

# Mt. Sudarshan (6507 m) & Mt. Saife (6161 m) Expedition 2017

Organized by:

## **South Calcutta Trekkers Association**

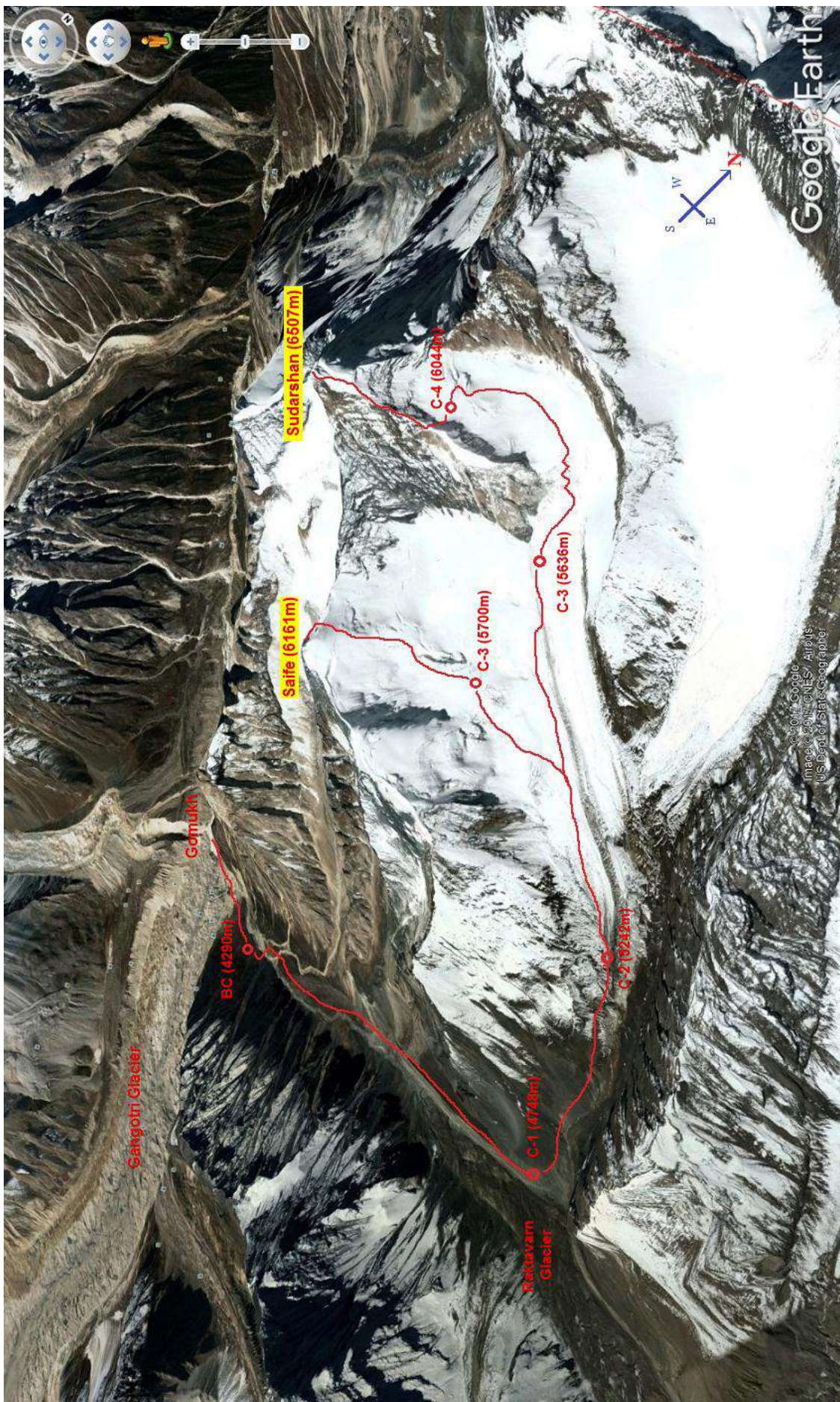
Off: 14 Chakraberia Lane, Kolkata 700020  
Club: 45B Puddapukur Road, Kolkata 700020  
scta@gmail.com / www.scta.in

