

Project Together

Khayang Peak (6,186 m) Expedition

March 9-22, 2025

Expedition Report



Submitted To:

Mount Everest Foundation

Prepared By:

Prakash Gurung, Pur Bahadur Gurung (Yukta) and Sandesh Sherpa

April, 2025

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Acknowledgement

We, Prakash Gurung, Pur Bahadur Gurung (Yukta), and Sandesh Sherpa, extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who made the “Project Together” expedition to Khayang Peak (6,186 m) possible. This ambitious alpine-style endeavor, though it fell short of the summit, was a testament to the support and trust of our partners, whose contributions fueled our journey and commitment to sustainable mountaineering.

Our deepest appreciation goes to the **Mount Everest Foundation (MEF)** for their generous financial support through a 3,500 GBP grant. This funding was the backbone of our expedition, enabling us to cover critical costs for permits, transportation, gear, and logistics, while ensuring we upheld our zero-waste and eco-conscious ethos. Their belief in our vision to pioneer an unclimbed peak inspired us to push our limits and honor the Himalayas.

We are profoundly grateful to **Ian Wall**, CEO of Kathmandu Environmental Education Project (KEEP), and **Pratik Bahadur Khatri**, General Secretary of the Alpine Sports Federation-Nepal (ASF-Nepal), for serving as referees for this project. Their expertise, guidance, and endorsement lent credibility to our mission, ensuring we adhered to the highest standards of safety, ethics, and environmental responsibility. Their support was a beacon throughout our planning and execution.

We also extend our sincere thanks to **Black Diamond**, **Elite Exped**, and **RAEKO** for their invaluable support with gear and equipment. Their high-quality gear was instrumental in our alpine-style ascent, allowing us to climb light and resilient.

Together, these contributions empowered us to reach 5,220 meters, map uncharted terrain, remove 9 kg of waste, and share sustainable practices with local communities. Though Khayang Peak stood unconquered, the support of these remarkable organizations and individuals ensured our expedition left a legacy of grit, respect, and inspiration. Thank you for standing with us in this call to the wild.

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Executive Summary

The “Project Together” expedition aimed to achieve the first ascent of Khayang Peak (6,186 m) in Nepal’s Manaslu Region via an alpine-style climb on the southwest face. Led by Prakash Gurung (32, IFMGA Mountain Guide), the team included Pur Bahadur Gurung (Yukta, 36, Aspirant Guide) and Sandesh Sherpa (35, Aspirant Guide), supported by three local porters. The expedition, spanning March 9–22, 2025, sought to pioneer a new summit, uphold sustainability, and inspire through documentation and community engagement.

Starting from Kathmandu, we drove to Jagat (1,410 m) and trekked through Deng, Namrung, and Syo to establish Approach Camp (4,200 m) and Base Camp (4,765 m). On March 15, we reached 5,220 m, navigating the Khayang Glacier’s crevasses and 7–10 m ice walls, but a sudden whiteout, heavy snowfall (12–15 cm), and avalanche risks forced retreat. Persistent snow forecasts for three days ended summit hopes, leading to a descent on March 16. We deviated from the planned Larke La Pass exit due to snow, retracing our route to Kathmandu by March 22, four days early.

Despite not summiting, we fulfilled secondary objectives. We upheld a zero-waste policy, removing 9 kg of waste (3 kg human, 1 kg kitchen, 3 kg recyclables, 2 EPI gas canisters) to Samagaon’s MCA checkpoint. We documented the journey with 200 photos, 5 hours of video, and GPS data (Base Camp: 28° 36' 22" N, 84° 43' 05" E; highest point: 28° 36' 43" N, 84° 42' 55" E). Community engagement included buying local produce in Syo, a Puja ceremony, and donating notebooks, pencils, and conservation books to Khorlabesi’s school, inspiring sustainable mountaineering. We plan to offset CO2 emissions by planting 100 trees in Gorkha.

Adverse weather, avalanche risks, and technical glacier challenges underscored the need for advanced weather monitoring (satellite receivers, buffer days), rigorous hazard protocols (avalanche training, turn-back rules), and proactive health oversight (daily SpO2 checks). Flexibility in routes and waste strategies, like pre-scheduled MCA drops, is critical. Google Maps and Earth aided planning but missed dynamic hazards like crevasses and storms.

The expedition cost NPR 1,052,900, funded by a 3,500 GBP MEF grant (NPR 592,830), NPR 238,500 from Black Diamond and RAEKO and NPR 221,570 from the team. Efficient resource use (e.g., two of six gas canisters used) and an early return kept costs in check.

Khayang Peak remained unclimbed, but “Project Together” demonstrated resilience, environmental stewardship, and cultural respect. Our alpine-style effort, reaching 5,220 m, mapped hazards and inspired locals, leaving a legacy of grit and sustainability for future climbers.

