

Tashi Chhopel.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

*Peak 6100m, Ascent.* A seven-member expedition from Bengal, India, led by Himadri Shekhar Bose, climbed an unnamed peak of 6100 meters near Kali nala, Losar area. The peak was climbed on August 31 by Soumen Deoghoria, Bijan Dey and Chhering Palden Bodh. Their attempt on nearby Peak 6163m failed.

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*Traverse of the Himalaya.* Bachendri Pal (the first Indian woman to climb Everest and a member of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation) led the Indian Women's First Trans-Himalayan Journey, which made a successful traverse of the entire Himalayan chain from the Arunachal Pradesh to the East Karakoram. Team members Chawla Jagirdar, Chetna Sahu, Vineeta Muni, Sumita Roy, Nanda Patel, Malika Viridi and M. Kokila Sudha went across Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, Kumaon, Garhwal, Kinnaur, Spiti and the Ladakh Himalaya to finish their trek by reaching the Indira Col at the head of the Siachen glacier on September 2. This traverse was organized in accordance with India's 50th year of freedom celebration.

Three members of the group, Vineeta Muni, Sumita Roy and Malika Viridi, went separately from Kumaon and completed their trek under a separate name and banner. They completed their traverse by reaching the Karakoram Pass on August 20.

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*Winter Traverse of the Indian Himalaya.* From January 27 to February 21, Susie Patterson and Ned Gillette went from Leh to Zaskar to Manali, covering about 225 miles and crossing three mountain ranges: Zaskar, Great Himalaya and Pir Panjal. It was a very cold winter with less snow than any local could remember. This was lucky and worked to our advantage; the rivers were nicely frozen, yet the walking usually did not demand major trail breaking.

We hired a 4WD taxi and drove from Leh to Nimmu west along the Indus River, then 15 miles south up the Zaskar River to the village of Chiling. There was no snow on the ground. With three Zankari porters who we'd hired in Leh, we walked for six days up the sometimes more, sometimes less frozen Zaskar River to Padam. It was fascinating to learn to read the ice on the big, swift river and decide what was safe. We all got our feet wet at times but nobody fell in. We slept in caves. Night-time temperatures were -20° to -30°F. There is no permanent trail through most of this spectacular gorge and it is only walkable in winter. For centuries, this route has been the only way in or out of Zaskar during winter months. Although we saw several groups of Zankaris traveling on the frozen river, we saw no other Westerners during this or any other part of the trip.

From Padam, we veered southeast up the Tsarap Lingti River, then south up the increasingly small Kargyak (KurgiaKh) River to Kargyak, the last village, at 4000 meters. All along this part, we were welcomed into houses, where we slept and ate. The great thing about being here at this time of the year was that we had the place and the people all to ourselves. It was a magical journey. Our porters turned back from Kargyak, saying, "Ahead OK in summer; never in winter." We waited out bad weather, then the two of us continued on our own. The weather deteriorated and we had a very difficult time guessing which canyon led up toward the Shingu La (5100m). Suddenly, the snow was deep and hid all traces of the summer trail. For the first time, we strapped on our lightweight MSR snowshoes over our Sorel shoebacks.