<b>Expedition Summary</b>	
1. Name of the Association	<b>South Calcutta Trekkers Association</b>
2. Name of the Expeditions	<b>(1) Mt Sudarshan (6507 Mt.) Expedition 2017 (2) Mt. Saife (6161 Mt) Expedition 2017</b>
3. Name of the Peak with height in meters and six figure co-ordinates	<b>Mt. Sudarshan</b> Height: 6507 meters Co-ord: 30°58'37" N, 79°05'36" E  <b>Mt. Saife</b> Height: 6161 meters Co-ord: 30°57'52" N, 79°05'59" E
4. Date on which permit given by IMF	15-May-2017
5. Nominal role of the team members	Leader – Rajsekhar Maity Deputy Leader – Sayantan Dutta Members – Sujit Bag Ashish Gupta Pradip Kumar Bar Koushik Das Avik Mondal Anindya Mukherjee
6. Commencement of Trek	29-August-2017 from Gangotri
7. Number of camps en route to Base Camp	1, in Bhojbasa
8. Interaction with local administration	1. DFO, Uttarkashi 2. Forest Office, Ganotri National Park 3. District Magistrate Office, Uttarkashi 4. Superintendent of Police Office, Uttarkashi
9. Establishment of Base Camp	30-August-2017, 4290 Mt
10. Establishment of higher camps	<b>Mt. Sudarshan:</b> Camp – 1 (4748 Mt) on 02-September-2017 Camp – 2 (5242 Mt) on 04-September-2017 Camp – 3 (5636 Mt) on 06-September-2017 Camp – 4 (6044 Mt) on 08-September-2017  <b>Mt. Saife:</b> Camp – 1 (4748 Mt) on 02-September-2017 Camp – 2 (5242 Mt) on 04-September-2017 Camp – 3 (5700 Mt) on 08-September-2017

11. Technical difficulty on way to higher camps	<p><u>BC to C-1</u> No major technical difficulty other than crossing the fearsome Raktavarn nullah at its full force.</p> <p><u>C-1 to C-2</u> Very loose and unstable scree section all the way to C-2.</p> <p><u>C-2 to Sudarshan C-3</u> No major technical difficulty up to Sudarshan C-3 on the right lateral moraine of Sudarshan glacier.</p> <p><u>C-2 to Saife C-3</u> No major technical difficulty up to Saife C-3 on the Saife glacier.</p> <p><u>Sudarshan C-2 to Sudarshan C-3</u> Large crevasse zone with very few brittle ice-bridges at the 1<sup>st</sup> section and huge bergschrund at a later stage with snow covering.</p>
12. Snow & Rock condition	<p><u>Snow</u> Snow condition was as expected in post-monsoon season. Ankle deep soft snow above C3.</p> <p><u>Ice</u> Very poor condition of ice was noticed on both the mountain faces. The ice was scaly, brittle and very unstable, particularly on Sudarshan where climbing angle was higher.</p> <p><u>Rock</u> Rock condition on Sudarshan summit ridge was more or less unstable. The rock section was rock-fall prone.</p>
13. Weather Condition	At initial stage (BC to C2) weather condition was poor but expected. Usual rain and fog in post-monsoon season. At higher camps weather was found to be fairly good, except 1 or 2 days of snowfall.
14. Summit Report	Attached
15. Compliance to Environmental guideline	<p>Garbage - All biodegradable waste was buried under soil by digging hole at campsites. All non-biodegradable garbage were carried down and disposed at forest check post, Gangotri.</p> <p>Equipment – All technical equipment are brought down except few snow-stakes and one fixed rope in the most critical pitch where descending without rope was impossible.</p>
16. Maximum height attained and its date	<p><u>Mt. Sudarshan</u> 6570 Meter (Summit), on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017</p> <p><u>Mt. Saife</u> 6161 Meter (Summit), on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2017 6161 Meter (Summit), on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017</p>
17. Name of Summiteers	<p><u>Mt. Sudarshan</u> (1) Sujit Bag (2) Ashish Gupta</p> <p><u>Mt. Saife</u> (1) Sayantan Dutta (2) Avik Mondal (3) Anindya Mukherjee (4) Pradip Kumar Bar (5) Koushik Das</p>

