

# **2007 New Zealand/Scottish Kharchakund Expedition**

**Garhwal Himalaya, India, Sept-Oct 2007**



**Mount Everest Foundation Expedition**

**(Expedition Reference 07/40A)**

## **Final Report**

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# 2007 New Zealand/Scottish Kharchakund Expedition Report

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## **1 Aim**

The goal of the expedition was to climb the East Ridge of Kharchakund, a 6612m peak located in the upper Gangotri Glacier in the Garhwal Himalaya, India. The ridge presents significant challenges in both rock and ice, and was to be climbed in alpine style in post-monsoon conditions.

## **2 Summary**

The expedition members were Patricia Deavoll (New Zealand) and Bruce Normand (Scotland). The team spent four weeks in the Gangotri Glacier from early September to early October 2007, working from a base camp (BC) in Sunderban meadow at the northern foot of Kedar Dome. After initial acclimatisation to 6000m on Kedar Dome, in excellent weather, an attempt on the route was aborted after one day due to the arrival of a six-day storm. This rendered the challenging route impossible under the conditions. A reconnaissance of the southeast face revealed that this was guarded by an icefall deemed too dangerous to attempt. With days remaining in the expedition and unstable, wintery weather persisting, the climbers made an ascent of a peak of height 6465m, located further up the Gangotri Glacier and believed to be previously unclimbed.

The team members were accompanied by Paul and Shelley Hersey (New Zealand), and a liaison officer, cook and assistant cook (India). The weather pattern and snow conditions were at first typical of the post-monsoon, with generally warm, sunny days and cool nights ensuring compact snow. However, the early onset of winter conditions put an end to attempts at serious technical climbing. The expedition performed a complete assessment of Kharchakund as a climbing target given the snow and glacier cover of the current decade, and succeeded in completing a new route on one more of the many unclimbed summits still to be found in the Gangotri area.

## **3 Introduction**

### **3.1 Purpose**

The aim of the expedition was to climb the East Ridge of Kharchakund. This was to be accomplished by initial gear transport, acclimatisation and reconnaissance of both sides of the ridge, followed by one or more attempts to climb it in alpine style.

### **3.2 Situation**

Kharchakund is located on the upper Gangotri Glacier, on the orographic left side directly beyond (southeast of) Kedarnath (see map in Appendix B). It is approximately equidistant between Shivling, which marks the end of the glacier, and the Chaukamba peaks at its head. It is opposite the Swachand Bamak, one of the more significant side glaciers feeding the Gangotri, which has at its head Satopanth, one of the 7000m peaks in

the area. The Gangotri Glacier, with a length of 28km, is the largest in the Himalaya, and as such constitutes one of the most important geographical features in the Garhwal Himal, that part of the range located in the Uttarkashi district of the Indian state of Uttaranchal Pradesh. The Gangotri is the primary source of the River Ganges, known in Uttarkashi as the Bhagirathi, and thus is one of the most important hydrological features of the entire northern Indian plane. This position is recognised by the role of the township of Gangotri (3140m), and the actual source at Gaumukh (3890m), among the most important pilgrimage sites in all of Hinduism.

### 3.3 Access

The approach to the Garhwal begins with a journey of 450km from Delhi to Gangotri. After 220km of good roads on the flat plains, above Rishikesh (6 hours) a paved but tortuous road winds through the lower foothills to Uttarkashi (120km, 6 hours), and from there a further 110km (7 hours) through forests lining the steep walls of the Bhagirathi valley bring one to Gangotri. This last part of the road is at times vertiginous and prone to frequent wash-outs, but remains passable in a regular small vehicle. Beyond Gangotri a well-used trail leads pilgrims and ponies up the true right bank of the Bhagirathi River for 13km to the usual overnight stop at Bhojwasa (3790m), after which only 4km remain to Gaumukh (3890m); in this section the valley opens and broadens from the gorge-like character of the Bhagirathi to the flat, wide Gangotri Glacier basin. The trademark peaks of the Gangotri come into view here, specifically Bhagirathi Parbat II (6512m), III (6454m) and I (6856m) on the true right, and Shivling (6543m) dominating the true left.



