

Mt. Changuch (6322 M) Expedition 2010

Organized by:

South Calcutta Trekkers Association

45B Puddapukur Road, Kolkata 700020

Expedition Report

Information as required in format specified by IMF	
1. Name of the Association	South Calcutta Trekkers Association
2. Name of the Expedition	Mt Changuch (6322 Mt) Expedition 2010
3. Name of the Peak with height in metres and six figure co-ordinates	Mt. Changuch Height: 6322 meters Co-ord: 30°17' N, 80°02' E
4. Date on which permit given by IMF	23 rd March 2010
5. Nominal role of the team	Leader – Rajsekhar Maity Dy Leader – Brijes Day Quarter Master – Binoy Bhowmik Treasurer – Barun Majumdar Equipment In-charge – Upal Chakraborty Paramedic – Shyamal Dey Members – Sujit Bag Dipen Samanta Prasenjit Majumdar Gopa Day Ashis Gupta
6. Commencement of Trek	18 th May '10 from Munsyari (7,200 ft)
7. Number of camps en route to Base Camp	Five transit camps - Lilam (5,854 ft) - Bugdyar (8,028 ft) - Reilkot (10,295 ft) - Lawan (11,400 ft) - Bakri Thach (11,532 ft)
8. Interaction with local administration and other agencies	1. Sub-Divisional Magistrate Office, Munsyari 2. Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun 3. Forest Office, Munsyari 4. ITBP check-post, Bugdyar 5. ITBP check-post, Reilkot 6. Mr. Narendra Kumar (C/O- Adventure Trekking, Munsyari) No assistance was required and no problems were faced
9. Establishment of Base Camp	Lawan Glacier (13,907 ft) 23 rd May '10
10. Establishment of higher camps	Camp – I (15,438 ft) on 26 th May '10 Camp – II (16,852 ft) on 30 th May '10 Camp – III (19,121 ft) on 1 st June '10
11. Technical difficulty on way to higher camps	<u>Base to Camp - I</u> No technical difficulty faced. Trek with steep height gain by the side of Lawan Glacier, through a ridge leading to the Changuch Ice-field <u>Camp I to Camp – II</u> Easy ascent above the snow-line to the ice-field <u>Camp – II to Camp – III</u> Difficult mixed wall of rock, snow and ice at 60 – 80 deg gradient. Very poor rock and snow condition.
12. Snow & Rock condition	<u>Snow</u> No snow up to Camp-I. Camp-I to Camp-II : Thick and soft snow on the route and at Camp-II site. Camp-II to Camp-III : Very poor snow condition. Slopes of 60-65 degree elevation covered with thin layer of soft snow. At parts, the layer of soft snow melted and hard ice from beneath was

	<p>exposed. Snow condition was bad at Camp-III also. Summit ridge : Moderate stable snow deposition with huge cornices along the NW ridge. But at patches the snow melted and mirror-like glossy hard blue ice got exposed.</p> <p><u>Rock</u> Loose scree towards Camp-I. Loose scree at some parts of the way to Camp-II. Camp-II to Camp-III : Very poor rock condition. Unstable rocks on the wall at 60-80 deg gradient with one long and wide rock-fall zone. Summit ridge : First part consists of loose rocks at 70-75 degree gradient.</p>
13. Weather Condition	<p>On the 6 days approach to the base camp the weather remained clear with a couple of short drizzles. It deteriorated gradually as we were establishing higher camps above base. Very High Winds with snow was experienced couple of times at camp - I & once at the Summit Camp. Warm & moist air masses used to flow from the south (Pindar Valley) creating disturbance to the local weather system of the Lawan valley. Base camp also did experience soft snow of couple of inches twice. Initially the clouds were of low & medium levels and at the end high level clouds started appearing. We could observe clouds at all levels and forms during our stay above base, such as Cirrus, Alto cirrus, Alto Cumulus, Alto Stratus, Cumulus congestus and Stratus for short durations.</p> <p>On 3rd June early morning we observed Cirro Starus covering the sky and creating a Halo around the sun.</p> <p>There was no long stretch of bad weather but the weather kept on deteriorating at regular intervals.</p> <p>Temperatures were more or less as per expectation. The lowest recorded was on the very early morning of 3rd June at 19100 Ft of 15 Deg below Zero.</p>
14. Summit Report	Attached
15. Camp site cleaning activity & disposal of garbage.	All non bio degradable garbage were carried down and submitted at the forest office at Munsyari, where the garbage was disposed off in presence of concerned forest officials.
16. Maximum height attained and its date	6050 m (20000 ft approx), 3 rd June '10, 10:00 hrs
17. Name of Summiteers	Summit not reached
18. Name of LO	Not applicable
19. Total Expenditure	Attached
20. Details of Day by Day events	Attached
21. Suggestion / Complain	Suggestion – Rules and regulations for all sorts of permits should be informed properly in advance.
22. Survey of India map or sketch marking accurately the route, camp site and their heights.	Attached

