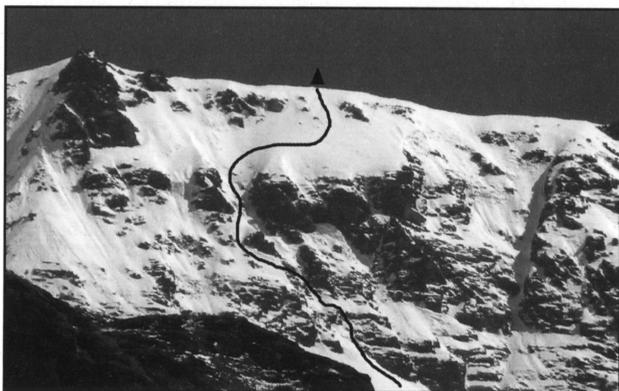


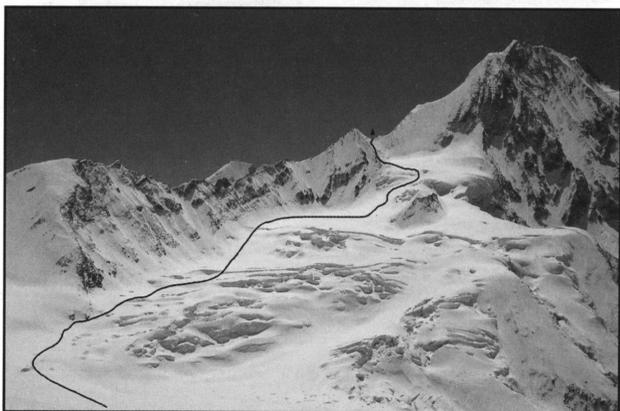
KUMAUN

Changuch (6,322m), northwest ridge from south. Before 2009 Changuch was attempted unsuccessfully three times from the south, via the Pindari Glacier. In that year Martin Moran's British expedition approached from the Lawan Valley to the north and made the first ascent via the northwest ridge (AAJ 2010). In spring I was asked by the IMF to organize another attempt from the south, and on May 29 we established base camp at 3,565m on the true right bank of the Pindar River. Above, 40-50° grassy slopes led to the terminal moraine of the Buria Glacier, where boulder slopes and a semi-rocky face (on which ropes had to be fixed) took us to advanced base at 4,477m, on a grassy platform the size of a helipad. After making seven carries we moved to this camp on June 5.

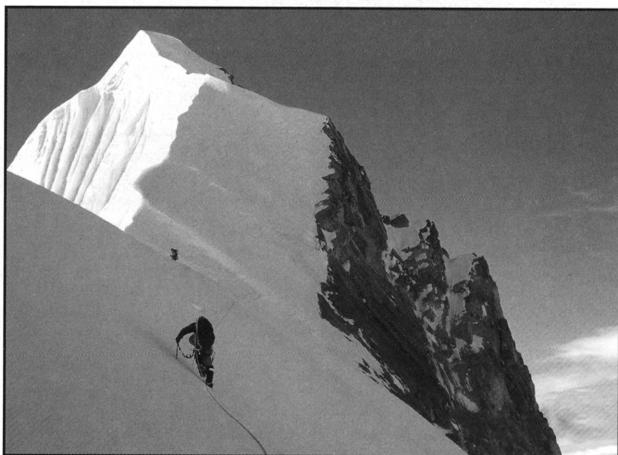
A weaving route through snow and rock slopes up to 50° took us to Camp 1 at 5,380m, a few ropes being fixed on the difficult sections. From here we made a nearly horizontal traverse right for three km on the upper Pindari Glacier, above the icefall and beneath the slopes of Nanda Khat (6,611m) and Trail's Pass. This took us to below the small pointed summit of Chota Changuch on the long northwest ridge of Changuch. The last expedition to come this way met with



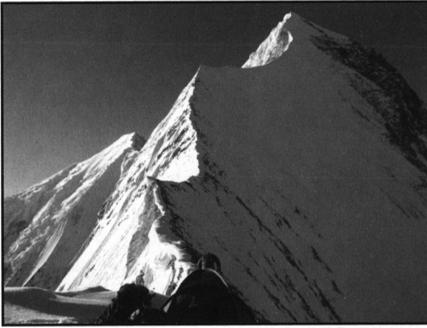
Route to Camp 1 rises at up to 50°. Dhruv Joshi



Route from Camp 1 to Camp 2 across the upper Pindari Glacier. Chota Changuch is small summit just left of camp. Above camp, northwest ridge, seen in profile, leads directly to Changuch's summit. Dhruv Joshi



Approaching top of Changuch's northwest ridge. Dhruv Joshi



Camp 2 (Col Camp) with northwest ridge and summit of Changuch ahead. Flat-topped summit visible to left is Nanda Kot (6,861 m). *Dhruv Joshi*

disaster. In September and October 2007 a joint IMF-Indian Navy team followed a similar route, establishing Camp 1 at 5,050m. They were dogged by bad weather, but eventually a party, hoping to place Camp 2 close to or on the northwest ridge, reached 5,650m (the highest altitude so far attained on the mountain) before retreating in a huge storm. Early next morning Camp 1 was hit by an avalanche, which killed two members and badly injured a third. With the route down to advanced base obliterated by snow, the survivors and injured member had to be evacuated by helicopter, though the two bodies were not recovered.

For us the upper Pindari Glacier was well covered in snow, which allowed us to cross the many crevasses easily. We climbed 250m up 45-50° slopes just right (east) of Chota Changuch, reaching the ridge above at a col. It was this col that the British expedition had reached from the opposite side. From below, the crest had appeared broad, but we discovered it was little more than two meters wide, offering an exposed site for Camp 2 or Col Camp (5,755m, two tents). The ascent from Camp 1 took 10 exhausting hours, and we decided to rest the following day, during which we collected ropes fixed on the face below.

At 12:15 a.m. on the 17th Bharat Bhushan, K Wallambok Lyngdon, Takpa Norboo, Chetan Pandey, and I roped together and set off for the summit. A 200m-long traverse on an exposed 50-60° snow/ice slope forced us to fix ropes, though we removed them during the descent. The ridge was narrow throughout, but at 9.50 a.m. we reached the summit, for its second ascent. Despite an unexpected blizzard on the way back, we were in camp at 4 p.m. We regained base camp on the 20th, cleaned up, and were back in Delhi on the 28th.

DHRUV JOSHI, *India*

SIKKIM



Jopuno massif (5,936m) from northeast. Face lies above Zor Patam Valley, which has never been explored. *Anindya Mukherjee*

In the footsteps of John Claude White and photography of unclimbed peaks. From March 9 to 22 Indians Anindya Mukherjee and Thendup Sherpa made the first upstream trek along the Ronggyaong and Rukel River systems, leaving the Teesta River at Sanklang, reaching the lower Talung Glacier southeast of