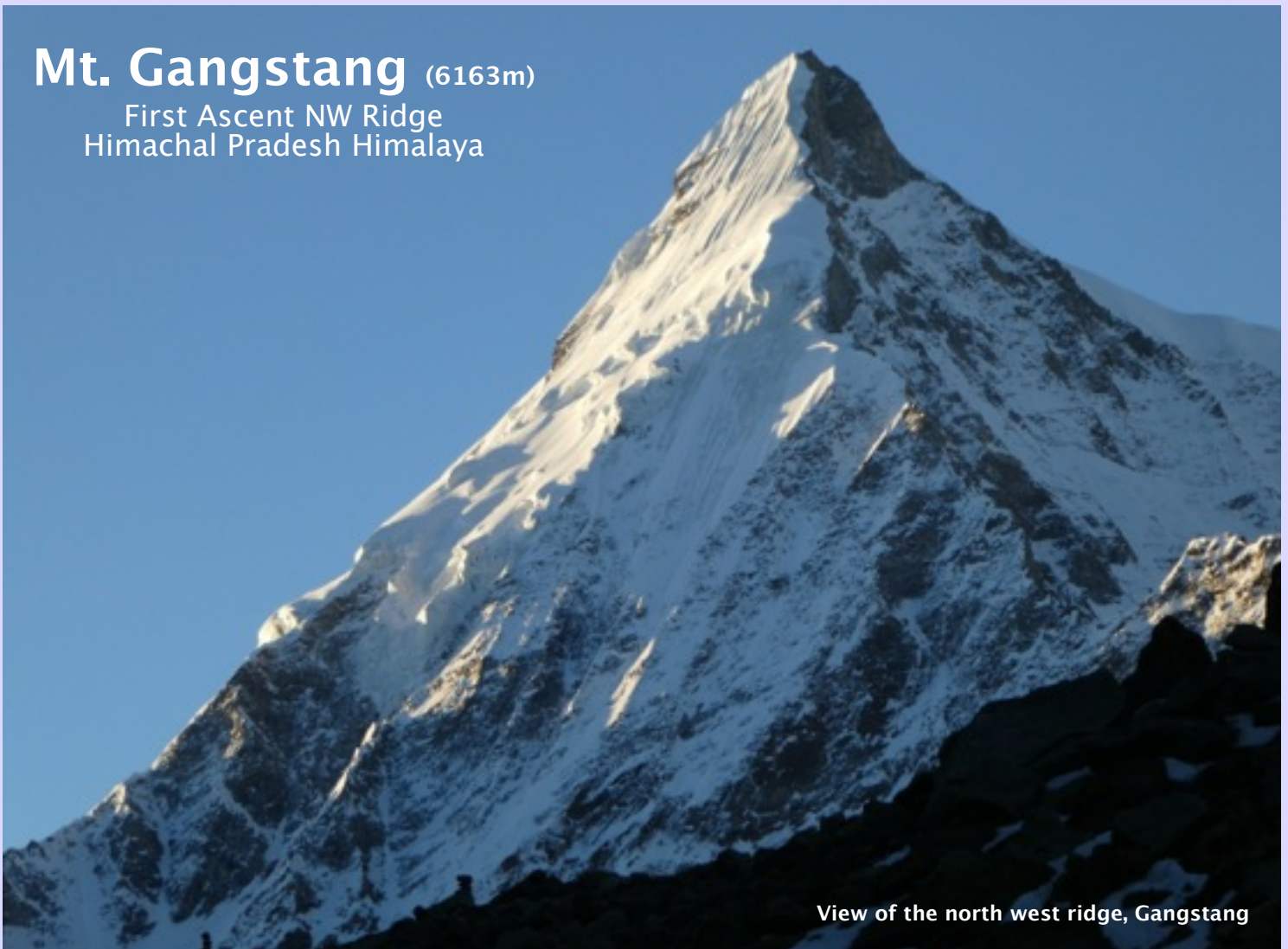
We exited the couloir, already by its left (West) side onto the face by then, and the ground ahead was fairly moderate. One could see the flat, table-top, North summit of T16 ahead and the South summit above. The N summit was at least 1 km away and the ridge was up and down with quite a few pinnacles in between – all pretty much at the same level, of course depending on the perspective. We were not keen on hopping on each and every of them and not planning to tag the N summit either (especially since we had no idea which is higher anyway, as the IMF records only mentioned one altitude for a two summits peak).

It was long past 5 PM when we started heading down, down-climbing what we could, abseiling where we could not or where it was faster. Into the snow couloir we alternated between abseils and down-climbing until the slope gave in and we started walking face out towards the glacier below. By 3 AM we were in Base Camp.

– Cosmin Andron

Mt. Gangstang (6163m)

First Ascent NW Ridge
Himachal Pradesh Himalaya



View of the north west ridge, Gangstang

British mountaineer Malcolm Bass gives an account of his and Guy Buckingham's climb of Mt. Gangstang (6163m) in the Himachal Pradesh Himalaya. This was a first ascent of the peak by the North West ridge and Malcolm talks about the many aspects of this challenge.