Rajsekhar Maity
Leader
Mt. Changuch (6322 M) Expedition 2010

Date: 26th July, 2010
Place: Kolkata

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Details of Day-wise Events

DATE	ACTIVITIES
14 May, 2010	Departure from Howrah Station by Amritsar Mail
15 May, 2010	Reached Lucknow at afternoon. Caught Nainital Express from Aishbagh at night
16 May, 2010	Arrived Tanakpur at morning. Reached Pithoragarh by jeep at evening
17 May, 2010	Took morning bus to Thal. Then went to Munsyari by jeep. Reached Munsyari by noon. Spent rest of the day in administrative work and marketing
18 May, 2010	Went to Dhapa by Jeep. Trekked to Lilam (5854 ft) via Sai Polu
19 May, 2010	Trekked to Bugdyar (8028 ft)
20 May, 2010	Trekked to Reilkot (10295 ft)
21 May, 2010	Trekked to Lawan village (11400 ft)
22 May, 2010	Trekked to Bakri Thach (11532 ft)
23 May, 2010	Trekked to Base Camp (13907 ft)
24 May, 2010	Took Rest at Base Camp for Acclimatization & Load arrangement
25 May, 2010	7 members and 3 sherpas ferried load to Camp-I (15438 ft) and returned back to Base Camp
26 May, 2010	3 members, 3 sherpas and 1 cook occupied Camp-I (15438 ft) 3 members ferried load to Camp-I and returned back to Base Camp 1 member felt unwell at Base Camp and was sent back to Martoli with another 1 member
27 May, 2010	2 members and 3 sherpas from Camp-I ferried load to Camp-II (16852 ft) and returned back to Camp-I 2 members from Base Camp occupied Camp-I
28 May, 2010	1 member and the cook ferried load to Camp-II and returned to Camp-I 1 member from Camp-I went to Base Camp to ferry extra load and returned to Camp-I 3 sherpas occupied Camp-II (16852 ft) and started opening route to Camp-III
29 May, 2010	No movement at any camp due to bad weather and snow-fall
30 May, 2010	4 members from Camp-I moved to Camp-II (16852 ft) 1 member and the cook stayed at Camp-I 3 sherpas continued fixing rope on the wall in between Camp-II & Camp-III
31 May, 2010	2 sherpas completed fixing rope up to Camp-III and came back to Camp-II 1 sherpa Came down to Camp-I to fetch extra equipments and food and returned to Camp-II 2 members from Base Camp ferried load to Camp-I and returned to Camp-II 1 member from Camp-I made visit to Camp-II to meet team members & sherpas and returned to Camp-I
1 June, 2010	4 members and 3 sherpas climbed up to the Col on NW ridge of the peak and established Camp-III/Summit Camp (19121 ft)
2 June, 2010	2 sherpas went for route opening and rope fixing on the NW ridge of the peak 4 members and 1 sherpa stayed at Camp-III (19121 ft)