18. Total Expenditure	Rs. 5,50,000 (rounded off)
19. Details of Day by Day events	Attached
20. Financial assistance required?	No

# ROUTE MAP



## Day to day itinerary

24-Aug	The expedition team departed from Howrah Station by train.
25-Aug	Reached Haridwar at evening and stayed there.
26-Aug	The team left Haridwar, travelled to Uttarkashi this day and stayed there. The day was spent in administrative works, collecting hired equipment from NIM, collecting permit from DFO Uttarkashi.
27-Aug	The team travelled to Gangotri and stayed there.
28-Aug	Stayed at Gangotri for acclimatization. During daytime the team members hiked to high altitude to acclimatize.
29-Aug	The team trekked to transit camp at Bhojbasa, with 16 porters, 4 HAPs and 1 cook. Spent the night at Lal Baba's ashram.
30-Aug	Starting from Bhojbasa the team 1st crossed the landslide infested are at Gomukh, then took the gully along Raktavarn nullah. The original plan was to cross the nullah this day to reach the actual BC spot. But seeing the overflowing nullah at midday they planned to set their base camp before the nullah, on the true left bank of the Raktavarn nullah at a height of 4290m.
31-Aug	Opened a route over the nullah and fixed a rope to cross the stream. The high altitude porters ferried the load to C-1 this day and returned to BC.
01-Sep	Bad weather and continuous rain from last night made the water level increased at the nullah. The fixed rope was washed away making the crossing impossible. Later when rain stopped the team again found another route over the nullah and fixed another rope for the upcoming day.
02-Sep	Amidst continuous rain the team crossed the overflown nullah and trekked till the junction of Swetvarn nullah and Raktavarn glacier where they established their Camp 1 at a height of 4748m.
03-Sep	All team members along with HAPs ferried load to Camp 2. The track goes along the right bank of Swetvarn nullah till the snout of Swetvarn glacier, and then along the Sudarshan nullah till the snout of Sudarshan glacier.
04-Sep	The full team left Camp 1 and moved to Camp 2 near the snout of Sudarshan glacier. Set up their Camp 2 at 5242m.
05-Sep	All team members along with HAPs ferried load to Sudarshan Camp 3. The track goes along the Saife glacier till the medial moraine formed between Saife and Sudarshan glacier.
06-Sep	The team was divided into two. <b>Sudarshan team:</b> 3 members (Rajsekhar Maity, Sujit Bag, Ashish Gupta) left Camp 2 and moved to Sudarshan Camp 3 with 3 HAPs. <b>Saife team:</b> 5 members (Sayantan Dutta, Anindya Mukherjee, Pradip Bar, Koushik Das and Avik Mondal) stayed at Camp 2.
07-Sep	<b>Sudarshan team:</b> Team opened a route over the crevasse zone and ferried load to Sudarshan Camp 4. <b>Saife team:</b> Team members with 1 HAP opened route to Saife Camp 3 and ferried load.
08-Sep	<b>Sudarshan team:</b> Team left Camp 3 and moved to Sudarshan Camp 4 / Summit camp (6044m). <b>Saife team:</b> Team left Camp 2 and moved to Saife Camp 3 / Summit camp (5700m).
09-Sep	<b>Sudarshan team:</b> An ice wall of varying degree of slope, reaching around 80 degree inclination near the top, emerges till the col on the West ridge of the mountain (summit ridge). 3 members, with help of HAP, fixed the rope till the col on the West ridge. <b>Saife team: 2 members; Sayantan Dutta and Avik Mondal, along with HAP Sarvan left the summit camp at 3:00 AM at dawn, climbed the North-East face of Mt. Saife and reached the summit at 9:10 AM at morning.</b>
10-Sep	<b>Sudarshan team:</b> Due to bad weather at morning the team couldn't start early. Later 1 member with HAPs went up to open the rest of the summit route and fixed ropes till 6300m on the West ridge of the mountain. <b>Saife team:</b> Due to bad weather at morning the team couldn't set out for the 2nd summit attempt this day.
11-Sep	<b>Sudarshan team: 2 members; Sujit Bag and Ashish Gupta, along with 2 HAPs set out for the summit bid at 4:30 AM in morning, climbed along the West ridge, later they traversed to the North face of the mountain and climbed up till the summit. The team reached summit of Sudarshan Parbat at 2:20 PM. While reaching the summit point during the latter half of the day, they found clouds and white out covering the summit.</b> <b>Saife team: 3 members; Anindya Mukherjee, Pradip Bar and Koushik Das, started their summit bid at 6 AM in morning. They climbed the North-East face of Mt. Saife without any help from HAP and reached the summit at 10:30 AM. They got clear view of surroundings and took photographs.</b>