Gangstang is a classically pyramidal peak which is reminiscent of the Matterhorn. It was first reportedly climbed by Italians in 1945 via the South West Ridge which has since become the normal route. In 2007 Martin Moran and team explored the northern and western aspects of the mountain establishing a partial new route from the west that joined the normal route at 5850m. It was Martin's photos of and enthusiasm for the unclimbed NW Ridge which inspired the climbers.

After making a tiny impression on the superb granite bouldering surrounding base camp, the team with their Liaison Officer acclimatised with a climb of Neelkantha (5324m), previously known as Thiroth Shivling, the rock bastion that stands on the tip of the NW ridge of Gangstang. For those going on expedition to India, it's worth noting that the Indian Mountaineering Foundation will now hire out bouldering mats to expeditions at a very reasonable rate. After a couple of day's rest at the comfortable and well located base camp the climbers headed off towards the ridge.

The first night was spent on the glacier under the North Face at around 5000m and in the early hours of the following morning they crossed the bergshrund and climbed a couloir onto the North West Ridge. From then on it was rock and mixed climbing all the way; they torqued and crimped, they jammed and pressed down, with the blissful absence of any objective danger from above. By Himalayan standards the rock quality was good but just needed to be managed with respect.

There were two camps on the ridge itself, one being palatial compared to the other, which was half perched over a cornice with everything and everyone tied off in numerous directions. The climbing, on blocky granite, was excellent, with brilliant situations. On day three, Guy torqued up a short wall and reached onto a slab above to find himself peering through a hole straight down the immensity of the west face overhanging the ridgeline by a good 5 metres. However that was the end of the "fun times".



Malcolm on the first tower – Day 1



Guy on the grey towers – Day 3



Guy – Day 3

As they approached 6000m, it was beginning to snow and the wind significantly strengthened blowing straight up the west face leaving them cold and exposed. The climbing, now mostly on bulletproof grey water ice, became monotonous and arduous. They were tiring, the air was thin and their calves were screaming. The pitches just never ended; then, rather anti-climatically, the climbers were on the tiny summit. With visibility low, snow and wind still blowing there was only time for the obligatory selfie and fist-bump prior to using a short break in the clouds to locate the start of the South West ridge to camp as soon as possible. After a 100m descent they established their last camp in light dry snow glad of the rest and a chance for something to eat.

It snowed all night and was still snowing in the morning, but by 8am it started to clear and allowed them to see the descent route (following Martin's 2007 ascent line). Four abseils, a lot of down climbing and some dodgy bum-sliding, (almost not stopping for the bergshroud!) and finally they were away from the dangers of the mountain. All that remained was the 6 hour moraine trudge back to base camp for man-hugs, pakoras and screech.

When asked about the climb, Malcolm said, "We were looking for a great Himalayan line to climb and we found it in spades!"

– Malcolm Bass

Peak Z1 (6163m)

Suru valley, Zaskar Himalaya



Karn Kowshik recounts his team's Alpine style expedition to Peak Z1 (6050m) in the Zaskar Himalaya. The 3 member team had to abandon their attempt on this highly technical peak due to bad weather conditions.

This August, Taylor Maavara (Canada), Bharat Bhushan and I decided to put up an Alpine style attempt on Peak Z1 in the the Zaskar region of the Indian Himalaya. We decided on the Peak after permission to Brammah II did not come through, and Z1 is on the IMF's Open list.

The only beta we had came from Mandip Singh Soin, who had put up the first ascent in 1980 with a Japanese team. Over a long phone conversation, he told us about his route to a shoulder, from where they took the ridge up to the summit.

It was our desire to do a more technical route, but the weather had other plans for us. To start with, we found that the ridge taken by Soin was now covered by massive seracs, and the only possible route would be up the West face. When we got to the ridge (summit camp) though, it snowed for 3 days straight, forcing us to hunker down in the tent, after which we judged conditions to be too avalanche prone. Bharat and Taylor did climb a smaller, secondary summit we dubbed Z1 Daughter.

We found the Zaskar valley to be a literal treasure trove for the New Alpinist. Peaks are easily accessible, only a day or two's walk from the road, and most are around 6000 metres, with a couple (nun & Kun)over 7000. Our basecamp for Z1 was the same as for Kun (7135), and all around us, we could see plenty of lines that would make for great climbing, all around the 6000 mark.



Camped under the summit.

It's not just the Suru Valley where we were camped, but even further down the road. An hour's drive brings us to Pensi la, from where the beautiful looking Z3 can be accessed from the roadhead!

Walking up the Temasa Nala, one can see a massive 'matterhorn-looking' peak, which was attempted in 2105 by Derek Buckle and team, and is still unclimbed.