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Cover Sheet

Expedition Name: Project Together

MEF Reference: MEF-F (2025 Climbing)

Expedition Start and End Date: March 9 - March 22, 2024

Expedition Leader with Contact Details:

Prakash Gurung

Address: Aanbukhaireni – 6, Tanahun, Nepal

Phone: +977 9813112063

Email: Kemchaygurung36@gmail.com

Expedition Members and Nationalities:

1. Prakash Gurung, 32, Nepali (Team Leader)
2. Pur Bahadur Gurung (Yukta), 36, Nepali
3. Sandesh Sherpa, 35, Nepali

Location:

Country: Nepal

Province: Gandaki Province,

District: Gorkha District

Municipality: Chum Nubri Rural Municipality

Mountain Range: Mansiri Mountain Range

Mountain Subrange: Kutang Subrange

GPS Coordinates:

Base Camp: Latitude 28° 36' 22" N, Longitude 84° 43' 05" E (4,910 m)

Highest Point Reached: Latitude 28° 36' 43" N, Longitude 84° 42' 55" E (5,200 m)

Objective: Latitude 28° 38' 00" N, Longitude 84° 42' 48" E (6,186 m) (Not Achieved)

Summary:

“Project Together” targeted the first ascent of Khayang Peak (6,186 m/20,295 ft) in Nepal’s Manaslu Region via an alpine-style climb on the southwest face, spanning March 9 – 22, 2025. We (Prakash Gurung, Pur Bahadur (Yukta) Gurung, and Sandesh Sherpa) reached 5,220 m on March 16 but retreated amid a fierce storm (12 – 15 cm snow, 5-10 m visibility), a grueling long approach from base camp (4,500 m), and a glacier riddled with snow-masked crevasses. We maintained sustainability—packing out 9 kg waste, will be offsetting CO2 via reforestation—and documented extensively (more than 100 photos, videos, and GPS

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waypoints). Three local porters supported the approach, insured. Cultural respect shone through homestays and local purchases. Though the summit evaded us, we mapped crevasse zones, logged storm data, and shared insights. This attempt highlights Khayang's brutal unpredictability—future teams need weather buffers and advanced bases.

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The Team and Their Story

The Team

Prakash Gurung (Team Leader)



Age: 32

Nationality: Nepali

Occupation: Mountain Guide

Certification: IFMGA Mountain Guide

Key Achievements:

- Successfully guided clients to the summit of Mount Everest (8,848.86 m).
- Summited Khumjungar (6,759 m) in alpine style on [date unspecified].
- Attempted Lhotse South Face (8,516 m) on [date unspecified].
- Completed ascents of multiple 6000 m and 7000 m peaks including Ama Dablam and Himlung.

Additional Details:

- Instructor at Nepal Mountaineering Instructors Association (NMIA).
- Member of Technical Committee at Nepal National Mountain Guide Association (NNMGA)
- Actively participates in outdoor and adventure activities.

Email: Kemchaygurung36@gmail.com

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Pur Bahadur Gurung (aka Yukta)



Age: 36

Nationality: Nepali

Occupation: Mountain Guide

Certification: Aspirant Guide

Key Achievements:

- Successfully guided and summited 22 peaks over 8000 m, including Mount Everest (8,848.86 m), K2 (8,611 m), and Annapurna I (8,091 m).
- Completed ascents of 11 out of 14 8000-meter peaks.
- Summited Khumjungar (6,759 m) in alpine style on [date unspecified].
- Completed ascents of multiple 6000 m and 7000 m peaks including Ama Dablam and Himlung.

Additional Details: President of Mission Community Help Foundation; actively involved in outdoor and adventure activities.

Email: guideyukta@gmail.com

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Sandesh Sherpa



Age: 35

Nationality: Nepali

Occupation: Mountain Guide

Certification: Aspirant Guide

Key Achievements:

- Successfully guided clients to the summit of Mount Everest (8,848.86 m).
- Completed ascents of multiple 6000 m and 7000 m peaks including Ama Dablam and Himlung.

Additional Details: Actively engaged in outdoor and adventure activities.

Email: SandeshTREKER2011@gmail.com

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The Story of Project Together: Khayang Peak



We set out for Khayang Peak in March, a trio—Prakash, Sandesh, and Yukta—joined by our steadfast porters, hearts ablaze with the thrill of the untamed. The “Project Together” expedition wasn’t just a climb; it was our pact with the wild, a dance with the Himalayas’ icy soul. From Kathmandu’s clamor to the glacier’s edge, we chased a summit that tested us, humbled us, and left us richer in ways we hadn’t foreseen.

We set out for Khayang Peak in March, a trio—Prakash, Sandesh, and Yukta—joined by our steadfast porters, hearts ablaze with the thrill of the untamed. We began our journey not just with gear, maps, and permits—but with a shared dream. Khayang Peak stood tall in our minds, remote and untouched, rising 6,186 meters into the wild heart of the Mansiri Himal. It wasn’t just another summit. It was a first. A chance to do something new, something meaningful. That’s why we called it Project Together—not for the summit alone, but for how we wanted to get there: as a team, with humility, with purpose.