12-Sep	<p><b>Sudarshan team:</b> Entire Sudarshan team started to climb down from Camp 4, crossed Camps 3, 2 and 1 on their way and reached the Base Camp at night this day.</p> <p><b>Saife team:</b> 2 members of Saife team reached the Base Camp previous day. This day rest of the team (3 members) left the high camp reached the Base Camp at afternoon.</p> <p>The team met the low altitude porters at base camp that evening coming from Gangotri.</p>
13-Sep	Entire team, along with HAPs, Cook and porters left the Base Camp, trekked towards Gangotri and reached Gangotri by evening.
14-Sep	Team first travelled to Uttarkashi, did the administrative tasks, visited NIM to return equipment and later travelled further to Haridwar.
15-Sep	Team stayed at Haridwar. The day was spent in taking care of the equipment, tents and load rearrangement.
16-Sep	Left Haridwar and boarded on the train to Howrah.
17-Sep	Team reached Kolkata.

## **Summit Report – Mt. Saife (09-Sep-17)**

On 09 September 2017 at 2:30 am Sayantan Dutta, Avik, Mondal along with high altitude porter Sarwan started for the summit attempt. Weather was clear. The route was covered with soft snow at a gradient of 60-70°. Sarwan was in the lead. Fixed rope was there and all the members used jumars. They reached the North-West ridge of Mt. Saife at around 5:30 am. There were 2 crevasses on the way. The crevasses were negotiated sidewise. The gradient of the ridge was around 75°. Rope was fixed till summit and members used that for jumaring. All 3 summit members reached summit at around 9:15am.

All along the route to summit climbing rope of 8mm diameter was fixed using snow stakes of various sizes. They were at the summit for almost 15 min, offered Puja, and took photographs. Sayantan, Avik and Sarwan returned back to Summit camp, did their packing and descended further down to Camp-2.

## **Summit Report – Mt. Saife (11-Sep-17)**

On 11th September we made a second successful summit attempt on Mt. Saife. 3 members; Anindya Mukherjee, Pradip Kumar Bar and Koushik Das set out for summit bid from camp-3 at 6am morning. We had no guide or high altitude porter with us and we tried for an unsupported attempt. The route first goes through a layer of soft snow accumulated at the base of the peak at a gradient of nearly 40°. Then the climbing starts on the North-East face of the peak and gradient increased to 60-70°. A rope was fixed partially by the previous summit team. We drove some more ice-screws on our way to anchor the rope well. Anindya Mukherjee was leading by fixing the rope and other 2 junior members were following by jumaring on the rope. After traversing the crevasses on the face of the peak, they started climbing again on a slope of 75°. The weather was clear and surrounding peaks were all clearly visible. At around 9:30am the members reached the North-West summit ridge of the mountain. The ridge was tremendously sharp with a very high level of exposure on the opposite side, which went down directly to Thelu Bamak at a very high gradient. Towards the West direction of the summit ridge Mt. Thelu was seen very near along with other prominent peaks of Gangotri glacier region like Shivling, Thalay Sagar, Manda etc.