This valley has literally hundreds of unclimbed peaks, ranging from steep, ice climbs to big wall rock climbs. The high concentration of peaks, along with the great road access, makes this a great region for Indian alpinists on a budget, as well as for veteran climbers who can put up more challenging lines.

Porters and Horses are available at Tangol, where there is a Government Guest House or at Rangdum, where one will need to ask around in the village. Horses are harder to find, and may not be able to make it too far up the valley, and porters may be a better bet for unclimbed peaks.

Keep in mind that all expeditions, Indian or Foreign, will need paperwork from the IMF, and also need to get this vetted by the police in Kargil, or they will not be allowed into the Zaskar (we learned this the hard way!).

- Karn Kowshik



Nelang Valley

Garhwal Himalaya

If mountains could speak, the Nelang Valley would, perhaps, have the most interesting tales to tell. From the Great Game to tales of trade and treachery, escape and exploration, and finally desertion, this valley, on the Indo-China border in Uttarakhand, has seen them all.

Caravans from China and India moved across them in the days of the silk road, Heinrich Harrer's journey to freedom and a timeless bestseller – Seven Years in Tibet – began from this valley in the 1940s. For the past 70 years though, the valley has remained silent, its visitors limited to Army men protecting our borders and national interests. The interest in the valley has always been great among mountain lovers, but there are few loves that bureaucracy is incapable of destroying.

So when it was finally announced in May 2015 that the government was considering opening the Nelang Valley to civilians, Avilash Bisht and I jumped at an opportunity we never thought would come our way.

In 1939, the British explorer J.B. Auden had attempted to open a route between the Mana and Arwa Valleys and had visualized 'Arwa Col', which he estimated would be around the height of 6,100 meters could possibly be the highest in the Indian Himalayas.

The fact that such a Col has never been identified was reason enough for us to plan our very own exploration in search of what point could possibly be Arwa Col. On June 6, 2016, Avilash Bisht, Raymond Shaw and Ranu Kawatra reached the ridge diving the Telang region with the Arwa and Saraswati Valley. We surveyed a couple of points on the ridge to see if we could locate a point as visualised by J.B. Auden but could see that both points were technical and did not offer safe passage for trekking groups. We completed the exploration by descending via Trimukhi Col to Badrinath, an alternative to Kalindhi Khal.

This photo feature is a recounting of our fascinating journey.

– Sankar Sridhar



Parting ways with Nilapani reveals a landscape dominated by sand and a plants stunted by the lack of oxygen. As if walking on sand was not problem enough, the prickly underbrush forced us to wind our way through gaps in them or risk snagging our trousers or laces.



Leopard Camp, so named by Harish Kapadia, offers a a rough night for trekkers. Camping ground is at a premium this place dominated by borders rocks and pebbles. The only consolation for us came in the form of the colourful hillsides that surrounded camp, changing hue with the slant of the sun as the evening lengthened.



The only thing worse than being stuck between a rock and a hard place is being stuck between boulders and crevasses. We chose the moraine rather than tangling with the crevasses as we headed to meet the Glacier. Our goal was to get to the base of Mana, seen here in the distance, on the left of the frame.



The Mana Glacier transformed into a Yogi's bed of pins, a far cry from the smooth flat sheet of white that it seemed from a distance the day before. But the contest seemed even for this one day. On hard ice, we matched the forming penitents with crampons of our own!



Raymond Shaw makes his way down the steep descent of 5,900 metre Saraswati Col. The decline, the powdery snow and dead rock made progress so slow and painful, the snowfield at the bottom seemed inviting, even though we knew a different set of problems waited for us there. The only redeeming factor was that we were nearing the end of this trek.



Avilash Bisht, Raymond Shaw, Ranu Kawatra and Tasha make their way down from the col as I watch from base camp. My broken ankle, which had come off the cast two days before we set out, was in no position to take any more punishment, and I decided to turn back have way to rest it for the gruelling climb down Saraswati Col. While missing out on the 6,100 metre col was saddening, it was a high even witnessing this tiny moment of history unfold before my eyes.

Entries open for the IMF Mountain Film Festival 2017

The poster features a large, stylized silhouette of a movie camera on the left, set against a background of a snowy mountain peak. The camera's reels are filled with a pattern of small white dots. In the top right corner, there is a logo for the IMF Mountain Film Festival, which consists of a blue camera lens icon above the text 'IMF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL'. The main text on the right side of the poster reads: 'INDIAN MOUNTAINEERING FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE FIRST MOUNTAIN MOVIE FESTIVAL- 2017'. Below this, it says 'Inauguration & Screening on 11 FEB 2017'. At the bottom right, there is a call to action: 'Download the brochure and SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY NOW.'

IMF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL

INDIAN MOUNTAINEERING
FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES
THE FIRST MOUNTAIN
MOVIE FESTIVAL- 2017

Inauguration &
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11 FEB
2017

Download the brochure and
SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY NOW.