We left Kathmandu on March 9, 2025. The city’s bustle faded as we drove westward in a rugged 4WD, our electric vehicle hopes dashed by the reality of broken tracks beyond Arughat. Our jeep rattled past terraced fields and riverbanks, bouncing over rocky trails as we inched deeper into the Budhi Gandaki Valley. By the time we reached Machhakhola, the light was fading. We sorted ropes, stoves, and tents under the stars, the river murmuring nearby.

The days that followed were a steady rise through nature’s layers. From Jagat’s stone alleys to Deng’s barley fields, we hiked narrow ledges above rushing rivers. Mule bells echoed, and

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prayer flags fluttered on swinging bridges. Altitude made itself known—one porter battled headaches, another nausea—but we moved with care, checking in, adjusting loads. By the time we reached Namrung, then Syo, the mountain had already begun to shape us. We bought vegetables from local farmers. We slept light, the altitude whispering through our dreams. Then came the push toward the unknown.

On March 13, in Syo, we paused for breath and blessings. A Lama's Puja sent prayers skyward, and we pushed to Approach Camp at 4,200 meters, the yak trail crumbling under avalanches' scars. We climbed to Approach Camp at 4,200 meters, threading through yak trails half-swallowed by landslides and avalanche debris. The porters struggled on the broken terrain, and we fixed ropes to help them. That night, we scouted ahead—Prakash and Sandesh tracing the moraines, choosing the safest place for Base Camp. The cold bit deep.

The next morning, we performed another Puja at a Lapsu. From here on, the glacier was ours alone. We hauled our gear to Base Camp at 4,910 meters, a precarious perch amid shifting ice. Crevasses yawned beneath our feet. Snow began to fall.

March 15 dawned crisp, the glacier gleaming under a blue sky. We—Prakash, Yukta, and Sandesh—roped up, aiming for Camp I at 5,600 meters. The Pangpoche Glacier was a frozen labyrinth—crevasses like A's, H's, V's, hidden by snow bridges that groaned underfoot. Ice walls, 7 to 10 meters high, demanded axe and crampon, each climb draining us. To our right, rockfall zones; to our left, avalanche-prone slopes. We pressed forward through the only safe corridor, reaching 5,220 meters by afternoon. Just 380 meters shy of our target for Camp I. That's when the whiteout hit. Cracking slopes warned of avalanche, visibility gone. One moment, we were under a cobalt sky. The next, we were wrapped in blinding snow and wind. The view vanished. The horizon collapsed. The crevasse edges blurred into nothing. Then came the sounds—the cracks. The deep, dreadful sound of snow shifting under pressure. Avalanches threatened from above. We stopped. Huddled. Spoke few words. We didn't hesitate long. We knew what came next if we pushed forward. One misstep. One wrong foot on a hidden crevasse. We turned around. Each step down the glacier was a gamble, but we made it—back to Base Camp. Huddled in the storm, we chose life over summit, retreating in a nerve-wracking crawl to Base Camp, shaken but safe. We waited at Base Camp, hoping the skies would clear. But it didn't but the day brought more snow. Weather apps forecasted three relentless days of it, crushing our hopes. The mountain had made its decision.

We packed up, leaving no trace. Every wrapper, every empty canister, every gram of waste. Even 3 kilograms of human waste, sealed and hauled on our backs. We descended through snow to Approach Camp, the storm chasing us down, but we reached 4,200 meters by dusk. The porters rejoined us, and we all exhaled. We were alive. We hadn't reached the summit—but we'd survived, and we had done right by the mountain.

On March 17, the clouds lifted slightly, and we made our way back to Syo. Then came the detour. We (Prakash and Sandesh) volunteered to take our collected waste to Samagaon, where the Manaslu Conservation Area office could dispose of it responsibly. Nine kilos in total. A weight that mattered more than any summit photo. We spent that evening in Syo, speaking to the locals. We told them what had happened. We talked about crevasses, storms, retreat. But we also talked about sustainability, respect, and what it means to climb with conscience. They listened. Some nodded. Some smiled. We felt heard.

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From there, we made our way back down. We pushed straight to Deng, then to Jagat. One of our porters had blisters. We took some of his load and slowed our pace. At Khorlabesi, we stopped at a school. Shared stories with wide-eyed children. Gave them notebooks and pencils. Planted seeds of wonder. Maybe one day, they'll climb too. On March 22, we reached Machhakhola. The next day, the jeep took us back to Arughat, to Dhading, then finally to Kathmandu. And a lifetime in our hearts.