Bhagirathi II, III and I from below Bhojwasa



Shivling from Tapovan

Above Gaumukh the trail climbs briefly onto the glacier above its snout, crosses morainal debris to the true left and climbs steeply to Tapovan (4300m), a large meadow at the foot of Shivling which is the standard BC for this peak. On this section Kharchakund and Kedar Dome (6831m) become visible up-glacier, as does Meru (6672m) behind Shivling. From Tapovan the trail continues for two almost level, grassy kilometres to Kala Patar (4370m), then for a further two kilometres traverses very steep, loose slopes and drops abruptly to the main lateral moraine of the Gangotri shortly before the Kirti Bamak. This major tributary glacier separates Shivling and Meru from Kedar Dome and Kedarnath

(6940m). The final two kilometres of the approach require crossing straight over the debris-covered Kirti Bamak to a grassy meadow around a shallow lake at the foot of the northern slopes of Kedar Dome, Sunderban (4535m). This proved to be a good BC with adequate water, but was rather wind-exposed during the prevailing south-westerly storms. The view up-glacier extended past Kharchakund to the Chaukamba wall, but to see the other significant peaks of the region, specifically Chaukamba I (7138m), Satopanth (7075m, behind the Bhagirathis), Thalay Sagar (6905m) and Brigupanth (6772m), it is necessary to gain altitude. Beyond Sunderban the trail continues over level, grassy moraines on the true left before descending to the rubble-covered Gangotri. Crossing this diagonally to the centre of the glacier gives access to the clean ice of the upper basin, and hence allows easy travel right to the head of the glacier. The foot of the East Ridge of Kharchakund is approximately 11km from Sunderban at an altitude of 4800m.

## **4 Team**

The expedition members were Pat Deavoll of New Zealand and Bruce Normand from Scotland. They were joined by Paul and Shelley Hersey (New Zealand), who were sharing the Kharchakund permit and logistical support with a view to climbing a new route on the Southeast Face and ridge of the peak. The support team was composed of the cook Sarin, his assistant Kanaya and the (civilian) liaison officer Shamil.

## **5 Preparation**

### **5.1 Conception**

In 2004 Pat Deavoll was a member of a MEF-sponsored expedition which attempted the first ascent of Jankuth, a 6805m peak at the head of the Gangotri glacier, directly west of Chaukamba I. This expedition was not successful, due primarily to very unseasonal post-monsoon weather in that year, when the monsoon essentially lapsed directly into the winter. The initial aim of the 2007 expedition was to make a further attempt on Jankuth, based on the knowledge of its West Face gleaned on the previous visit, and with the blessing of the other members of the 2004 expedition.

However, since then the Indian province of Uttaranchal Pradesh has begun to demand a permit in parallel to that issued by the Indian Mountaineering Federation (IMF), and similar in price. Because Jankuth is not on the list of peaks known to the Uttaranchal authorities, permission to climb it was denied, and the advice of the trekking agency was that the process of reversing this decision was likely to be extremely lengthy.

### **5.2 Objective**

On the 2004 expedition Deavoll had been struck by the imposing Kharchakund, a peak the team trekked past frequently. Kharachakund is known to have been climbed three times, by three separate routes: a Japanese ascent of the West Face (snow, ice) in 1980, an impressive Austrian ascent of the Northeast Face (ice, seracs) in alpine style in 1982,

and an equally impressive, protracted assault on the North Ridge (rock, ice) by a Scottish team in 1987. The latter two teams both descended by the Japanese route. The southern half of the mountain remained essentially untouched, and also unseen except by the select group of climbers who had ventured high up the Gangotri. The South Face contains a long glacier ramp ending in a short icefall and leading smoothly into the South-Southwest Ridge. The East Ridge, rising in a series of rock and ice steps, presented a particularly challenging prospect for a new line. This peak and route were then chosen as the alternative target. Also based on the 2004 experience, the decision was made to begin the expedition at the very start of September, trading a possible approach during the end of the monsoon for more climbing time before the onset of winter.



Kharchakund seen from the Gangotri Glacier below Tapovan, showing the E Ridge in partial profile.



Kharchakund E Ridge seen from the Gangotri Glacier at the base of the route.

### 5.3 Permission

Applications for permits to climb Kharchakund were lodged with the IMF and with their new equivalents in Uttaranchal Pradesh, and approval was granted by both.

### 5.4 Logistics

The expedition used the services of the trekking agency Himalayan Run and Trek (HRT) both to obtain the required permits and to arrange transport and provisions for the trek and climb. Mindful of the vast amount of effort expended by the 2004 team simply in hauling provisions up the flat Gangotri glacier at an altitude below 5000m, the 2007 expedition was predicated on first acclimatising to 6000m on the easy slopes of Kedar Dome before any serious assault on Kharchakund. This would reduce the amount of food and equipment to be carried up-glacier, and led to a division of time into 15 days at BC and 15 days above it. HRT was then asked to provide provisions (food, fuel and appropriate portage) for the trek and for half the envisioned time in BC, while the team brought or bought in Delhi the necessary provisions for the time above BC.