To promote adventure sports in India the IMF is establishing a Mountain Film Festival. The IMF Film Festival will be a competitive event featuring the best adventure films shot in India or the Indian Himalaya and will take place in February every year. The theme is **Adventure Sports, Wildlife and Culture**, with a link to mountains, lakes, rivers or skies. Areas covered can be mountain climbing, rock or ice climbing, caving, kayaking, white water rafting, paragliding, wildlife in mountain regions and culture of mountain people.

Last date for submission of entries is **January 15, 2017**. Post submission a list of films titled as 'finalist' will be selected and will be first screened at a marquee event on Saturday, **February 11, 2017**, at the IMF Centre at New Delhi. The films selected as 'finalists' as part of a Pan India Tour will be screened throughout February at key locations within India, facilitated by the IMF Zonal Heads. The IMF will also share the finalist capsule with Mountaineering and Adventure Cubs across India and various Universities, effective March 1, 2017.

To download the brochure, please visit the IMF website at:

http://www.indmount.org/FormAdmin/201609210733089918_IMF%20Mountain%20Movie%20Festival%202017.pdf

Queries may be addressed to the Festival Director, Maninder Kohli at maninderkohli@gmail.com.



IMF conducts the first course on Expedition Medicine

The IMF Medical Expedition was conceived as a month long learning expedition with the purpose of creating an expanding pool of holistic mountain leaders capable of providing an integrated Basic Health support, Life support and rescue logistics to expeditions and the remote mountain communities in need until the arrival of definitive medical care.

The curriculum comprised of a set of interlinked learning modules packaged within a moving expedition to a mountain (peak 6499m) in Rudugaira Gad. These embedded learning modules progressively unfolded as a series of site-specific learning events of increasing complexity and problem solving focus as the expedition spiralled up the mountain.

Beginning at the IMF on 28th May 2016, with 21 participants, a series of inter-active lectures were delivered by the teaching faculty drawn from the city's premier teaching hospitals with a content focus on creating a wide epistemic base of foundational medical concepts through First Aid, CPR, Triage, Field Trauma management, Disaster responses, psychology , communication and leadership.

The expedition next shifted to the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM) where participant-centric problem solving methods were used, focussing on the domains of Acclimatization and High Altitude Illness. Next few days were spent at Harsil where the learning events moved through a spectrum of contents as well as a vulnerability analysis of the Sat-Tal nala which was the source of 2013 Dharli mud slide and also studying the health cultures and practises of the Bagori Village community.

The expedition next moved up to the Patagonia camp site (3100m) above Gangotri where learning was shaped through role plays focused on approaches to common medical problems. Thereafter the expedition moved to an intermediate camp site at 4200m, where the emphasis shifted to team-based problem solving with focus on improvised injury management and evacuation.

The subsequent 18 days were split between three learning sites at 4500m, 4700m and 5500m, where Team simulation exercises were carried out with five focus domains of – first aid response with rescue and evacuation logistics in complex gullies (4,800m), Avalanches, Hypothermia & Frostbite, Timed CPR on management and Team conflicts. Some members also climbed a 6499m peak, and descended bringing back all the left over garbage.

The expedition ended with a summative exam, after which all passing candidates were certified under on IMF certification with UIAA medical commission's approval and logo.

- Dr. Anil Gurtoo



IMF's Special Training Initiatives

The IMF, in collaboration with the Chandigarh Administration, conducted four batches of extremely special Basic Mountaineering Courses from May to July this year. The initiatives were organised to train two batches of young girls, under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative and, for the first time in the world, two batches exclusively for Specially Abled Youth, including vision and hearing impaired, polio afflicted and mentally challenged children.

The initiative was planned and organised by the IMF Youth Development Committee in association with the department of Women and Child Development, headed by Bhavna Garg, an IAS officer. The upcoming course was publicised widely through social media and after a suitably designed fitness test, 60 girls and 60 specially abled youth were selected to undergo the Basic Mountaineering Course. Preparatory lectures included Motivation Lectures by IMF President Col. H S Chauhan.

On 15th May, after a flagging-off ceremony graced by the hon'ble Governor, the participants proceeded to undertake training at ABVMAS Manali, HMI Darjeeling and JIM&WS Gulmarg, in four batches, two each of girls and children with special needs. The specially abled children were accompanied throughout their training with special Instructors, not only to aid and assist them but also to ensure that their motivation levels remained high. The youth proved to be a highly determined and positive group of individuals, who not only remained motivated themselves but inspired their instructors as well, as Special instructor Jagat recalls.

Following the training session, the two batches of girls moved on expeditions to Mt. Reynok and Friendship Peak. Both teams summited. The two highly enthusiastic teams of the specially abled children moved on expeditions to Mt. Tulian and Friendship Peak. The team to Friendship Peak could not succeed in summiting, while the team to Mt. Tulian summited. The teams were flagged-in by the legendary mountaineer Col. Prem Chand (retd).

Two of the visually impaired youth from this batch of trainees have since been selected for the 2017 IFSC Paraclimbing World Championships.

