

slope. They quickly reached the first rock barrier, which was to prove one of the key parts of the route. They were unable to dry-tool and had to resort to conventional rock climbing, cleaning snow from the rock as they went. They camped at 5,650m, in the lower section of the large funnel-shaped snowfield.

On the 10th the angle of the snow slope became steeper than anticipated, generally 50–70° but in some parts even steeper. The snow was hard and compact, and though they had feared this section might be avalanche-prone, there was actually very little danger. Small powder-snow avalanches sometimes occurred, but were harmless. Toward the top of the funnel-shaped snowfield the climbers stopped for the night, at 6,070m, and made a hanging bivouac.

On the 11th they tackled the second rock wall, which was another crux and led to the junction with the northwest ridge. Though the last part was difficult, they were able to exit above the big serac barrier. The ridge ahead was not so easy, and they had to remain roped. They set up their third camp at 6,200m.

On the 12th they ascended the upper part of the northwest ridge and, after surmounting a section of 60° snow/ice, reached the summit of Shivling at midday. Half an hour later they began the descent, stopping again at their top camp, so they could descend through the serac barrier in well-frozen conditions the following morning. From there they reached the Normal Route (west ridge), arriving at base camp the same day.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA FROM INFORMATION PROVIDED BY KAZUYA HIRAIDE, *Japanese Alpine Club*

*Editor's note: The northwest ridge integral is unclimbed, and the Japanese reached the crest via the lower section of the 1987 Czechoslovakian Route on the north face.*

## CENTRAL GARHWAL

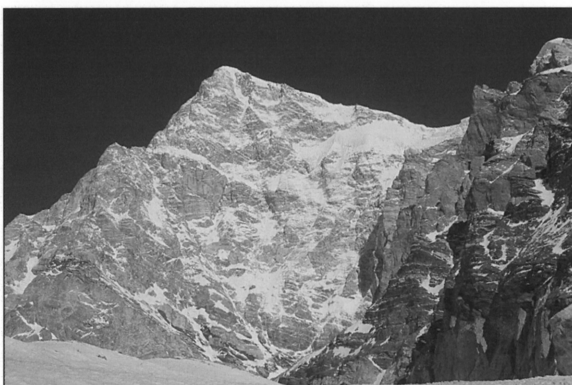
*Kamet, Normal Route, ascent.* In the autumn Sue Nott and I spent seven weeks on an expedition to Kamet. We were plagued by horrible weather. On the approach from base camp to advanced base we got trapped between camps for five days while more than 3½m of snow fell. We had been in India for 25 days and only seen our objective, the unclimbed east face, for 10 minutes. And we still hadn't made it to advanced base, which is only a three-day hike from base camp in normal conditions.

Kamet (7,756m) is situated close to the Indo-Tibet border, and a peak permit for foreigners requires permission from both India and China. Receiving this permit would have likely been impossible without the help of Ibex Expeditions, our great outfitter. One condition of the permit was a strict six-week time limit. Our original plan was to acclimatize on the Normal Route (the northeast face, first climbed by Lewa, Holdsworth, Smythe, and Shipton way back in 1931), and, after resting, go for it on the east face. When nearly out of time, we had to compromise and go for the summit by the Normal Route. Two of the three teams with plans for this route had already pulled the plug. These large teams had many high-altitude porters and twelve climbing Sherpas. The mountain was covered with deep snow, and the avalanche hazard was high. On September 30 we left our one-tent advanced base at 5,500m and started up with light packs, five days food, and fuel. We found spectacular yet technically easy terrain on this historic route, but the upper snow slopes scared the crap out of us. Here, we broke trail

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. *Satya 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