Khayang Peak stood unconquered. But we didn't fail. We adapted. We listened. We came home with all team members safe, with all our waste carried out, with respect intact. That, to us, is a summit of its own. We carried back more than defeat—grit forged in crevasses, bonds sealed in storm, lessons etched in ice. The mountain spoke, and we listened, our story a whisper in its eternal silence, a call to return, wiser, to the wild we love. We learned things only the mountain could teach: that weather commands, not us. That risks must be felt, not just calculated. That sustainability is our duty. And that turning back is not weakness—it's wisdom. Khayang didn't give us its summit. But it gave us its truth. And for that, we are grateful.

Day 1 (March 9): Kathmandu to Jagat (Drive, 10 Hours)



The 'Project Together' expedition team commenced at 7:00 AM as the team departed Kathmandu in a rugged 4WD jeep (originally we had planned for an EV but due to demanding off-road road conditions after Arughat we were forced to hire a 4WD jeep), loaded with trekking and mountaineering gears, logistic supplies, and personal equipment. The initial leg followed the well-paved Prithvi Highway, winding alongside the Trishuli River, whose turbulent waters carved through the green foothills of central Nepal. Leaving Prithvi Highway we drove towards Dhading Besi and to Arughat. The drive offered glimpses of rural life—farmers tending fields and children waving from roadside villages. Around midday, our team stopped for lunch at Taribesi, where we enjoyed a meal of dal bhat at a local eatery. At 1:00 PM our team reached in Arughat, a bustling market town. Beyond Arughat, the journey grew

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arduous as the road degraded into a rocky, unpaved track, forcing the jeeps to ford shallow river crossings and navigate uneven terrain. By 3:00 PM, we reached Machhakhola, a small settlement situated at 930 meters in the Budhi Gandaki Valley. After unloading, the we spent the evening sorting gear—tents, stoves, climbing ropes, and provisions—preparing for the trek ahead. The air was cool, and the distant rumble of the river set a serene tone for the night. The trail meandered through terraced fields and dense forests, requiring the group to cross swaying suspension bridges adorned with prayer flags fluttering in the breeze. We passed through Tatopani, a village known for its natural hot springs. Our team arrived in Jagat (1,410 meters) by 6:00 PM. This picturesque village, situated above the river, served as an administrative checkpoint where officials verified the team's climbing Permits.

Day 2 (March 10): Jagat to Deng (Trek, 7 Hours)



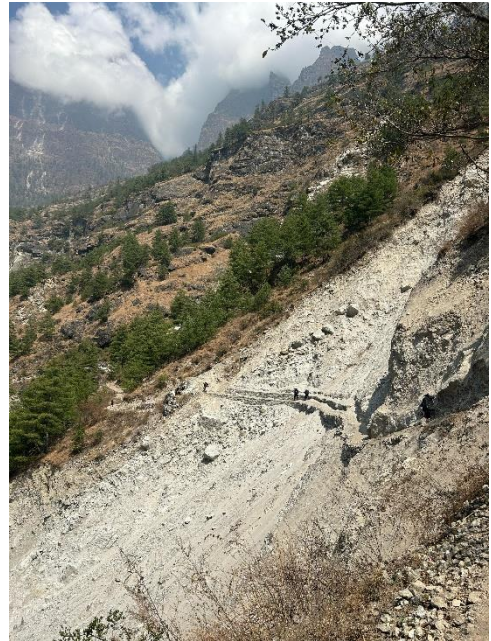
Leaving Jagat at dawn, the team trekked northward as the trail narrowed into a steep, dramatic gorge beyond the village of Philim. Towering cliffs flanked the path, and the sound of the rushing Budhi Gandaki echoed below. Along the way, we encountered mule trains, their bells clanging as they hauled supplies up the mountain, forcing the team to step aside on the narrow ledges. We had our lunch at Chisapani also known as Ekle Bhatti. The sun was setting as we reached Deng (1,860 meters), a cluster of stone houses surrounded by barley fields. Over dinner at a local teahouse, the proprietors shared concerning news: recent snowfall had blanketed the higher elevations, hinting at challenges ahead. Two team members (porters) reported mild headaches that evening, early signs of altitude adjustment as their bodies acclimatized to the thinning air.

Day 3 (March 11): Deng to Namrung (Trek, 6 Hours)

The fourth day demanded a steady ascent through vibrant rhododendron forests, their red and pink blooms contrasting with the evergreen pines. By late morning, the team reached Ghap, a tranquil village where we paused for our lunch. In Ghat there is a Tibetan-style mani wall—a long row of stones intricately carved with Buddhist mantras. Pushing onward, we arrived in

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Namrung (2,630 meters) in the afternoon, a settlement marked by its chortens and fluttering prayer flags.