– Keerthi Pais



IMF collaborates with ONGC and Coal India for Cleaning Expeditions



The IMF and ONGC jointly conducted the Ganga Source Cleaning Campaign starting in June 2016 all through the year till October 2016. ONGC has been regularly collaborating with the IMF for such expeditions in the past as well, under the ambit of CSR.

This year regular cleaning of the area up to Gaumukh was undertaken and the segregated garbage was collected at Gangotri, and subsequently handed over at Haridwar for recycling and further disposal. Medical awareness camps were also conducted in the remote villages. Mr Rajiv Rawat, a mountaineer from Uttarakhand led the campaign.

Coal India sponsored a 10 member Cleaning Expedition to Indrahara Pass and Triund, jointly conducted by the IMF and the Regional Mountaineering Centre, McLeodganj. Two teams collected garbage in the popular trekking area of Illaqa till Illaqa Got (10,500 ft). Thereafter one of the teams moved towards the Old Kunal Pathari Temple while the second team to Llahes Cave (11,500 ft) and cleaned those areas.

Meanwhile, another team along with a doctor and a pharmacist proceeded towards Kareri village to conduct a medical camp. The villagers were examined and given medicines, as well as instructed on the benefits of cleanliness and hygiene.

Five of the team members moved towards Nag Dal (12,315 ft), as the rest of the team moved onwards to Indrahara Pass. Both the routes were found to be extremely dirty with plastic and other garbage strewn around. The collected garbage was sent back to RMC, McLeodganj on 07 mules, and next day on 10 mules.

Next the teams descended to Triund, another popular trekking route, and collected enough garbage to be sent back on 12 mules. They continued to clean and collect garbage along the route on their return march, and brought the bags down to RMC. The entire collected garbage was handed over to the Municipal Authorities of Dharamshala.



Indian Mountaineer No. 52, 2016 edition released

The IMF released the 52nd edition of the Indian Mountaineer, the annual IMF magazine. The edition contains a host of expedition and trekking reports as well as information on all the key developments of the year in the Indian Himalaya and the IMF. Some of the articles featured in this year's issue include:

Kusyabla (5,916m) & Temple (5,947m) in Korlomshe Tokpo, Zaskar – Derek Buckle

First Ascent, Northwest Ridge of Gangstang – Malcolm Bass

Skiing down Kedar Dome – Andreas Schwarz

Treks to 100 lakes of Kashmir – Mahmood Ahmad Shah

Explorations in Arunachal – Colonel Ajit Dutt

Online version of the Indian Mountaineer journal is available for a price of Rs. 100/-. Orders can be placed at orders@indmount.org.



IMF holds Climbathon 2016



IMF conducted the fourth edition of Climbathon, its Alpine Mountaineering Leadership Programme, from August 4 to August 27, 2016, in the Kun Base Camp region, Shafat Glacier, Jammu and Kashmir.

The Jammu and Kashmir government provided full hospitality and security for all 29 Climbathon participants from Srinagar till road head (Nun-Kun region) and back. Participants were given exposure to strengthen their climbing techniques. Learning sessions included both the hard-core mountaineering skills as well as the soft-core leadership/team building skills. Teaching methods included a spread of different styles, ranging from role-play to interaction through formal teaching sessions and group presentations and experience sharing.





IFSC Bouldering World Cup 2016 held in Mumbai

The 2016 IFSC Bouldering World Cup was organised by the Mumbai-based Girivihar Adventure Club and hosted by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation from 13 to 16 May this year. A total of 80 athletes from countries like the US, Canada, France, Russia, Slovakia, South Korea and Iran, among others, and including 18 Indian athletes, had competed for the top honours. The Japanese team dominated the podiums, as they took home two golds, one silver and one bronze medal, with Russia and Germany taking one each. The medal positions were:

Bouldering Men

Gold : Kokoro Fujii (Japan)
Silver : Tomoa Narasaki (Japan)
Bronze : Alexei Rubtsov (Russia)

Bouldering Women

Gold : Miho Nonaka (Japan)
Silver : Monika Retschy (Germany)
Bronze : Akiyo Naguchi (Japan)

Announcing the 22nd National Sports Climbing Championship



The 22nd National Sports Climbing Championship (NSCC) is all set to be held at Bengaluru, from 17 to 20 December, 2016, under IMF South Zone Committee. The **Lead**, **Speed** and **Bouldering** Competitions would be conducted as per the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) Rules, in the following categories:

Sub Junior (Girls & Boys)
10-13 yrs

Junior (Girls & Boys)
14-16 yrs

Senior (Men & Women)
17 years & above

Protected Area Permits relaxed in Border States

The central government has ordered relaxing of the Protected Area Permit (PAP) regime to enable foreigners to visit restricted areas in Ladakh, Arunachal, Sikkim and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

