

However, elsewhere in the east, on the route to the Makalu area, this autumn's Danish expedition going to the recently-opened Tutse (Peak 6) found a banner across the trail at Sedua village reading, "Welcome to you, Makalu base camp. Entry tax for Maoist Party." Its fixed-price list was: Rs 5,000 (roughly \$70) per tourist, Rs 1,000 per guide, Rs 500 per Sherpa cook, Rs 100 per kitchen boy, and Rs 50 per porter. Farther east, a French team going into the Kangchenjunga region for Gimmigela Chuli (The Twins), was also stopped and "taxed." But a Jannu expedition went so fast past Sedua that they escaped without having to pay the tax.

On the very popular trekking route north from Pokhara to the south side of the Annapurna range, the office buildings of the Annapurna Conservation Area have been taken over by the rebels, forcing conservation staff to suspend their work. An Italian expedition to Annapurna III was charged Rs1,000 per foreigner but nothing for their Sherpas and other Nepalese staff. On the equally well frequented trail around the Annapurna massif, Maoists are seen in strength on the west side just south of the Kali Gandaki village of Marpha. They are collecting the same amount in the Marshyangdi Valley on the east side of the massif at Ngadi village, just north of the road-head town of Besisahar, where teams going to the north side of the Annapurna range leave their buses.

Much farther west, the French on their way to climb Raksha Urai had to stop at Chainpur village and wait for two days while two of their Nepalese staff went down a valley to meet the local Maoist leader. They were forced to pay the tariff demanded in his area. The team's trekking agent asked the team not to disclose how much they were forced to pay: trekking agents don't like discussions on this topic. The team members were told that if the climbers had been American, British, or Japanese, they would not have been allowed to continue on their way.

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Autumn fatalities. Ayumi Nozawai was one of seven climbers who died this autumn. He was part of a three-man Japanese expedition attempting the west ridge of 7,140m Nemjung. On October 2 the party had reached ca 6,000m, not quite at the start of the west ridge, when a snow avalanche suddenly swept down the mountainside. One member, Nobuteru Kawahara, was untouched, but the other two, who were above him, were caught by it. Kawahara succeeded in digging Hiroytaka Imamura out of the snow, and both searched for Nozawai. They found him not far away, buried almost up to his neck, and when they pulled him out, he was dead. They immediately abandoned the climb. Nozawai had, among others, climbed Api and Gasherbrum I, as well as making an attempt to 6,750m on the unclimbed north ridge of Kula Kangri in Tibet.

As noted elsewhere two climbers fell to their deaths on Raksha Urai. An experienced German professional expedition leader, Robert Rackl, also suffered a fatal fall: he was on Ama Dablam, and the probable cause was the breaking of a fixed rope. Avalanches swept to their deaths two South Koreans, Hwang Sun-Dug and Park Joo-Hoon, on Lhotse Shar. The leader of a Greek Cho Oyu team, Christos Barouchas, died of altitude sickness.

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