Upon reaching the ridge we thought of moving further ahead and touch the final rock portion of the summit. As it was literally a knife-edge sharp ridge with sheer fall towards the opposite side, we took ultimate care to traverse along the ridge. Anindya Mukherjee led the way while other members gave belay support to him. At 10:30am of 11<sup>th</sup> September all 3 members touched the ultimate rock pinnacle of the summit.

The team spent few minutes there to take photographs of members holding club flag and of the surrounding views and then started descending down towards camp-3.

## **Summit Report – Mt. Sudarshan (11-Sep-17)**

At dawn of 11th September we set out for the summit attempt on Sudarshan Parbat. The summit team consisted of 2 climbing members Sujit Bag and Ashish Gupta, and 2 high altitude porters Raj Bahadur and Badrinath to help them. We left camp-4 at 4:30am morning, it was completely dark outside of the tent. Putting on our headlamps we started climbing the ice wall in front of the camp, where we fixed the rope the day before yesterday. The ice condition was little better than the day before as it became hard in the cold of the night. The gradient of the wall starts with 60°, gradually become much steeper to almost 90°. After 1.5 hours of jumaring on the fixed rope we reached the col on the East Ridge at a height of approx. 6100m. From the col the route goes straight along the East Ridge of the mountain. Initially the slope was of 45° gradient and gradually got steeper. The sharp ridge, with high exposure on the both sides, goes till a rock band at nearly 6200m of altitude. After negotiating the unstable rock barrier we reached the point at 6300m, till where the rope was fixed by Rajsekhar and high altitude porters yesterday, at around 8am.

It was a more or less clear morning with few scattering clouds. From that point we left the East Ridge by traversing a little towards the South section of the mountain face and started fixing the rope with help of two HAPs. By then the snow was quickly becoming soft in the heat of the sunlight. Added to that, the poor condition of the exposed ice made our task difficult and made a significant delay in progress. After 3 hours' of grueling effort we managed to cross the South section of the face and reached the Cornice atop the East Ridge at a height of 6300m, over the huge ice-serac seen from the base of the mountain. From that point we again started fixing rope on the very sharp ridge with help of two HAPs. For some time the gradient became little less but the exposure increased more. At a height of 6440m the ridge became very sharp once again with sheer fall at both sides and the gradient increased very sharp to 60°-75° and thereafter rose straight till the summit point. It took us very long time to fix rope on that very sharp ridge with not so good ice condition. It was almost 12:30pm and by then the weather started deteriorating. Not very scaring, but somewhat covered with cloud and thick fog.

The final part of the ridge on the summit pyramid was very technical with a gradient of nearly 80° with very high exposure over the south wall of the mountain. After an hour's hard effort the rope was fixed by the HAPs till the top. As we started climbing on the last section of the summit pyramid, a thick cover of cloud started surrounding us and visibility went down to 10 to 15 meters. We later heard from the Mt. Saife summit team that they clearly noticed us on the final section of the summit pyramid but instantly all got covered in cloud. The surrounding peaks were mostly visible till then, but no more after that. After the steep climb when we noticed there was no further uphill to climb we realized we reached the top of Sudarshan Parbat at 2:20pm on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017. It was under thick cover of whiteout and we could only see a small rock bulge on the summit which we had seen earlier in previous teams' summit photo, nothing else was visible in any direction. We took pictures of that rocky bulge with members and our club flag.

All through, from the bottom of the wall of East Ridge up to the summit, about length of approx 700 meters, we had to anchor fixed rope on the entire route for climbing. Altogether, approx 25 numbers of Rock Pitons / Ice Screws / Snow Channels were used. All along the route, we saw numerous fixed-ropes anchored by earlier teams. However, we restrain ourselves from using those ropes.

We waited for 30 minutes on the summit for clear weather, but no luck. As it was very late in the afternoon already we didn't wait any longer and started climbing down. By the time the last member reached camp-4 it was 7pm evening.