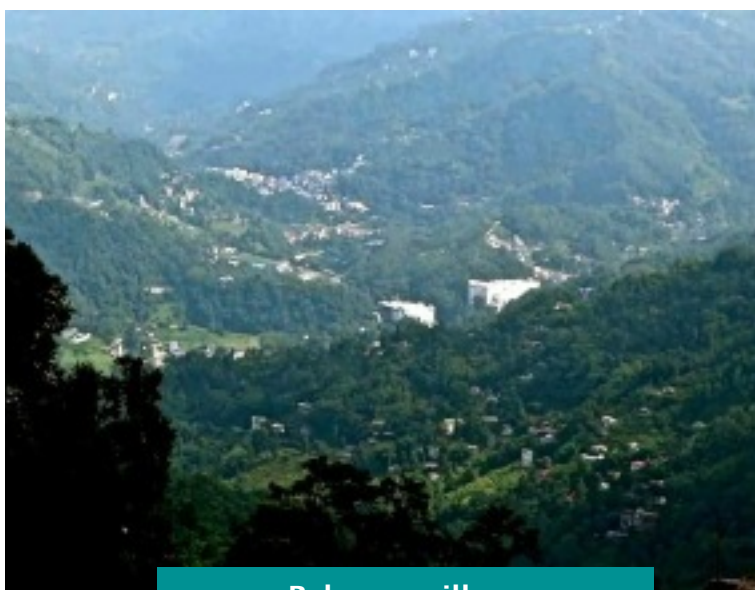
Solo foreign travellers will now be permitted to visit the restricted areas with Protected Area Permit (PAP) and Restricted Area Permit (RAP), available within 10 days of application, as against the earlier 30-day limit. They will also now be able to apply only 30 days prior to travel, as opposed to the earlier 60-day limit. From now on, the concerned state government will be issuing the permission for travel.

Foreign tourists would now be permitted to visit a number of unexplored areas in Ladakh like Panamik, Phukpochey, Hargam, Taksha, Sasoma, Chaglung, Kobet, Aranu, Khemi, Warshi, including Yarma Gompa/Yarma Gonbo Monastery of the Nubra Valley in Leh.



For credits and information: <http://www.ibtimes.co.in/centre-eases-travel-norms-foreigners-going-places-like-ladakh-arunachal-report-682809>

Sikkim's first Airport to come up in 2017



Pakyang village

Sikkim is slated to get its first greenfield airport operational by March 2017. The airport, spread over 200 acres, is coming up at Pakyang, 35 kms. south of Gangtok, the state's capital. Presently the nearest airport to Sikkim is at Bagdogra, about 124 kms. away. Also under construction is a terminal with a capacity for 100 passengers, ATC tower and a car park for 80 vehicles.

When completed, the airport will be one of the five highest airports in India.

For credits and information: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/pakyong-airport-in-sikkim-to-become-operational-by-2017/articleshow/50503378.cms>

Electric buses on Rohtang route, trial run begins



Rohtang Pass

Following the orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), Himachal Pradesh govt. has initiated efforts to ply non-polluting vehicles on the 51 km stretch of the Manali–Rohtang highway. A 10 day trial run of a 24-seater Electric bus began in Manali in the first week of October, flagged off by the state Transport Minister.

NGT had ordered the state government to run CNG and electric vehicles to the ecologically fragile mountain pass to reduce pollution in the area. Successful trail runs of CNG vehicles have already been conducted earlier, however the government is first trying to introduce electric buses as transporting CNG to Manali would not be easy and the procedure would take a little more time.

For credits and information: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/Himachal-Pradesh-begins-trial-run-of-electric-buses-on-Rohtang-route/articleshow/54685861.cms>

Sikkim and IMF to promote eco-tourism in Kangchendzonga

The Sikkim government plans to promote Mt. Kangchendzonga (8,586m) and the Kangchendzonga National Park, recently declared as a World Heritage Site, as an eco-tourism destination.

15 day circumambulation (Parikrama) treks of the periphery of India's highest peak have been planned in association with the IMF, to be conducted during the summer season.



The state govt. has also launched a 15 minute helicopter service from Gangtok to witness breathtaking views of Mount Kanchenjunga. 14 pristine peaks, having height of below 7,000m, have been opened recently in North and West Sikkim, and the state government has identified about 15 places from where the various peaks can be viewed.

For credits and information: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/sikkim-to-promote-kanchendzonga-as-eco-tourism-destination-3073227/>

Leh celebrates the 4th Naropa Festival: “Kumbh of the Himalaya”

From 16 – 22 September, 2016, the barren landscape came alive with dazzling colours, in celebration of the 1000th birth anniversary of the great Buddhist saint Naropa.

The week-long celebrations, held at Hemis monastery, the seat of the Drukpa tradition, saw more than 200,000 people in attendance, including celebrities from Hollywood, Bollywood and the music world. The

rare public display of six bone ornaments and the unfurling of the ancient silk Thangka of Buddha Amitabha, the largest silk brocade in the Himalayas, was among the main highlights of the “Kumbh of the Himalaya”, so-named as it is held every 12 years like the Kumbh. Several riveting performances were held throughout the week, including traditional Buddhist dances, martial arts and musical performances by acclaimed artistes.