Climbing provisions (i.e. for the time above BC) were assembled by ordering gas canisters through HRT, bringing specially packaged food (including freeze-dried meals, foil-packaged tuna, energy bars and gels, chocolate, coffee, teabags and isotonic drinks) from New Zealand and from Europe, and obtaining further Western food (soups, noodles, couscous, nuts, dried fruits, spice sachets, more chocolate bars) and non-food (toilet paper) items in Delhi.

Climbing equipment consisted of two 60m x 8mm ropes with a standard rack of rock (nuts, cams, pitons), ice (screws of all lengths) and snow (pickets) protection. Because of the acclimatisation strategy only one tent needed to be brought beyond BC, and this was a

**small 2-person, single-wall bivouac tent (Black Diamond ‘First Light’). Snowshoes were considered essential for the glacier approach. The team had a Thuraya satellite telephone.**

#### 5.5 Finances

Because a significant proportion of the expenses was based on a team of four climbers, the numbers presented in the “expenditures” portion of this section include the costs of Paul and Shelley Hersey. The full financial details follow in tabular form.

#### Expenditures (4 climbers)

Item	US\$
Peak fee, IMF	1800
Peak fee, Uttaranchal Pradesh	1600
Environmental levy	400
Liaison officer equipment rental	500
Airfares	1145+5800
Total agency fee	11751
Insurance	1428+1560
Satellite telephone	180
Food from New Zealand	360
Food from Delhi	150
	US\$26674

The total cost of the expedition, including airfares, attributable to the Deavoll-Normand team was US\$12186.

The agency fee included services, staff, accommodation, transport, porters, gas canisters and all food and fuel for the approach and trek out, plus for 15 days in BC. No expenses were incurred for air freight, as all the climbers were able to bring the required equipment in personal baggage (with the generous assistance of the New Zealand Changabang Expedition in transporting 2 bags for Pat Deavoll). No expenses were included for medical equipment: the main expedition first-aid kit was provided by Normand, but with each climber also bringing and using some personal supplies, and no major incidents occurring, this was never used.

### Income (2 climbers)

Financial grants were received as follows:

Donor	Amount	US\$ equivalent
The Mount Everest Foundation	£1900	3800
The British Mountaineering Council	£400	800
The New Zealand Alpine Club	NZ\$1000	706
		<hr/>
		US\$5306

Personal contributions from each of the two climbers were then US\$3440.

Equipment grants and support included:

- Heinz-Watties NZ – foil-packaged tuna
- Back Country Foods (New Zealand) – freeze-dried meals at wholesale price
- Icebreaker (NZ) – woollen underwear at wholesale price to NZ members
- Southern Approach – clothing for Pat Deavoll
- Black Diamond – equipment for Pat Deavoll

### 5.6 Insurance

Deavoll has full expedition-standard accident and medical insurance through the New Zealand Alpine Club and Normand through the BMC.

### 5.7 Medical

Both members have current inoculations against tetanus, diphtheria, polio, thyphoid and hepatitis A and B. Neither obtained rabies inoculations, and mosquito repellent combined with long-sleeved clothing was deemed sufficient protection against malaria for the short time spent in potentially hazardous zones. Normand provided a comprehensive first-aid kit, including injectables, for all regular eventualities, but in the event this was not used because nothing stronger than ibuprofen (from personal supplies) was required by any of the climbers. Deavoll used acetazolamide as a prophylactic for acclimatisation purposes, while Normand used no altitude medication.

### 5.8 Travel

The New Zealanders flew to from Christchurch to Delhi via Singapore with Singapore Airlines, arriving late on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, while Normand arrived early on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> September from Frankfurt with Kuwait Airlines. All members had a 30kg baggage allowance, and neither Deavoll nor Normand paid any excess. Transport and drivers for the return trip to Gangotri were arranged through HRT, as was accommodation in Delhi (4 nights), Uttarkashi (1 night), Gangotri (3 nights) and Rishikesh (1 night).



## 6 Expedition Log

### 3<sup>rd</sup> September

The team members met in the morning at the YWCA Blue Triangle Family Hostel, the accommodation arranged in Delhi by HRT. Here they were met by HRT Delhi staff, who took them to the IMF for the pre-expedition briefing, where it was confirmed that the expedition had met all of the administrative requirements. Here the team members also met with their civilian liaison officer Shamil, who was to accompany the expedition throughout.