3 June, 2010	<p>2 members and 2 sherpas went for the summit. They started climbing the NW ridge at 4.00 am</p> <p>The summit team reached up to a height of 20000 ft on the NW ridge by 10.00 am</p> <p>The summit team then faced difficulties arising out of bad weather and shortfall of technical equipment, decided to call off the summit attempt and came back to Camp-III</p> <p>The entire team (4 members, 3 sherpas) came down from Camp-III and reached Camp-I by 8.30 pm at night</p>
4 June, 2010	<p>All members, sherpas and cook moved from Camp-I and came down to Base Camp at morning</p> <p>Rest of the day was spent at load re-arrangement</p>
5 June, 2010	Trekked from Base Camp to Martoli
6 June, 2010	Trekked to Bugdyar
7 June, 2010	Trekked to Lilam
8 June, 2010	Trekked to Dhapa. Took jeep to reach Munsyari by afternoon. Spent rest of the day in administrative work and packing
9 June, 2010	Took jeep to Kathgodam. Reached Kathgodam at night
10 June, 2010	Boarded the train at Kathgodam station at night
11 June, 2010	In train
12 June, 2010	Reached Kolkata at morning

Rajsekhar Maity

Leader

Mt. Changuch (6322 M) Expedition 2010

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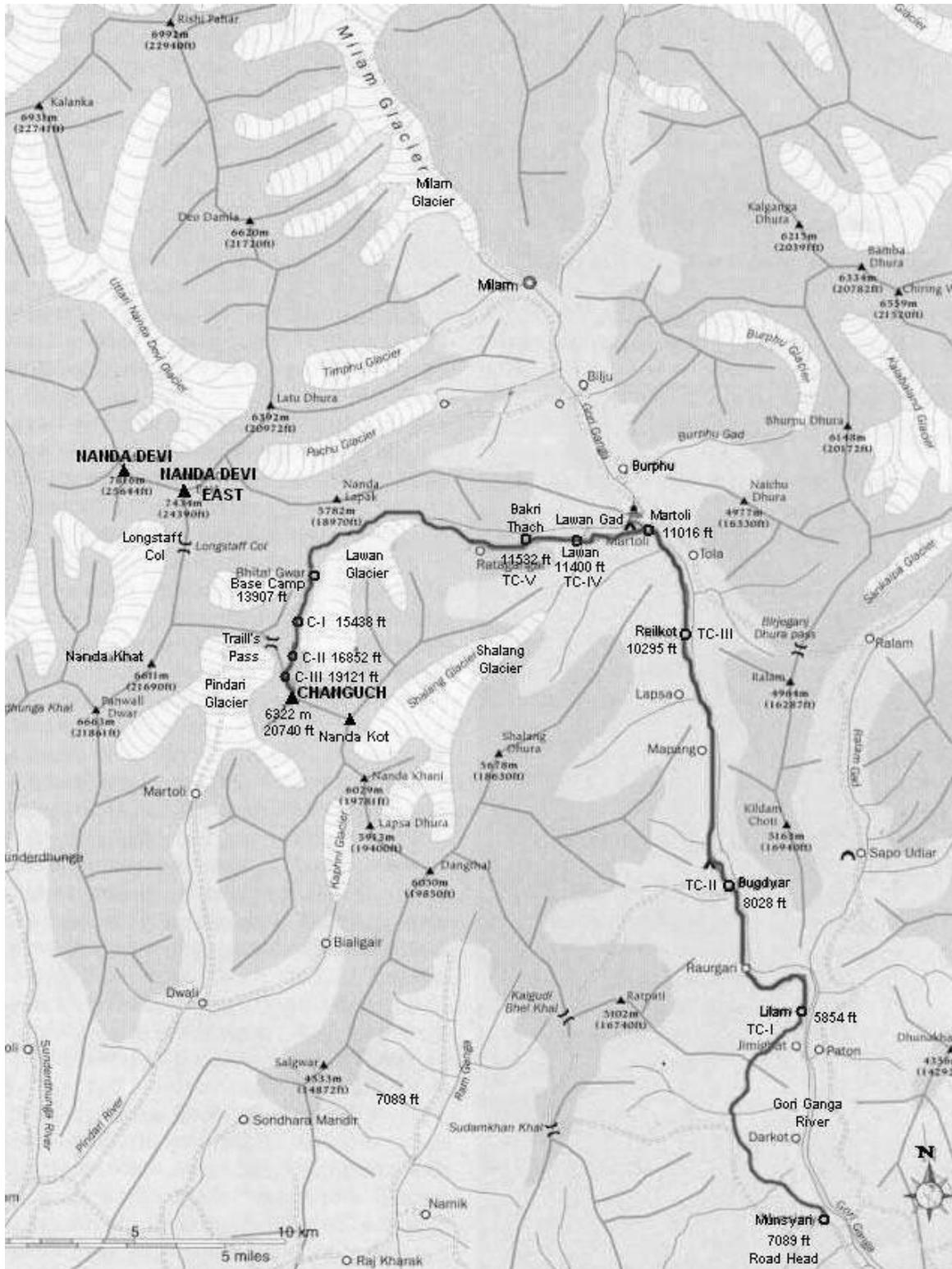
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Route Map