For credits and information: <http://www.naropa2016.org/naropa2016.php>

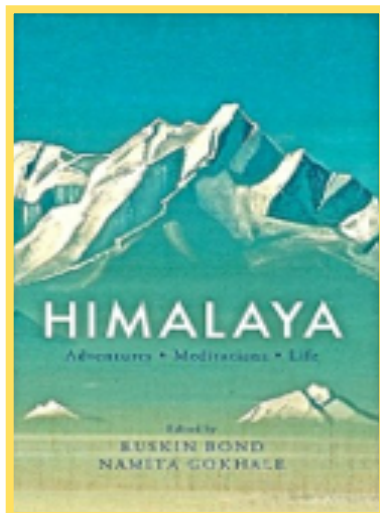
“The Swiss Machine” climbs Mt. Shivling in 7 days!



Acclaimed Alpinist and record breaking speed climber Ueli Steck was in India recently on a hush-hush 40th birthday trip with his wife, climbing Mt. Shivling (6,543m) in the Uttarakhand Himalaya, as he revealed in an interview to Stefan Nestler during the International Mountain Summit at Bressanone.

Great weather had ensured that the couple were on top of the challenging mountain in barely 7 days. Steck prefers to climb fast, even running at times, earning himself the moniker “The Swiss Machine”. Asked about his next project, he revealed his plans to again attempt an Everest-Lhotse traverse without bottled oxygen, along with Tenji Sherpa.

For credits and information: <http://blogs.dw.com/adventuresports/2016/10/15/ueli-steck-if-you-go-too-far-you-are-dead/>



Himalaya: Adventures * Meditations * Life

This riveting anthology of over fifty essays features a dazzling range of voices as varied as Fa-Hsien, Pundit Nain Singh, Heinrich Harrer, Fanny Parkes, Dharamvir Bharati, Arundhati Subramaniam, Rahul Sankrityayan, Amitav Ghosh, Jawaharlal Nehru, Frank Smythe, Paul Brunton, Edmund Hillary, Mark Twain, Sarat Chandra Das, Dom Moraes, Manjushree Thapa, and then the two editors themselves. There are tales of great climbs, explorations, spiritual experiences, animal sightings, accounts of catastrophes, and even war on “World’s highest battlefield”. An unmissable read!

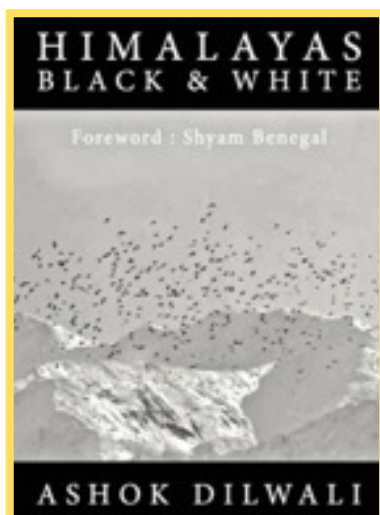
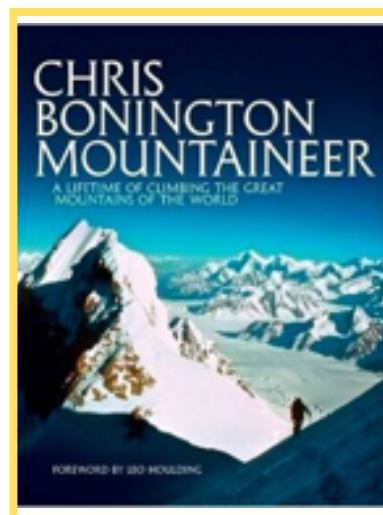
Edited by Ruskin Bond and Namita Gokhale
Speaking Tiger Publishing Pvt Ltd * September 2016 * Rs. 559/-

Chris Bonington Mountaineer

A lifetime of climbing the great mountains of the world 2016 Revised Edition

Chris Bonington’s revised and updated photographic autobiography, while chronicling his sixty years of climbing the world’s most challenging mountains, now brings us up-to-date with the latest exploits of this mountaineering giant. He takes us through his incredible lifetime of climbing with over 500 stunning photographs, recounting his recent climb of the ‘Old Man of Hoy’, which had also been one of his first ascents, with Leo Houlding. Chris Bonington Mountaineer is a must for anyone with a passion for exploration, mountains or climbing.

