

in deep snow, finding sections of highly tensioned wind slab. These slabs would kindly remind us of our insignificance by giving off a more than subtle “whoop.”

After five days of hard work we reached the summit at 1:30 p.m. on October 4, in strong afternoon winds. Upon returning to Delhi we heard news of a tragic season: eight climbers killed on other expeditions. Though we didn't get to attempt the east face, we had a great adventure and made many new friends.

JOHN VARCO



The ca. 1,800m-high unclimbed southeast face of Kamet (7,756m). With the obvious central line predominantly snow (though interrupted by more tricky rock barriers) and the relatively easy slopes of the Normal Route behind the right skyline, this face could succumb to an alpine-style ascent by a well-acclimatized party. *Saty Dam*

*Pk. 6,123m, first ascent, east ridge; Bidhan Parvat, ascent, southeast face.* A 10-member expedition from Kolkata, led by Amitava Roy, planned to ascend of Devban (6,855m). The team reached base camp at Thaur Udiar (4,095m) in the Amritganga Valley on June 26 and established three camps up the Devban Glacier. From Camp 3 Susanta Basak, Arupam Das, and Roy made the first ascent of an unnamed peak of 6,123m by the east ridge. On the following day, from the same camp, Das and Sherpas Gyalgen, and Tashi climbed the southeast face of Bidhan Parvat (6,520m). They did not attempt Devban due to avalanche danger. [Bidhan Parvat was first climbed in 1937 by Frank Smythe on his famous Valley of the Flowers expedition. The second ascent came in 1968, when the mountain was unofficially named by a team from Bengal, in memory of Sir Bidhan Chandra Roy, former Chief Minister of Bengal. Although unendorsed, the name seems to have stuck—Ed.]

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

## EASTERN GARHWAL

*Changabang (6,864m), north face attempt.* The Korean Changabang North Face Expedition was led by Chung Seong-kwon and had as members Ha Ho-sung, Kim Ji-sung, Lee Keun-tak, and Lee Min-sook. They arrived at base camp (4,600m) on May 3, established advanced base (5,200m) below the face, and on the 7th began fixing 250m of line up a moderate ice face that lay roughly 350m above the bergschrund and to the right of the 1998 Russian-American Lightning Route. Deteriorating weather made progress difficult, and the Koreans didn't reach the site of Camp 1 (5,700m) until the 16th. On the 18th, despite depressing snow conditions, they fixed more rope and hauled food and gear to Camp 1. They then made little progress until the weather finally cleared on the 24th. During the intervening time they ferried more gear to Camp 1. They reached Camp 2 (5,850m) on the 25th.

Although provisions were sufficient, the climbers realized that their remaining time was

running short, and faster progress would be needed to reach the summit. They established a portaledge at Camp 2 on the 26th. The following day the weather remained clear enough for two members to work the route toward Camp 3, while three others rappelled to retrieve more rations from base camp and advanced base. The weather deteriorated again halfway through the ninth pitch, and the two lead climbers rappelled to the portaledge hoping for a positive forecast for the next day.

After a night of subzero temperatures, they were up at 4 a.m. in promising weather. However, the next two pitches (70m) proved a struggle. There were plenty of hook placements, but the thought of running it out for great distances was overbearing, and they opted to bolt every 8m until they reached more ice. From there, they climbed two more 50m pitches, at the top of which they placed two more bolts where the ice had thinned enough for granite to show through. Eventually, however, snowy weather again prevailed, and they rappelled into the night.

They spent the following days sitting out bad weather and trying to haul the portaledge to the next camp, but to no avail. On June 2 the weather cleared, allowing Kim Ji-sung and Lee Keun-tak to jug through pitch 14 and Ji-seong to lead another 50m aid pitch, before worsening weather forced him down. Soon after he returned to the portaledge, the snow showers ceased. The following day Ha Ho-sung aided pitch 16 using a plethora of exquisitely solid skyhook and talon edges. Although the proposed site for Camp 3 was still some distance away, it seemed attainable.

However, once again that cruel joke called snowfall returned. The expedition leader, Chung Seong-kwon, sat there feeling the toll of attrition, staring over at his partner, watching the snow fall even harder at their high point of 6,100m, and guessing how cold Ho-sung must be. Despite sufficient provisions, hope of good weather, time, and the will to stay on the wall had all gradually withered away with the falling of the snow. He knew they must go down.

The Korean Changabang attempt was graded VII W15 A2. The team wishes to thank The North Face Korea and Korean Trango for their sponsorship.

LEE YOUNG-JUN, MOUNTAIN MAGAZINE, Korea (translated by Peter Jensen-choi)

*Changabang, west face, Boardman-Tasker Route, attempt.* The boulders basked in the sun, 9½km of them, wave after wave of rock misery. Waiting. The chance of breaking an ankle, breaking a leg, or being trapped by two closing together like the doors of an aircraft hangar, was ever-present. I hated it.

A new route on Changabang's west face sounded good a few thousand kilometers away, an age away with a team of four to spread the load. The intended team of four turned into a pair, Stu McAleese and I. A late arrival made it three. Olly Sanders was going to be in India, so it made sense to drag him along.

When we decided to climb the west face, we had the impression that the Nanda Devi Sanctuary had re-opened since its closure in 1982. This was not the case, and to climb on the west face we would have to approach from the north, via the Bagini Glacier. This caused several difficulties: we couldn't see the west face; the approach was now 9km over possibly the worse moraine I have encountered; and to reach the Bagini Ridge we were faced with a 450m climb resembling the North Face of the Tour Ronde in the French Alps.

The type of climb and the overall cost dictated we had more gear than I was accustomed to. A capsule-style expedition is not one I would normally consider, but the \$6,500 that the IMF and local government charged, the \$6,000 the agent charged, the flights, the freight, and