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Day-wise & Summit Report

Name of the Peak	: Changuch
Height	: 6322 Mt. (20,740 Ft.)
Latitude	: 30°17' N
Longitude	: 80°02' E
State	: Uttarakhand
Distt.	: Pithoragarh
Location	: Lawan Glacier
Expedition Status	: Unsuccessful
Reached Upto	: 6000 Mt. on North-West Ridge
Reason for Failure	: Shortfall of Rope and Anchors in fixing the rope on the summit ridge
Duration	: 14 th May to 12 th June 2010
Team Members	: Rajsekhar Maity, Brijes Day, Dipen Samanta, Barun Mazumdar, Sujit Bag, Upal Chakraborty, Binoy Bhowmik, Prasenjit Mazumdar, Shyamal Dey, Ashis Gupta, Gopa Day.
Sherpa	: Phurba Sherpa, Mingma Tenzing Sherpa, Topchen Sherpa.

Motivated by the long list of unsuccessful attempts by climbers of various countries on Mt. Changuch (6,322m), this year South Calcutta Trekkers Association had undertaken a venture to launch an expedition to Mt. Changuch which is situated at the outer rim of the Nanda Devi Sanctuary in the state of Uttarakhand.

Changuch was first attempted in 1987 by an Anglo-Indian team which could hardly find a route to climb it. Since then, till 2009, Changuch faced a considerable number of attempts, all of which resulted in failures. It was only in May, 2009, that a British team, led by world-famous mountaineer Martin Moran, made the first ascent of Changuch.

To achieve the dream of the first Indian team on the summit of Mt. Changuch an eleven member team from South Calcutta Trekkers Association along with 3 Sherpa set out from Kolkata on the eve of 14th May 2010. This was South Calcutta Trekkers Association's 21st Expedition.

14th May 11 members & 3 Sherpas left Howrah railway station by Amritsar Mail for Lucknow at 7:10 pm.

15th May The team got down at Lucknow station at 5pm and hired two Tempo jeeps to carry the load to Aishbagh station, a 20 minutes' drive from there. The advance team sent earlier to collect equipments from NIM, Uttarkashi and permit from Forest Department, Dehradun (by depositing a draft of Rs. 11,100) met us at Lucknow and handed over the things to us. The main expedition team then left Aishbagh station by Nainital Express at 8:45 pm.

16th May Reached Tanakpur at 10 am. Due to sudden rush for some local festivals going at that time we couldn't find the bus service on time. There were very few jeep/cars at jeep stand and that too loaded with local passengers. After 3 hours of waiting we managed to reserve 2 cars which brought us to Pithoragarh town at 7 pm night. Stayed at KMVN Tourist Rest House.