### 4<sup>th</sup> September

The team members met with C. S. Pandey, the head of HRT, and then with senior HRT guide Nawain, who would accompany the expedition (in the role of sirdar) to BC. Nawain then supervised a visit to a market where western-style climbing food for the time beyond BC was purchased.

### 5<sup>th</sup> September

The team and all its baggage left Delhi at 5am in an 18-seater bus to drive to Haridwar, Rishikesh and finally Uttarkashi, arriving after dark.

### 6<sup>th</sup> September

The members spent the morning in Uttarkashi for final, minor shopping tasks, driving in the afternoon to Gangotri and arriving there at sundown. The cook and cook's assistant joined the expedition in Uttarkashi, bringing also significant amounts of food and equipment assembled at the HRT branch office there.

### 7<sup>th</sup> September

The members spent a free acclimatisation day in Gangotri, which they used for repacking equipment and also for hiking up the Kedar Ganga valley, ascending directly south from the township, for views of North Face of Thalay Sagar.

### 8<sup>th</sup> September

The approach trek began, with Bhojwasa (3790m) as first day's stage. The total baggage (for four climbers and three staff) totalled 35 porter loads but was carried by only 19 men, most taking double loads. The weather was partly cloudy. On this section pilgrims and trekkers enter the National Park directly above Gangotri. In Bhojwasa the expedition set up its tents in a standard camp rather than use the pilgrim rest-houses which are available here.

### 9<sup>th</sup> September

The approach trek continued past Gaumukh (3890m), where only Normand joined the pilgrims in immersing himself in the infant Ganges. Once on the moraines covering the Gangotri Glacier, the first views of Kedar Dome and Kharchakund were obtained, and accompanied the climbers up to Tapovan (4300m). The weather was fine in the morning, but turned cloudy in the afternoon for the final 30 minutes of trekking along to Kala Patar (4370m).

### 10<sup>th</sup> September

The approach trek was completed to Sunderban Meadow (BC, 4535m): fine morning weather accompanied the traverse of steep morainal paths beyond Kala Patar, and the crossing of the Kirti Bamak, but lapsed to a cloudy afternoon during which BC was set up in the open, flat meadow. Water would flow occasionally through the meadow in the evenings, and otherwise reliable, stationary water could be found in a small lake.

### 11<sup>th</sup> September

Deavoll and Normand made an initial gear carry along the Gangotri Glacier with approximately 25kg of equipment, fuel and food. The trail followed the lateral moraine beneath Kedar Dome, after which the climbers crossed into the centre of the glacier to pick up clean ice, finding the situation similar to that in 2004. With the weather deteriorating to afternoon showers, the gear drop was made on the glacier in line with Kharchakund summit, still some 2km short of the base of the East Ridge and at approximately 4850m.

### 12<sup>th</sup> September

Rest day.

### 13<sup>th</sup> September

The climbers made a gear carry and reconnaissance along the true right bank of the Kirti Bamak to foot of Northwest Ridge of Kedar Dome. The sometimes indistinct normal route was found and the gear deposited by a small lake at 4900m. Once again fine morning weather turned to afternoon cloud.

### 14<sup>th</sup> September

The morning was spent resting and packing, before an afternoon departure to camp at the previous day's gear drop with a view to climbing higher on Kedar Dome for acclimatisation. The weather was partly cloudy all day.

### 15<sup>th</sup> September

In excellent morning weather, progress was easy on a partial trail and low-angle talus slopes, which the climbers followed all the way to 5500m by early afternoon. Here a good camp site was established, shortly before the point where the ridge trail changes

from talus to snow and ice. The weather remained good until the evening, affording excellent views of Shivling, Meru, Brigupanth, Thalay Sagar and also Satopanth. By contrast, the summit of Kedarnath appeared not very imposing above the badly broken glacier in the cirque below the Northwest Ridge of Kedar Dome.



Meru seen from on Kedar Dome



Thalay Sagar seen from on Kedar Dome

### 16<sup>th</sup> September

With Deavoll feeling the altitude, a very slow start was made on a sunny, warm morning. The team hiked over the ice and snow slopes of the rounded Northwest Ridge, stopping at precisely 6000m. Excellent weather and views were to be had all day.

### 17<sup>th</sup> September

This day was a repeat of the previous one: Deavoll was still suffering from a headache, the pair made a slow start to the day's acclimatisation hike, and walked this time to 6100m (Deavoll) and 6200m (Normand). On this day the weather was cloudier and turned to evening snow showers.

### 18<sup>th</sup> September

The team descended to BC in good weather, seeing more than 10 blue sheep in a small herd on sloping meadows by the Kirti Bamak.