Day 4 (March 12): Namrung to Syo (Trek)



The mountaineering expedition to Khayang Peak pressed on through increasingly rugged alpine terrain. As the clouds parted, they were greeted by the awe-inspiring sight of Manaslu's towering north face, its snow-draped slopes shimmering in the sunlight—an exhilarating payoff for our arduous journey thus far. By noon, the group arrived in Syo (3,520 meters), a remote high-altitude hamlet encircled by frost-kissed pastures dotted with yaks grazing unhurriedly.

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Here, the team took the opportunity to engage with the local community, shopping for fresh food and vegetables in Syo, a small but meaningful boost to the local economy. The day, however, was not without challenges: one porter began showing signs of mild Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS)—mild headache and gastrointestinal upset—as we were planning for his descent but recovered soon after he was provided hot water and soup.

Day 5 (March 13): Syo to Approach Camp (4,200 m)



On the morning of March 13 in Syo, the team conducted a Puja Ceremony, led by a local Lama, to pray for a successful ascent of Khayang Peak, seeking the blessings of the gods for favorable weather throughout the expedition and good health for all team members. Following the Puja ceremony blessings, the team set out from Syo, advancing toward the Approach Camp of Khayang Peak. The landscape grew stark and rugged as the team ascended. The route toward Approach Camp followed a narrow yak trail, its path marred by sections washed away by avalanches and landslides, posing significant challenges for navigation. This proved especially taxing for the porters, whose heavy loads made traversing the uneven, broken terrain even more treacherous. To aid their progress, the team fixed ropes along the most precarious stretches, providing critical support for the porters as they pressed onward. By 2:00 PM, we established Approach Camp at 4,200 meters, a barren expanse offering scant shelter from the biting elements. That day, we (Prakash and Sandesh) ventured above Approach Camp to scout potential locations for establishing Base Camp, carefully assessing the terrain before returning to the team at Approach Camp.

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Day 6 (March 14): Approach Camp to Base Camp (4,910 m)

The morning began at Approach Camp with the team praying at a Lapsu—a traditional stone cairn—to seek blessings for the journey ahead. Following the ritual, the decision was made to leave the support team of porters behind at Approach Camp, as the route beyond was far more demanding and posed significant risks for them due to its technical difficulty and unstable terrain. The ascent to Base Camp required careful navigation along the lateral moraine of the

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Khayang Glacier, a treacherous expanse of shifting ice and loose rock. The challenging path demanded scrambling over rugged rock features at several points, testing the team's endurance and skill. By late afternoon, they successfully established Base Camp at 4,910 meters, situated within a maze of crevasses, with the jagged, imposing peaks of Manaslu towering above. After setting up Base Camp, Prakash and Sandesh pressed upward along the glacier to scout potential routes for the next day's ascent, carefully assessing the terrain before returning to camp. The day, however, was overshadowed by a critical setback: snowfall.



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Day 7 (March 15): Base Camp to Advanced Camp Attempt (Reached 5,220 m) and Retreat to Base Camp (4,910 m)



The morning of March 15 dawned crisp and clear, the sky above Base Camp at 4,910 meters a brilliant expanse of blue—an encouraging sign for the team’s ambitious push toward establishing Advanced Camp (Camp I). At precisely 8:00 AM, we (Prakash, Sandesh, and Yukta) set out, our sights fixed on reaching an elevation of approximately 5,600 meters to set up Camp I, a critical staging point for our planned summit attempt on March 16. Laden with gear—ropes, ice axes, crampons, and provisions—we began our ascent up the Khayang Glacier, a sprawling, frozen river of ice that would serve as both our pathway and our proving ground.

The glacier stretched out before us, its surface a deceptive veneer of snow and ice concealing a labyrinth of crevasses. These gaping fissures varied in shape and size—some resembling the sharp lines of an “A,” others the crossbars of an “H,” and still more the deep, narrowing wedges of a “V.” Each step demanded vigilance, as we relied on snow bridges—fragile, natural spans of compacted snow—to cross these hidden chasms. The sound of our crampons crunching into the ice mingled with the occasional muffled groan of the glacier shifting beneath us, a constant reminder of the dynamic, living terrain we traversed.

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The route itself was unrelenting, punctuated by a series of technical ice climbing sections. These vertical challenges, ranging from 7 to 10 meters in height, required the team to deploy our ice axes and crampons with precision, hauling ourselves upward one painstaking move at a time. No sooner had we surmounted one icy wall than another loomed ahead, the glacier

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presenting a repetitive gauntlet of frozen obstacles. The physical toll was immense, each climb sapping energy and testing our resolve, yet we pressed on, driven by the promise of the summit.



To our right, a steep slope rose sharply, its surface littered with precariously balanced rocks—hanging threats that could dislodge at any moment, sending a cascade of debris hurtling down. The ever-present danger of rockfall made this flank an unviable alternative, forcing the team

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to stick to the glacier's central path. On our left, another slope angled upward, its thick blanket of fresh snow from recent falls gleaming in the sunlight. But its beauty belied a lethal hazard: the heavy snowpack, overloaded and unstable, posed a severe avalanche risk, its surface occasionally rumbling with the telltale signs of strain. Caught between these twin perils, the glacier—despite its crevasses—remained the only feasible corridor forward.