- 17th May** Took the first bus at 5am to Thal, and then hired two jeeps to get to Munsyari at 12 noon. Met Narendra from 'Adventure Trekking' at KMVN TRH Munsyari who were contacted in advance for porter, cook and mule arrangement. Rajsekhar & Narendra went to the Sub Divisional Magistrate's office to inform him of our expedition and then went to Forest Department office to show the permit received from Dehradun and deposited a draft of Rs. 5000. Rest of the team completed the remaining marketing & packing.
- 18th May** The team with porters and loads got into 2 jeeps and 1 mini truck at morning and reached Dhapa where we met the mule-owners with their mules. The usual trek route starts from Dhapa and goes to Lilam through Jimmighat which is 2 hours' easy walk. But due to a huge road project work now going at that region the trek route is deviated through Kurjimia and Sai Polu which is a 14 km long walk through ups and downs. The load was distributed to 10 porters and 8 mules and we started to trek from Dhapa at 12 noon. Reached Lilam (5,854 ft) at around 4.30 pm amidst rain.
- 19th May** The rain continued for the whole night and also in the morning. It stopped at around 10 am and we set out in half an hour. After a 6 hrs' trek we reached Bugdyar (8,028 ft) at 4 pm. The entire route was along side river Goriganga. Reaching Bugdyar we reported to the ITBP check-post and showed the permits and documents to get clearance from them. We stayed at a tea-house hotel that night.
- 20th May** We started early in the morning and reached Reilkot (10,295 ft) at 2.30 pm afternoon. Took shelter at ITBP hut for the night. At evening the temperature came down to nearly zero deg Celsius.
- 21st May** We felt little short of kerosene oil, so bought 15 liters from the only shop at Reilkot. The porters also collected their rations for the next few days from here as there won't be any more shop on the route after Martoli. At Martoli we left Goriganga river and went along the true right of Lawan Gad which originates from the Lawan Glacier at the base of Mt. Nandakot and Changuch. At Lamgara, a beautiful green meadow with an outstanding view of Nandadevi East, we crossed Shalang Gad and ascended up to the deserted Lawan village (11,400 ft) at around 4 pm. We pitched our tents and Sherpas went for the water as there was no water stream that time.
- 22nd May** The mules wouldn't go beyond a certain point on this day's route because of the track ahead was not suitable for the mules. So the mule-owners left us at Shyama Kharak which is merely an hour's distance from Lawan. We moved ahead to another bugyal called Bakri Thach (11,532 ft). The porters ferried the entire load dumped by the mules in 3 iterations.
- 23rd May** Knowing that this day's route was the longest one we set out quite early. The loads were divided into 3 sets which would be ferried to the Base camp by the 10 porters in 3 days. After a long day's walk along a gradual inclination we reached the terminal moraine of Lawan Glacier from where the Lawan Gad comes out. We took the left lateral moraine of Lawan glacier after crossing the stream and reached at a vast open meadow at the junction of three streams coming down from Changuch, Traill's Pass and Nandadevi East respectively. 3 giants circled around the place, Changuch and Nanda Kot at south and at west stood the majestic Nandadevi East. Also Nanda Lapak was standing at north-west. At nearly 4:30 pm we established our Base camp (13,907 ft) there. The porters returned back to Bakri Thach for the next day's ferry.
- 24th May** This was declared a rest day for acclimatization & re-arranging loads for ferry to the next camps. The Sherpas went to look for a suitable site for Camp-I. Porters ferried 2nd round of load to Base Camp and returned back to Bakri Thach.
- 25th May** The route to Camp-I went along the stream coming down from Changuch ice-field for half an hour and then followed through a ridge of steep ascent for 1 hour to reach a small grassy patch just before the ice field of Changuch. 7 members and 3 Sherpas ferried load to Camp-I (15438 ft) and came back to Base Camp. Porters ferried the last round of load from Bakri Thach to Base Camp and left for Munsyari.

Meanwhile one senior member of the team fell sick of the exhaustion. Though after taking rest he recovered a bit, we decided not to take any unnecessary risk and to send him back to Munsyari the next day.