### 19<sup>th</sup> September

The day was devoted to rest and washing. The good weather persisted and at one point the camp was surrounded by a herd of blue sheep numbering more than 30, with many young.

### 20<sup>th</sup> September

A further gear supply for the forthcoming Kharchakund attempts was carried along the Gangotri Glacier to its confluence with the Ghanohim Bamak (4770m, foot of North Ridge of Kharchakund). The climbers then tried to perform a reconnaissance up the Ghanohim to view the West-Face descent route (Japanese, 1980). Clouds and showery

weather, with snow flurries on the glacier, made it seem that the route would not be visible in its entirety. However, in a convenient clearing it was possible to see the entire West Face. Glacial recession since 1980 had opened a gap of almost 100 vertical metres at the base of the face, which was now a rock band. However, the rest of the face appeared sufficiently objectively safe, including by-passing some seracs near the summit, and at the bottom it would be possible to cross over towards the base of the North Ridge, descending to glacier-level by a small snowfield and steep scree slopes.

### 21<sup>st</sup> September

The climbers moved their remaining equipment to the previous day's dump, then continued with heavy loads a further 3km to a true advanced BC (ABC) located below a small glacier flanking the base of the East Ridge on its north side. Normand returned to the initial gear dump to bring this also to ABC while Deavoll prepared a tent site on the lateral moraine. The weather was good all day.

### 22<sup>nd</sup> September

The pair walked a further 2km up the Gangotri Glacier and into the cirque below the Southeast Face of Kharchakund in order to observe in full both sides of the East Ridge. The most challenging rock and ice steps were identified, and where possible it was established on which side of the ridge they would be turned. The current ABC was chosen as the most logical starting point to by-pass the rubble of the lower ridge. Good weather in the early morning turned worrying, with lenticular clouds growing over the peaks and heavy snowshowers in the afternoon.

### 23<sup>rd</sup> September

The climbers made an early start to ascend the moraine, cross a snow-field, pass a rockfall-threatened gully and climb four pitches of brittle, 45-degree ice to reach a small notch in the northern spur of the East Ridge at 5500m. The weather was good, but with lenticular clouds above the summits. After a brief reconnaissance of the next section, which would be the first of a number of rock steps, a camp was set up in the notch. Snow began falling at 7pm.

### 24<sup>th</sup> September

Snow had fallen all night, accumulating over 10cm in places. The decision was made to abandon this push, and the previous day's climb descended in four abseils followed by a walk over marginal slopes of new snow over ice and rock. Most of the climbing equipment, food and fuel was dumped at ABC, and the climbers returned to BC in rain and strong wind, which deteriorated further in the course of the day.

### 25<sup>th</sup> September

Heavy snow fell overnight, accumulating over 30cm everywhere. The kitchen tent was damaged, but the mess and climbers' tents were rescued by timely shovelling at 5am. Further snow and strong winds continued throughout the day.

### 26<sup>th</sup> September

More heavy snow fell overnight, damaging the cook tent again, while the other tents were again shovelled clear on time. Drifting snow and strong winds persisted through the day.

### 27<sup>th</sup> September

Thick clouds and strong winds remained, bringing further snow showers.

### 28<sup>th</sup> September

Cloudy weather with persistently strong upper-level winds from the southwest brought more snow. Apparently, during this time some trekking groups with poorly equipped porters had to be assisted in descending from the trek over Arwa Pass, after which the Indian Army began to restrict trekkers wishing to go to Tapovan.

### 29<sup>th</sup> September

Cloudy, windy weather with short, sunny intervals continued, but cleared through the afternoon.

### 30<sup>th</sup> September

Good weather returned, bringing sunny, windless and clear conditions. This became a drying and packing day in preparation for another push up-glacier. The East Ridge was now unquestionably out of condition, but the plan was to attempt the glacier ramp route on the southeast face if possible.

### 1<sup>st</sup> October

The climbers returned to ABC. The snow was sufficiently deep that snowshoes could be used everywhere, including on the blocky moraines, and was also quite well consolidated as far as ABC, so that travel speeds remained reasonable. Deepening snow on the glacier beyond ABC slowed progress, and a camp was pitched 1.5km past ABC where the approach begins to steepen into the cirque below the southeast flank of Kharchakund. The weather remained excellent all day.