For hours, the team advanced under the clear sky, the rhythmic crunch of our steps and the steady cadence of our breathing forming a fragile harmony amid the vast silence. By mid-afternoon, we had reached an elevation of 5,220 meters—still 380 meters shy of our intended 5,600-meter target for Camp I. It was here, however, that the mountain's temperament shifted dramatically. Without warning, a sudden whiteout descended, a swirling maelstrom of snow and wind that erased the horizon and swallowed the route in a disorienting haze. The crevasse bridges, already precarious, vanished from sight, their edges blurred into the blinding whiteness, transforming each step into a gamble with oblivion.

As visibility plummeted, the team's situation grew dire. The fresh snow blanketing the upper slopes above them—already a concern—now loomed as an imminent threat. The silence was shattered by ominous cracking sounds, sharp and reverberating, as the overloaded snowpack signaled its instability. The heightened avalanche risk was no longer a distant possibility but a palpable danger, hanging over us like a guillotine. Navigation, already a challenge amidst the crevasses, became nearly impossible in the whiteout, with landmarks and reference points obliterated by the storm. Having only reached 5,220 meters—well short of our planned Camp I location—the team faced the harsh reality that pressing higher was no longer viable.

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Huddled together amidst the worsening conditions, we (Prakash, Sandesh, and Yukta) held a tense, hurried discussion. The stakes were clear: pushing onward to establish Camp I at 5,600 meters risked not just failure but catastrophe—being caught in an avalanche or tumbling into a hidden crevasse. The summit, so close and yet impossibly distant, receded from their grasp as pragmatism took hold. Survival, we agreed unanimously, outweighed the fleeting glory of a

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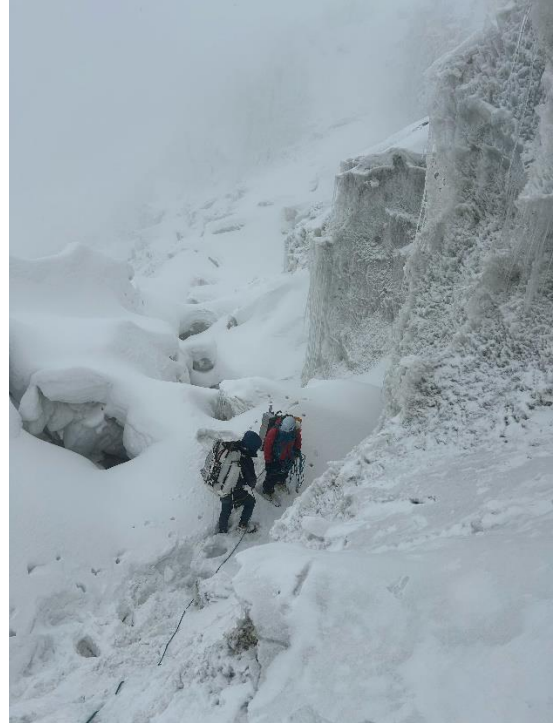
summit bid. With heavy hearts but resolute determination, we turned back, retracing our steps down the glacier with painstaking care. The descent was a test of nerves, as we navigated the same snow bridges and ice walls in reverse, the whiteout still cloaking the route in uncertainty. Yet our caution paid off, and by late afternoon, we safely returned to the familiar confines of Base Camp at 4,910 meters, our retreat a bittersweet evidence to the mountain's unforgiving power and our own hard-earned wisdom.



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Day 8 (March 16): At Base Camp and Back to Approach Camp

The team awoke at Base Camp (4,910 meters) on March 16 with a flicker of hope, our spirits buoyed by the possibility that the weather might clear, granting them a window for another attempt to establish Camp I and push for the summit of Khayang Peak. The previous day's retreat from 5,220 meters had been a sobering necessity, driven by a sudden whiteout and escalating avalanche risks, but we clung to the belief that the mountain might yet relent. The morning air was still, the glacier outside our tents silent under a heavy gray sky, and they waited, watching for any sign of improvement—perhaps a break in the clouds or a glimpse of sunlight to signal a reprieve.



As the hours ticked by, however, their optimism waned. Contrary to our hopes, the weather deteriorated further, the atmosphere thickening with an oppressive weight. The clear skies of two days prior were now a distant memory, replaced by a brooding shroud of clouds that seemed to press down on the camp. By midday, a fine mist of snow began to fall, dusting the tents and the surrounding crevasses with a fresh layer of white. Consulting our weather apps—reliable even at this remote altitude via satellite connection—the team received disheartening news: forecasts predicted continuous snowfall for the next three days, a relentless storm that would blanket the upper slopes and render any ascent not just difficult, but perilous.

