

India

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Indian Himalaya, overview. If you pardon the cliché, whenever God closes a door, he opens a window. This adage truly described experiences in the Indian Himalaya during 2010. There were not many expeditions, and few high peaks were climbed. This could be a reflection of higher peak fees and, more significantly, hindrances caused by the bureaucracy. However, there was much activity on small peaks, in new regions, and by smaller teams. This may be indicative of the future, as these expeditions are cost-effective. Many climbers did not mind meeting serious challenges below 5,500m, as above this height peak fees are required.

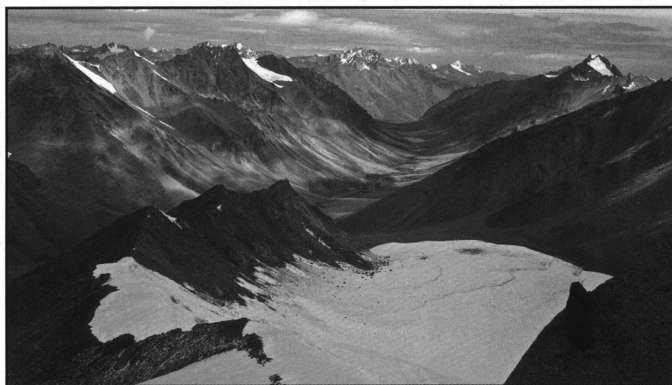
There were 40 foreign expeditions to India, a steep drop from the normal figure of around 65. There were 63 Indian expeditions, but many were on standard peaks or washed out by weather.

In early August a flash flood hit the lower areas of Ladakh. Rivers of mud flowed, destroying houses, roads and fields, and causing long-term damage. Aid from the army and government agencies has poured in but is never sufficient. Various organizations, including the Himalayan Club, raised funds to help projects. More work on rebuilding and damage repair will commence this summer, once the harsh winter is over.

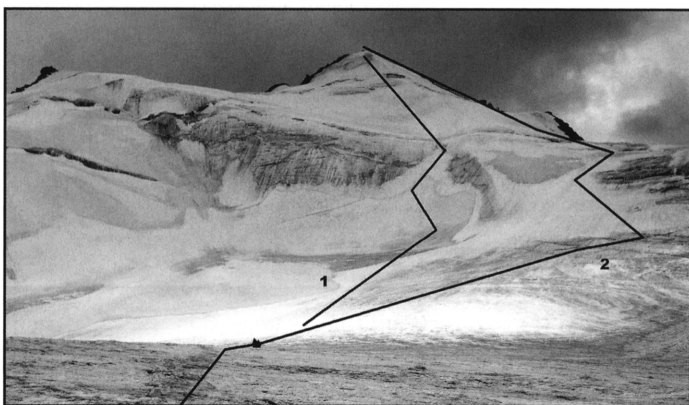
HARISH KAPADIA, AAC *Honorary Member, India*

LADAKH

Thanglasgo Valley, Big Rock Candy Mountain, first ascent; Dawa Peak, Kangsaimathung and Peak 2, new routes. Sheltered in the rain shadow of higher Himalayan peaks, the Nubra Valley is almost high-altitude desert, often expedition-friendly when other areas are drenched by monsoon. It was opened to foreign expeditions as recently as 1994 and remains relatively



View down Sniamo Valley from Kangsaimathung. Shabib Chasser (6,050m) is peak on far right. Geshi lies at far end of the ridge on left, Dawa Peak behind it in far distance. South face of Peak 6,060m and Samgyal are visible beyond the entrance to valley. *Matt Bridgstock*



North face of Dawa Peak. (1) 2008 BSES Route. (2) Northwest ridge—route of previous ascents. *Matt Bridgestock*

unfrequented. Previous ascents in this region have largely been made by Indian teams and visiting Sherpas, dating from the late 1990s. However, in 2007 a commercially organized Jagged Globe expedition picked off several new peaks.

In 2008 the British Schools Exploring Society (BSES), a London-based charity aiming to develop the next generation of

leaders and scientists through the underlying principle of “adventure with purpose,” organized its first expedition to the Thanglasgo Valley, a deep natural thoroughfare that bisects the Nubra region from north to south.