## Grade Assessment Reporting – Mt. Sudarshan

Subject	Details
<b>Name of Mountain</b>	<b>Mt. Sudarshan (6507 m)</b>
<b>Expedition Organization and Dates</b>	South Calcutta Trekkers Association, Kolkata 24 August – 17 September 2017
<b>Face/ Ridge Attempted</b>	East Ridge
<b>Nature of the face e.g. rock, snow, ice or mixed terrain</b>	Mixed terrain (Snow, Ice, Rock)
<b>Gradient of the route in approximate degrees and description of artificial technical aids used to negotiate difficulty.</b>	<p><b><u>Summit Camp to East Ridge Col</u></b> 65° at the start of ice wall, 80°-85° at upper portion. 50 meters of rope was fixed with ice-screws</p> <p><b><u>Col to Rock Band on East Ridge</u></b> 45° on snow field 100 meters of ropes were fixed with snow-stakes</p> <p><b><u>Rock Band</u></b> 50° over unstable rock 60 meters of ropes were fixed with rock-pitons and snow-stakes</p> <p><b><u>Rock Band to Cornice over the Ice Serac</u></b> 55° on 1<sup>st</sup> section over snow. 65° on latter section of exposed ice. 300 meters of ropes were fixed with ice-screws and snow-stakes</p> <p><b><u>Cornice over the Ice Serac to Base of Final Summit Pyramid</u></b> 45° on highly exposed snow ridge 100 meters of ropes were fixed with ice-screws and snow-stakes</p> <p><b><u>Base of Final Summit Pyramid to Top of Summit</u></b> 70°-80° on snow and exposed ice ridge with extremely high exposure 50 meters of ropes were fixed with ice-screws and snow-stakes</p>
<b>Leaders assessment of Technical Difficulty ( TD ) with Grade ( refer to grade description )</b>	<p><u>Camp-4 to East Ridge Col</u> : <b>Grade 5</b></p> <p><u>Col to Base of Summit Pyramid</u> : <b>Grade 4</b></p> <p><u>Base of Summit Pyramid to Top of Summit</u> : <b>Grade 5</b></p>
<b>Justification of grade assessment by leader required by marking route on photographs.</b>	Photo attached

## Grade Assessment Reporting – Mt. Saife

Subject	Details
<b>Name of Mountain</b>	<b>Mt. Saife (6161 m)</b>
<b>Expedition Organization and Dates</b>	South Calcutta Trekkers Association, Kolkata 24 August – 17 September 2017
<b>Face/ Ridge Attempted</b>	North-East Face, North Ridge
<b>Nature of the face e.g. rock, snow, ice or mixed terrain</b>	Mix of Snow and exposed Ice
<b>Gradient of the route in approximate degrees and description of artificial technical aids used to negotiate difficulty.</b>	<p><b><u>Summit Camp to North Ridge</u></b> 45° to 70° on snow and exposed ice 400 meters of rope was fixed with ice-screws and snow-stakes</p> <p><b><u>North Ridge point to Summit</u></b> 40° on very sharp snow ridge with high exposure No ropes fixed. Members climbed this small section with running belay</p>
<b>Leaders assessment of Technical Difficulty ( TD ) with Grade ( refer to grade description )</b>	<p><u>Summit Camp to North Ridge</u> : <b>Grade 4</b></p> <p><u>North Ridge point to Summit</u> : <b>Grade 4</b></p>
<b>Justification of grade assessment by leader required by marking route on photographs.</b>	Photo attached

## Incident Reporting

### Landslides

Due to landslides on the true right banks of Raktavarn nala, the traditional approach route to Base Camp was inaccessible. The team had to cross the nala from left side to reach the route to higher camps.

The Raktavarn nala, at the end of the monsoon season, was so furious that we had to try for 2 days to build a crossing route. Rope was fixed on the 1<sup>st</sup> day, but was washed away with the stream at full flow. Next day another route was found and rope was re-fixed, which again washed away after few days. Members had to jump over huge rocks to negotiate the dangerous Raktavarn nala.

Photographs: Attached



**RAJSEKHAR MAITY**

*Leader, Mt. Sudarshan & Saife Expedition 2017*

**South Calcutta Trekkers Association**

*14, Chakraberia Lane, Kolkata - 700020*

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2017

Place: Kolkata