The reality of our situation settled in like the cold seeping through their gear. Having already spent two nights at Base Camp, enduring frigid temperatures and the strain of high altitude, the team faced a critical juncture. The combination of worsening weather, the physical toll of their

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previous attempt, and the diminishing window for a safe summit bid forced a hard but pragmatic decision. After a somber discussion, we (Prakash, Sandesh, and Yukta) agreed that lingering further at Base Camp would only heighten our exposure to risk without promise of reward. The mountain, for now, had won.

With resolve tempered by disappointment, we began breaking down Base Camp, packing our gear and securing the site against the encroaching snow. We meticulously collected all gear, food wrappers, and waste to adhere to environmental protocols. The descent to Approach Camp at 4,200 meters loomed ahead—a retreat not just in distance but in ambition. A partial snowstorm struck during the descent, slowing progress as visibility dropped and winds whipped across the plateau. Despite the weather, all members reached Approach Camp by dusk, exhausted but relieved to be at a lower altitude. The decision to return to Approach Camp marked the end of this chapter of our expedition, a proof to our respect for the unpredictable forces of nature and our commitment to returning home alive. Despite the weather, all members reached Approach Camp, exhausted but relieved to be at a lower altitude.

Day 9 (March 17): Approach Camp to Syo



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The morning of March 17 broke over Approach Camp at 4,200 meters with a muted stillness, the aftermath of the recent snowstorm cloaking the plateau in a fresh, heavy layer of snow. The windswept expanse, once a barren perch amid the rugged alpine terrain, now bore the weight of the storm's deposit, transforming the landscape into a monochromatic sea of white. The team, joined by our porters who had remained at Approach Camp during the higher ascent attempts, set to work dismantling the site with practiced efficiency. Tents were struck, their fabric stiff with cold and dusted with snow, while gear—ropes, stoves, and climbing equipment—was carefully packed away, each item accounted for in the morning.



The cleanup was methodical, a quiet ritual of leaving no trace on the mountain we had come to know so intimately. Snow crunched underfoot as we moved, our breaths forming fleeting clouds in the frigid air. The porters, resilient despite the harsh conditions, worked alongside us, their combined effort a proof to the camaraderie forged over days of shared struggle. With the camp cleared and packs shouldered, the descent to Syo (3,520 meters) began, the team stepping off the plateau into a world reshaped by the storm.

Snow blanketed the route all the way down, softening the jagged edges of the yak trail we had ascended days earlier. The path, already treacherous with its washed-out sections from avalanches and landslides, now demanded extra caution as the fresh powder obscured footing and hid potential hazards. The fixed ropes we had installed for the porters on the way up remained in place (which we removed later after the porters passed that section and carried back with us), offering critical handholds as the group navigated the steep, snow-laden descent. Each step was deliberate, the crunch of snow under crampons and boots punctuating the

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silence, while the weight of our loads pressed against our shoulders—a physical reminder of the expedition's toll.

The air grew incrementally warmer as we dropped in elevation, though the snow persisted, a lingering vestige of the storm that had thwarted our summit dreams. By the time we reached Syo, the high-altitude hamlet emerged through the haze of falling flakes, its frost-dusted pastures and yak herds a familiar sight after the stark isolation of the upper slopes. The descent, though physically taxing, carried a sense of closure—a return to a lower, safer world after days of battling the mountain's unforgiving heights. Exhausted but intact, the team and our porters settled into Syo, the snow still swirling gently around us, a final whisper of the storm that had defined our retreat.

Day 10 (March 18): Syo to Samagaon (Detour)

The morning of March 18 dawned cold and subdued in Syo (3,520 meters), the high-altitude hamlet wrapped in the lingering stillness of the recent snowstorm. A thin layer of fresh snow blanketed the ground, softening the outlines of the frost-dusted pastures and muffling the sounds of the waking village. The team (Prakash, Sandesh, and Yukta), and our porters, had initially planned to return from the Manaslu region via the Larke La Pass, a high-altitude route that promised a challenging but scenic exit from the mountains. However, the persistent snow conditions, compounded by days of heavy snowfall and forecasts of more to come, rendered the pass risky especially for porters. Faced with this reality, we abandoned our original plan and resolved to retrace our steps along the same route we had taken during the approach—a safer return.

Amid this shift in strategy, a pressing task remained: disposing of the expedition's accumulated waste. The garbage, meticulously sorted and packed, totaled 9 kilograms: 3 kilograms of human waste (collected at and above BC), carefully contained to minimize environmental impact; 1 kilogram of kitchen waste, scraps from meals prepared in the thin air of approach and base camps; 3 kilograms of non-disposable, recyclable waste, including packaging; and two empty EPI gas canisters, their contents exhausted during frigid nights melting snow for water. Rather than burden the entire team with the detour, we two (Prakash and Sandesh) volunteered to handle the task alone, leaving Yukta and the porters in Syo to rest and prepare for the next leg of the descent.