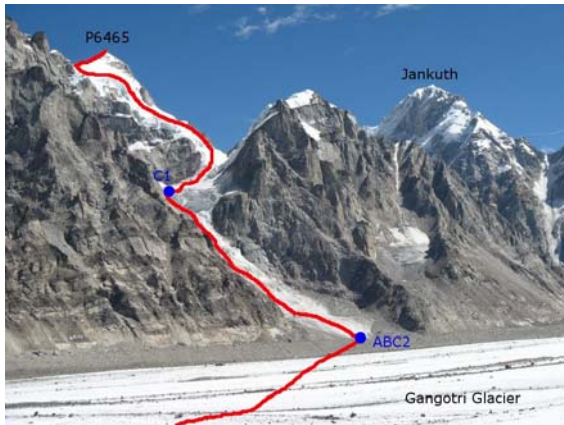
### 2<sup>nd</sup> October

An early approach to a height of 5200m at the base of the icefall guarding the glacier ramp revealed that the true left side of icefall was as dangerous as all other parts, despite appearances from further away. This route was therefore abandoned, meaning that the expedition would be unable to climb Kharchakund. Another possible target was sought for the remaining days of the expedition, and the decision made to attempt P6465, a snow and rock peak crowning the buttress fronting the Gangotri Glacier between the Swachand and Maiandi Bamaks (map, Appendix B). The climbers descended from beneath Kharchakund on a long, diagonal course up-glacier, to reach after some hours of heavy showshoeing the base of the icefall descending from the basin in the centre of this buttress. The route and icefall were inspected on the way, the icefall deemed sufficiently

safe on its true right side, and a camp set at 5050m. In view of the deep snow conditions, the pair decided to make the climb with an additional high camp at 5600m in the upper basin. The weather was hot and sunny all day.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> October

After an early start, the climbers had cleared the icefall by noon with only two roped pitches required. They crossed the basin and established a camp close to the base of a glacial ramp leading up to the Southeast Ridge of P6465. The weather was clear and sunny, but the winds were strong enough to raise snow flurries from the glacier surface.



P6465 seen from beneath Kharchakund, with route and camps marked.

Normand leading at 6200m on P6465.

### 4<sup>th</sup> October

The team started early, finding a generally good crust for snowshoeing. They followed the glacier ramp to meet the Southeast Ridge of P6465 at 5900m at sunrise. The ascent continued in deep snow, angling left into the South Face directly below the summit. The weather was extremely cold and windy, but initially clear, offering good views over the peaks of Yeonbuk (5953m) and Mandani Parbat (6193m) on other side of the Gangotri Glacier, to the endless ridges of Himalayan foothills beyond. A section of 45-degree snow and ice was climbed in four roped pitches. At this point lenticular clouds descended over the summits of Kedarnath and the Chaukambas, then of Kharchakund, and clouds began to blow around the summit of P6465. The pair traversed through more deep snow to reach the low-angle Southwest Ridge of the summit pyramid, which could be followed to 6400m. A final roped pitch of 45-degree firn led directly to the summit, which was reached at 1:30pm. The wind was strong and the weather mostly cloudy, but with clearings through which Jankuth, Satopanth, Swachand and the Swachand and Maiandi Bamaks could be seen. A rapid and uneventful descent followed, with the climbers returning to the tent at nightfall. A windy night with some snowfall ensued.

### 5<sup>th</sup> October

A mostly cloudy morning deteriorated to thick cloud, snow and later an electrical storm. The climbers descended the icefall with only one abseil and returned across the glacier to their second ABC in heavy snow conditions, low visibility and continuing snowfall.

### 6<sup>th</sup> October

The snow was deep and continued falling. The climbers cleared all their equipment from both ABCs and took it in a single heavy carry to BC. Strong winds persisted, and the temperatures were by now significantly lower than during the first storm (24-29<sup>th</sup> Sept). The mess tent at BC was found to be heavily drifted both inside and out.

### 7<sup>th</sup> October

On this morning the weather was partly sunny with gusting winds, but no snow showers. Unexpectedly, the porters arrived two days ahead of schedule, but with perfect timing given the end of climbing activities the previous day. This event was in fact a consequence of the emergency situation declared by the Indian Army as a result of the persisting winter weather, although for most climbers and trekkers in the area, including the Kharchakund Expedition, it was by no means critical. All of the team's equipment was packed and transported through deep snow on the Kirti Bamak, and thence on a snow trail along dangerous moraines (spontaneous rock fall) back to Tapovan, which turned out to be at the snow-line.

### 8<sup>th</sup> October

The expedition enjoyed a comfortable night without snow. In the course of the day the members and all porters descended to Gangotri. Here they were able to contact HRT and call the bus which would come from Uttarkashi, arriving the following evening for the return drive to Delhi.

### 9<sup>th</sup> October

Rest day in Gangotri.

