

(6210m) in Kumaon was led by Lt. Commander Satyabrata Dam of the Indian Navy and consisted of six members. The team left Delhi on September 12 and arrived at Munyari on September 13. The walk in started on September 15 and the team established Base Camp (3845m) at the snout of Sankalp Glacier on September 19. It took another three days to establish Advanced Base Camp at an altitude of 4630 meters. ABC was ideally located on a rock bed close to a glacial lake, a little short of the Kalabaland Icefall. Based on earlier studies and an initial reconnaissance of the mountain, the team decided on the south ridge approach. The team split into three pairs and carried out extensive reconnaissance, primarily to discover a route that would preclude traversing the cascading icefall on the southeast face. The weather, which had been deteriorating, took a turn for the worse. A scree-filled gully with gigantic boulders balanced delicately all the way up was selected as a probable access to the upper reaches of Burphu Dhura. A day's climbing with several heavy loads of equipment brought the team to a dead end, beyond which the formidable icefall gaped. The next day a gully further to the south was identified that seemed to clear the icefall and lead to a snow ramp beyond. Following the gully, Camp I was established on a snow rib a little south of the bottom of the first gendarme at an altitude of 5505 meters.

On September 30, the team climbed Burphu Dhura South (5815m), a virgin subsidiary peak of Burphu Dhura Main. From the summit, the entire south ridge of Burphu Dhura Main could be studied in totality. Though the unsettled weather did not provide much opportunity, it was decided to place CII (summit camp) on a shelf atop an ice caves. The shelf was located around 50 meters higher than a prominent notch above the second gendarme. The next three days, which were punctuated by extremely bad weather, were engaged in fixing pitches to CII and load ferrying. Nearly 500 meters of rope was fixed over steep and difficult snow and rock.

On October 5, five members occupied CII. The next day, leaving two members at CII, the rest of the team was forced to descend to CI due to extremely inclement weather. The night of October 6 was the worst that the team encountered, with thunder and lightning raging all around. On October 7, CII was wound up and the full team gathered at CI to consider alternatives.

Finding a brief window on October 9, the team made a definitive attempt from CI, gaining the top of a "shark's fin" at 6115 meters. Finally, a long paper-thin corniced ridge with several gaps in between and fully exposed drops on either side brought the team to an unexpected halt. All the equipment, ropes, etc., had already been exhausted and the objective danger was considered far too hazardous to continue the ascent. Further attempts were ruled out due to continuing bad weather and dwindling rations. The team returned to BC on October 11.

The whole expedition was marred by stormy weather. Incessant snow, blinding blizzard, plunging temperatures and technical climbing of the highest order challenged the team every day and almost at every step. Four of the members suffered from exposure, contracting severe chilblain and minor frost bite. The members took every opportunity to photograph and sketch the surrounding peaks and ridges, since many of the summits in the area remain virgin.

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## LADAKH

*Umdung Kangri, West Ridge.* Umdung Kangri (6643m) is a high peak seen in the south as one descends from Parang La pass. It is near the watershed with the Lingti Valley in Spiti and Ladakh. A Japanese Alpine Club—Tokai Section, expedition led by Tatsumi Mizano made a successful ascent of this peak; nine people reached the summit on August 6, 8 and 9 via the west ridge.

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