- 26th May** 3 members this day along with 3 Sherpas and the cook occupied Camp-I. Other 3 members ferried loads to Camp-I and then returned back to Base camp. The Sherpas went ahead to recce the route for Camp-III. The senior member at Base camp who fell sick earlier went back to Martoli with another one member. So we then came down to 9 members from the 11 members' team.
- 27th May** This day 2 of the 3 members from Camp-I ferried load to Camp-II (16852 ft) and returned to Camp-I. 2 more members from Base camp moved to Camp-I.
- 28th May** 1 member and the cook from Camp-I ferried load to Camp-II and returned to Camp-I. Another member from Camp-I visited the Base Camp to fetch some extra supply of food and equipment. The Sherpas moved to Camp-II (16852 ft) and started opening the route to Camp-III. The route to Camp-III was comprised of one mixed wall of rock, snow and ice of around 1500 ft at 60-80 deg gradient.
- 29th May** No movement at any camp due to bad weather (snow fall and continuous high wind). There was a sign of a spell of poor weather. Lots of warm valley clouds were originating from Lawan Gad valley. Five members – Rajsekhar, Brijes, Barun, Sujit and Upal stayed at Camp-I along with the cook. Three Sherpas didn't move from Camp-II and rest of the members took rest at Base camp.
- 30th May** The weather was not very clear, it was snowing mildly at Camp-I since the morning, still we decided to proceed to Camp-II this day. 4 members - Brijes, Barun, Sujit and Upal started at 12 noon from Camp-I and reached Camp-II (16852 ft) at 3.30 pm. 1 member, Rajsekhar, along with the cook, stayed at Camp-I. When the team left for Camp-II, snowfall had stopped, but there was a bit of white-out around. On leaving Camp-I the team followed a grassy ridge for a little while before descending on to a scree slope which led to a glacial field at the base of Changuch. The glacial field was covered with thick and soft snow. The route followed through the glacial field was without crevasses, consisting of a few snow-covered slopes of gentle elevation. While going over these slopes the twin peaks of Nanda Devi was seen on the West, for the first time. Towards the end of the route, the team had to climb a snow-covered slope of 65-70 degree elevation, along which a climbing rope of 50 metres length had been fixed.
- Camp-II had been established on the glacial field at the base of Mt. Changuch. Two tents were pitched on the flat ground covered by soft snow. When the team reached Camp-II, three Sherpas - Phurba, Mingma Tenzing and Topchen - were fixing rope on the wall that led to Camp-III. They faced difficulties in finding the route at the last stretch of the wall where the gradient was high and brittle hard ice was exposed. They couldn't make that through this day. They returned to Camp-II at 5 p.m.
- 31st May** Members took rest at Camp-II, while two Sherpas - Phurba and Mingma Tenzing - climbed up the wall towards Camp-III to finish fixing rope along the wall. They tried a new route up there devoid of hard-ice exposure. One Sherpa went to Camp-I to fetch supplies of food and technical equipment. One member, Rajsekhar, came up to Camp-II from Camp-I to meet the members and the Sherpas. At 4 p.m. the Sherpas returned after finishing rope-fixing along the route up to Camp-III. The weather was clear throughout the day. The temperature was recorded -3 degree Celsius at evening 6 pm.
- 1st June** All of the 4 members and 3 Sherpas from Camp-II started on the way to Camp-III at 7 am. They started climbing using the fixed rope from the base of the wall. The route to Camp-III mostly followed the edge of the rock, coming on to the snow-covered slopes at times. This had to be done in order to avoid a rock-fall zone along a snow-gully at the middle of the wall. Right at the base of the wall, the climb began by negotiating a bergschrund, and following a rock wall of 60-65 degree gradient. The rock wall consisted of huge unstable pieces of rock, and had to be traversed for quite a while till we reached the base of the rock-fall zone at 10.30 a.m. The team had to wait perched up under an overhanging rock, till 12.30 p.m. when the rock-fall subsided. At the same time heavy snow-fall began coupled with a strong wind. The rock-fall gully led to a few

snow-covered slopes of 60-65 degree elevation. The line of climb throughout followed the edge of the rock. Next came a long traverse on snow, with a gentle elevation, merging into a short traverse on the rock, leading to the final section of the climb. The final section consisted of a steep climb on snow, of 70-80 degree gradient, culminating into the summit ridge. The point at which we climbed on to the summit ridge was covered with a continuous line of a thick cornice of soft snow. The team reached Camp-III (19121 ft) at 5.30 p.m. It snowed continuously till then. At Camp-III, two tents were pitched cutting a platform on the knife-edged summit ridge. On one side of the tents, towards the Lawan glacier, the ridge was corniced, and on the other side, towards the Pindari glacier, there was a sharp drop of more than 1000 feet.

All along the route from Camp-II to Camp-III the condition of snow was very disadvantageous for climbing. The snow was extremely soft, and steps kept breaking down on the slightest pressure. Snow stakes were used as anchors in the snow for rope fixing. As the rock wall was full of big, loose rocks, some rock pitons were used in small cracks, while snow stakes were inserted into big cracks as anchors. We used 4 coils of polypropylene rock, of 220 metres each, and 2 climbing ropes, of 50 metres each, and one climbing rope of 80 metres on the wall to Camp-III (19,121 ft).