We took 38 young explorers, novices between the ages of 16 and 18, and trekked south from Hundar (3,150m, close to the military road to the Siachen Glacier) as far as Wachen (ca 4,000m). There we split into two groups, one moving southwest for a day up the Palzampiu Valley to establish a base camp at 4,400m, while the other trekked for longer, up the Sniarno Valley to the south, eventually making camp at ca 4,750m.

After a long period of training and acclimatization, the expedition sped to a fast-paced finale. In the Palzampiu Valley a team repeated Samgyal (5,810m, first climbed by Samgyal Sherpa in the late 90s) via the northeast ridge, and William Ames, Will Blackshaw, and Simon Fowler climbed a new direct route up the north face of Dawa Peak (5,890m, ice up to 55°). This peak was first climbed in the late 90s by Dawa Sherpa, probably by the northwest ridge, which has now received several ascents.

East of base camp a summit of nearly 6,000m had no previously recorded ascent. It was guarded

by an extensive rubble pile, which was deemed unsafe to attempt with the whole group, so we opted for a one-to-one ratio of leaders to youngsters. Leaders Simon Fowler, Chris Horobin, Liz Yeates, and I, with Will Anderson, Harry Eaton, and Luke Havers, summited via the north ridge—crevassed slopes up to 30°. At 2 p.m., in white-out conditions, a disappointing yet unanimous decision had been taken to turn around, to avoid re-crossing the boulder field in the dark. However, with masterful timing the cloud parted just enough to reveal the summit no more



Peak 2 (5,717m, possibly Yanchen Kangri) with new route up south gully and east ridge. *Matt Bridgestock*

than 50m away. A final burst of energy came from somewhere, and minutes later we were posing on the mist-enshrouded top and recording a GPS altitude of 5,980m. We dubbed the peak a distinctly non-Ladakhi name, the Big Rock Candy Mountain.

Over in the Sniamu Valley, Kangsaimathung (5,770m) and what is still known simply as Peak 2 (5,717m) lay within striking distance of advanced base. Both had been climbed in 2007, but our group was able to establish new routes on each.

A large group climbed Kangsaimathung from the northeast at PD+. (The mountain had previously been climbed from the south.) Leaders Matt Bridgestock, Andy Cowan, Sarah Lewis, and Sarah Major, with Harry Andrews, James Couzens, Luke Daly, Amy Forrest, Livvy Hampsher-Monk, Sarah Keane, Naill McLoughlin, Debbie Morgan, Henry Renninson, James Richardson, James Wood, and Yuan Yang took a diagonal line from the glacier to a point 80m from the summit, then climbed a final 50° snow slope to the top. They were accompanied by two Sherpas and a member of the cook team, who had never climbed a mountain before. On top these three celebrated with a chorus of beautiful Tibetan chants.

Peak 2 is probably the same as Yanchan Kangri, summited by the Jagged Globe expedition. Bridgestock and Lewis, this time with fellow leader Katherine Baldock, took Andrews, Couzens, Daly, Forrest, Hampsher-Monk, Morgan, Richardson, Wood, and Yuan Yang across a moraine field to a gully filled with loose snow yet liberally scattered with crampon-scratching scree, leading onto the east ridge. Once the cornice had been passed with care, the crest provided a gently angled ascent over snow to the top (F).

The expedition finished with a five-day trek south to Leh over the Lasirmou La (5,500m), from where we noticed a ca 5,600m peak to the east that would provide an easy but worthwhile goal for future parties.

ANDY RUCK, UK



Big Rock Candy Mountain (5,980m GPS) from east, with route of ascent up north ridge. 2008 base camp was close to river at bottom of picture. *Matt Bridgestock*

Thanglasgo Valley, Peak 5,850m, northwest face and northeast ridge; Peak 5,995m, southeast ridge. From 2007 to 2009 I led expeditions to the Nubra Valley for the British Schools Exploring Society (BSES), picking off a few previously climbed and unclimbed peaks in the Thanglasgo Valley south of Hundar.

Lying north of Leh in the rain shadow of the Himalaya, this region has seen few parties outside the main trekking routes; because of its proximity to the Pakistan border, it is regarded by the Indian military as being particularly sensitive. During the 2009 expedition plans were laid to attempt unclimbed Telthop (6,010m), which lies at the head of the Khalsar Dag Valley.

In 2010 our primarily British group arrived at the IMF offices in Delhi to discover that our intended approach from Hundar was impractical due to washed out bridges. After three days acclimatizing in Leh, we crossed the Kardung La to Desket, where we attempted to reach the mountain