by Chris Bonington
Vertebrate Publishing * November 2016 * Rs. 1622/-



Himalayas Black & White

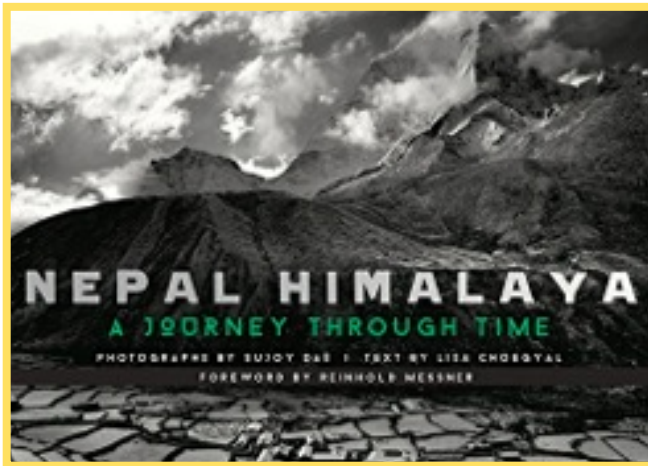
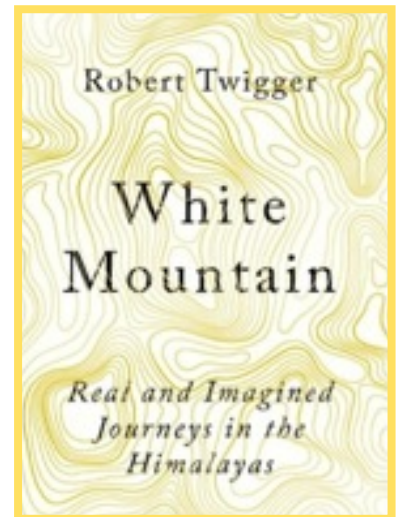
Himalayas Black & White is the twenty fourth landmark volume in the illustrious career of eminent photo-artist Ashok Dilwali. In the words of the artist himself, “In photography, Colour touches the body, Black and White captures the soul”. The volume is his own special tribute to his guru Ansel Adams, in his preferred palette. As Dilwali says, “Presentation of the Himalayas in colour has reached a point of saturation and an awareness of the beauty of stark monochromatic effects is emerging.” This book is a compilation culled from the thousands of images taken by him over several years of capturing the beauty of the Himalaya during hundreds of trips.

by Ashok Dilwali * Rave India Press * November 2016 * Rs. 1100/-

White Mountain

Robert Twigger, the acclaimed author of books such as *Red Nile* and *Angry White Pyjamas*, explores and unravels some real and imaginary journeys in a sweeping and enthralling biography of the world's greatest mountain range. Following a meandering path across the Himalayas to its physical end in Nagaland on the Indian-Burmese border, Twigger encounters incredible stories from a unique cast of mountaineers and mystics, pundits and prophets, and the unexpected links between them. The result is a surprising and compelling read.

by Robert Twigger * W&N, Orion Books* October 2016 * Rs. 525/-



Nepal Himalaya: A Journey Through Time

Sujoy Das, one of the most seasoned photographers of the Himalaya, and Lisa Choegyal together bring out the timeless beauty of the Nepal Himalaya. Sujoy's extraordinary black and white images brilliantly capture the majestic landscape and the fascinating life of the mountain villages, as Lisa's excellent text and captions provide perspective to the evolving lifestyle of this magical region. A visual treat!

by Sujoy Das and Lisa Choegyal * Vajra Books * July 2016 * Rs. 1935/-

Short film

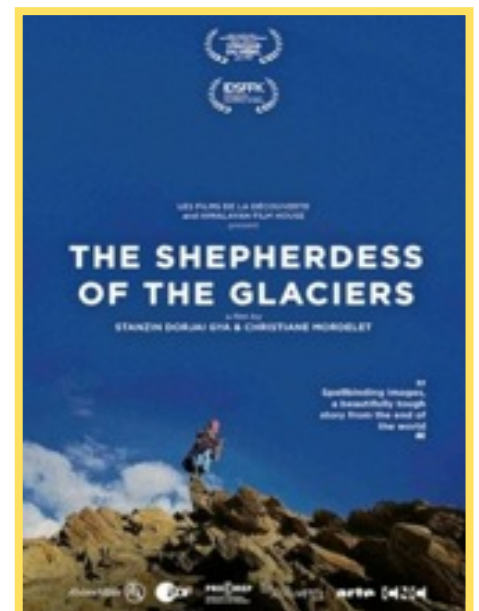
The Shepherdess of the Glaciers

Directed by : Stanzin Dorjai Gya and Christane Hordelet

This exceptional and moving documentary explores the life of Tsering, director Stanzin's shepherdess sister, as she devotedly, almost maternally, tends to her herd of almost 300 Pashmina goats and sheep in the remote regions of the High Himalaya.

Tsering, the only surviving shepherdess of the family, lives alone in the remote reaches of Ladakh, with only a radio for company, and under constant threat of attacks from wolves and snow leopards.

"Shepherdess of the Glaciers", which has been generating keen interest among documentary viewers worldwide, won the Special Jury Mention in the Long Documentary category at the 9th International Documentary and Short Film Festival of Kerala (IDSFFK).



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Photo courtesy Sankar Sridhar: Nelang valley, Garhwal Himalaya

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