2nd June This day two Sherpas could fix rope only on a small part of the summit ridge due to a shortfall of rope. After returning to Camp-III, one of the Sherpas went down on the wall below and opened one coil of polypropylene rope from the line of rope fixed between Camp-II and Camp-III. The weather was clear during the day. At night there was a strong blizzard, which went on till 4 a.m.

3rd June Around 4.30 a.m. Brijes, Upal, Phurba and Mingma Tenzing, went for the summit attempt. Two members and one Sherpa stayed at Camp-III. The summit ridge went up towards the summit in sharp elevations with a continuous line of corniced snow towards the Lawan glacier and a steep slope of 70-75 degree gradient covered with snow and rocks towards the Pindari glacier. Due to the cornice, we could not walk on top of the ridge, and had to climb along the slope on the side of the Pindari glacier. The first part of the summit ridge was covered with snow and loose rock. With the first rays of the morning sun, we saw twin peak of Nanda Devi on our West and the Pindari icefall at the base of the slope which joined the ridge on our west.

At 8.30 a.m. we were almost half-way on our way to the summit. At this point however, the line of fixed rope, which had been fixed the day before, had ended. In front was a snow-covered hump of 65-70 degree gradient, in the middle of which, there was a large section displaying hard, exposed and blue-colored ice. The route to the summit went straight up along this hump, after which the ridge, in a sharp elevation, ended at the summit pyramid. The Sherpas started fixing rope at this point on the remaining part of the route. We waited till 10 a.m. at this point, at which time, the weather got bad. Moreover, we understood that the pace of climbing would get extremely slow, as we had only one coil of polypropylene rope which had to be fixed, opened and re-fixed along the rest of the route. On top of that the weather was deteriorating fast. We decided to abandon the attempt and descend. The point from where we came back was 6000 metres. We used one coil of polypropylene rope, of 220 metres and four coils of climbing rope, of 50, 70, 80 and 100 metres respectively. For anchoring we mostly used snow stakes and a few rock pitons at the initial stretch. We came down to Camp-III at 12 noon, packed everything, and started climbing down at 1 p.m. amidst snowfall and a strong wind. The descent on the wall was hazardous, as most of the anchors had come out, and the snow had melted substantially, making the terrain highly unstable. The team reached Camp-I at 8.30 p.m.

4th June The team left some materials (tent, stove, excess food) at Camp-II the last day. This day one sherpa and the cook brought back the load from Camp-II. Then all five members, the Sherpas and the cook went down to Base camp, they reached the Base camp by 10.00 am and was welcomed by the members at Base camp. Rest of the day was spent at load re-arrangement. The excess food was distributed to the porters for their own use.

The garbage, that was being collected all through the expedition days, was made into two loads. This load of garbage was to be brought down to Munsyari and to be presented to the Forest Department office. We made sure that no garbage has been

- 5th June** All the members, Sherpas and the cook along with 10 porters started in the morning and reached Martoli at around 5 pm evening. We stayed at a hotel at Martoli for the night.
- 6th June** Trekking from Martoli to Bugdyar and stayed at a road-side teahouse hotel.
- 7th June** This day we trekked from Bugdyar and reached Lilam.
- 8th June** This day we divided into two teams. One team started very early from Milam and reached Dhapa at 12 noon where they got into one jeep arranged earlier. Rest of the members came a little late and reached Munsyari by late afternoon.
- After reaching Munsyari we went to the Forest Department office with the two loads of garbage. The garbage was then presented to the Forest department. The concerned officer then took it and burnt the garbage at their premises. After being satisfied they then returned the Demand Draft of Rs.5000 that was deposited earlier.
- 9th June** There was no direct bus service from Munsyari to Kathgodam/Haldwani. The only bus goes up to Pithoragarh only. So we booked two jeeps and traveled to Kathgodam. Reached the Kathgodam after 13 long hours, stayed at KMVN rest house for the night.
- 10th June** We boarded on to the Kathgodam-Sealdah Summer Special train which came to Kathgodam station 5 hours after its scheduled time.
- 11th June** The train was scheduled to arrive at Sealdah station this day evening, but it was running late by almost 14 hours. The whole day was spent in train.
- 12th June** Arrived at Sealdah station at 7 am morning and was received by our club members.

Rajsekhar Maity
Leader
Mt. Changuch (6322 M) Expedition 2010

Date: 26th July, 2010
Place: Kolkata