### 10<sup>th</sup> October

Return drive as far as Rishikesh.

### 11<sup>th</sup> October

Return to Delhi by early afternoon.

### 12<sup>th</sup> October

IMF debriefing and formal end of expedition.

## **7 Conclusion**

The expedition was not successful in its declared aim of climbing Kharchakund, either by the East Ridge or by any other route. However, a thorough reconnaissance of this route and of the southern flank of the mountain was performed. The expedition did succeed in making the first ascent of P6465, a peak located between the Maiandi and Swachand Bamaks on the true right side of the upper Gangotri Glacier.

## **8 Acknowledgements**

The expedition acknowledges with gratitude the assistance of the following organisations for financial assistance:

- the Mount Everest Foundation,
- the British Mountaineering Council,
- the New Zealand Alpine Club,

and the following companies for providing equipment and provisions:

- Heinz-Watties Ltd, Back Country Foods, Southern Approach, Black Diamond.

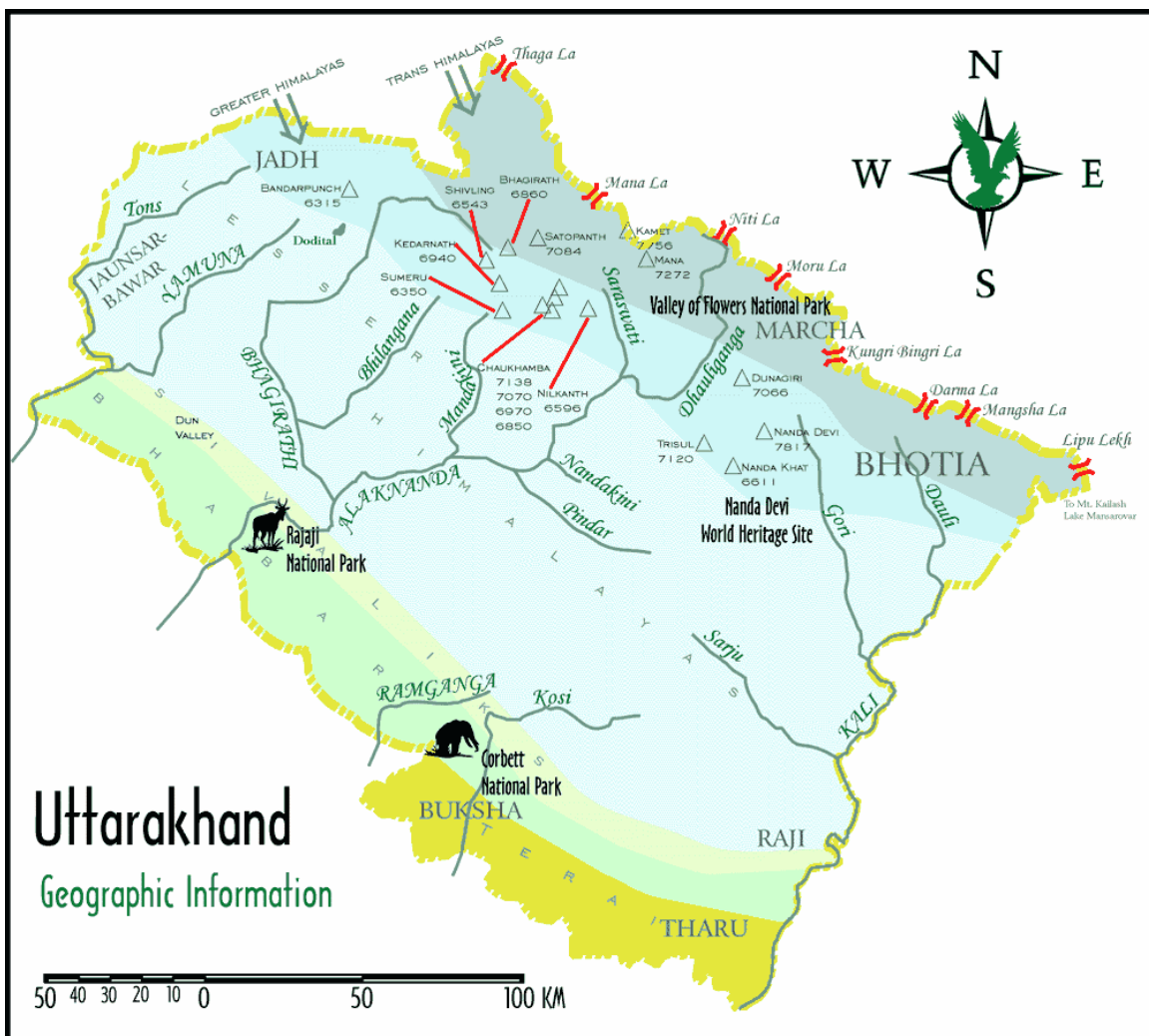


## Appendix A: Bibliography

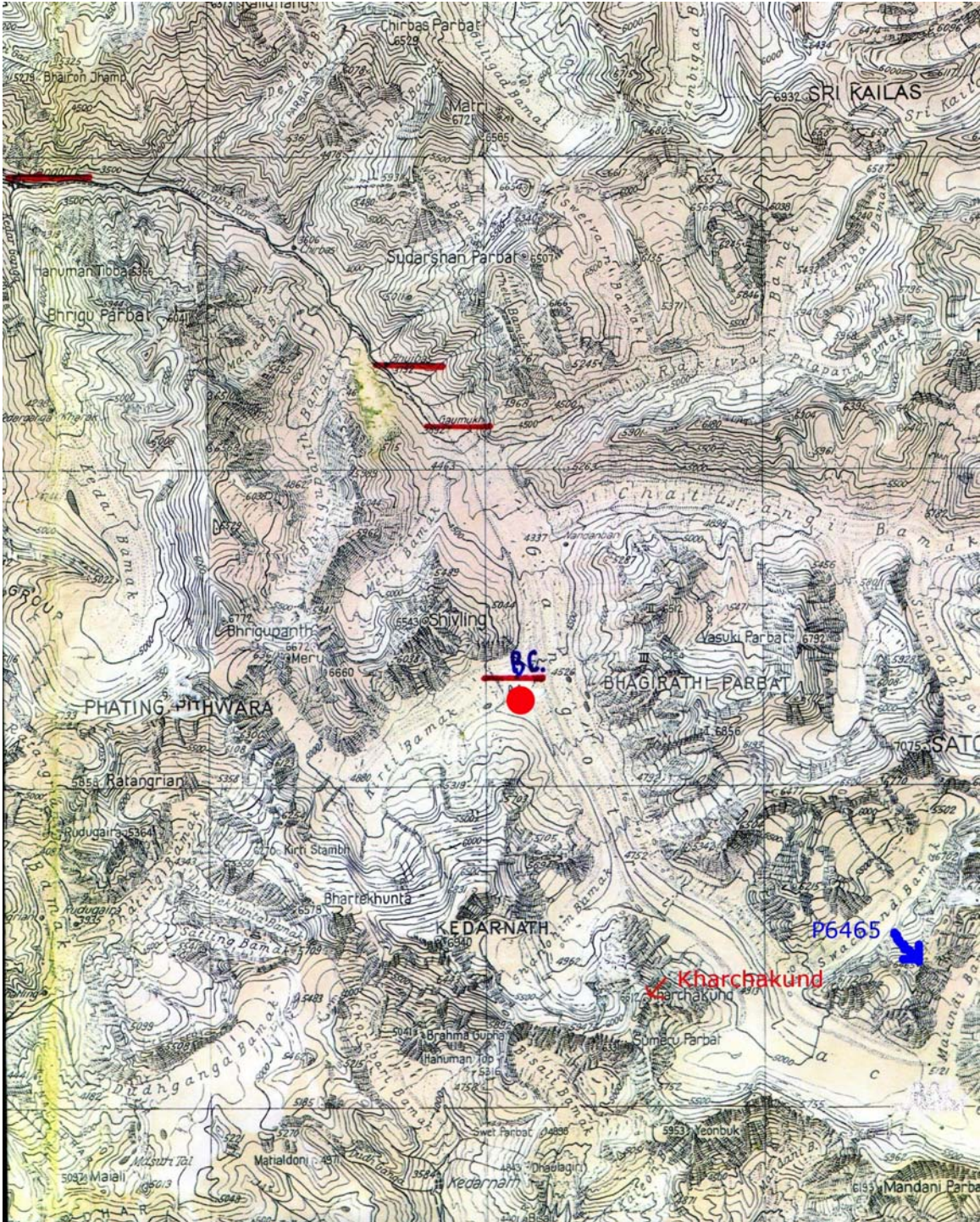
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## Appendix B: Maps

(a) Location of Garhwal peaks in Uttarakhand Pradesh province.



(b) Map of Gangotri Glacier



## Appendix C: Address Details

Indian Mountaineering Federation

Benito Juarez Rd,  
New Delhi 110 021,  
India.

**Himalayan Run & Trek**

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