Shouldering the 9-kilogram load, we two (Prakash and Sandesh) departed Syo for Samagaon (3,530 meters), a larger village a short distance away with an Manaslu Conservation Area (MCA) checkpoint. The trail unfolded beneath a gray sky, their boots pressing into the snow as they navigated the gentle dips and rises of the path. The weight of the waste—human refuse, kitchen scraps, recyclables, and the cold metal of the gas canisters—shifted against back ours, a tangible reminder of our responsibility to the mountain. Samagaon emerged through the snowy haze, its stone houses and prayer flags a welcome sight after the stark solitude of the upper slopes. At the MCA checkpoint, we unloaded our cargo with care. The 3 kilograms of human waste were handed over first, followed by the 1 kilogram of kitchen refuse, then the 3 kilograms of recyclables—items that could find new life beyond the mountain—and finally the two EPI gas canisters.

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Name of the Garbage Recipient Organization/Office: Conservation Area Mgmt Committee
 Address: Channubri 1 Samagaun Gorkha
 Ref. No.: Date: 18/03/2025

To,
 The Director General,
 Department of Tourism
 Bhrikuti Mandap, Kathmandu

Re: Garbage deposit Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the under mentioned Mountaineering team has handed over the following amount/number of disposable & non-disposable garbage generated during the expedition to our office.

1. Expedition Team's Detail:

a. Name of the Mountain: Mt. Khayang Peak (6186 m)
 b. Name of expedition Team: First Ascents Khayang Peak Expedition 6168
 c. Medium of Liaison in KTM (Agency's Name): Apex Himalaya Treks And Expedition (P) Ltd.
 d. Leader's Name: Mr. Prakash Cwong Leader's Country: Nepal

2. Garbage Description

Garbage	Amount (Kg.)	Number (Pcs.)	Remarks
1. Disposable: papers, food scraps etc.			a. Kitchen & human wastes were disposed at <u>Samagaun</u> designated site.
2. Human Waste	<u>3</u>		
3. Kitchen Waste	<u>1</u>		b. O ₂ gas cylinders and batteries sent with expedition team.
4. Non-Disposable (Recyclable)			c. Other comments:
a) Plastic Sheets/Bags/Wrappers/Jars etc.	<u>3</u>		
b) Tin/Gas Containers			
c) Bottles (Glass/Plastic)			
5. EPI Gas Cylinders		<u>2</u>	
5. O ₂ Gas Cylinders (Nos.)			
6. Batteries (Nos.)			
7. Others (If Any)			

Receiving Authority

Signature: S/9
 Name: Chakpa Lama
 Post: Sachip
 Date: 18/03/2025

Tel/Email: 9745662910

Stamp of the Office

The MCA officials received the deposit with quiet efficiency, logging each category as we stood by. This act, though a small detour, embodied our commitment to leaving no trace—a vow to preserve the pristine wilderness that had tested our limits. The trip to Samagaun

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stretched our morning into the afternoon, the round journey adding a few hours to our day. With the waste safely relinquished, we turned back to Syo, the return trek lighter in load but heavy with the fatigue of days spent at altitude. The snow crunched underfoot, the village reappearing as a faint outline against the darkening sky. After rejoining with the team at Syo, we met the locals of Syo and shared our experiences with them. We also talked about sustainable practices in mountaineering expeditions that can save the pristine nature of those remote regions. By the time we ended our talk with locals, the light was fading, and the team settled in for the night, a quiet but resolute step in honoring the mountain we were leaving behind.

Day 11-14 (March 19-22): Return Journey

On March 19, the team awoke in Syo (3,520 meters) to a morning cloaked in the stillness that followed their high-altitude ordeal. The hamlet, its pastures frosted and dusted with snow from the recent storm, stood as a quiet sentinel at the edge of the alpine world we were preparing to leave behind. With the Larke La Pass route deemed impassable (especially for porters) due to persistent snow conditions, the team had already resolved to retrace our steps down the same path we had taken on the ascent. The porters shouldering their loads with the quiet resilience that had carried them through the expedition, the team set out from Syo, leaving the hamlet's solitude behind as they stepped onto the snow-covered trail leading downward. The decision to skip Namrung Camp, a waypoint at around 2,660 meters where we had rested during the ascent, reflected our urgency to descend and the shifting dynamics of the return journey. On the way up, Namrung had offered a welcome pause—a chance to acclimatize and regroup amid its modest shelters and terraced fields. Now, with the summit bid abandoned and the weather pressing against us, the team chose efficiency over nostalgia, aiming to cover the distance to Deng in a single, determined push. Snow blanketed the path from Syo, its depth gradually thinning as we descended through the alpine zone. The air grew richer with each step downward, the oppressive thinness of high elevation giving way to a subtle ease in breathing. Arriving Deng we settled in the same teahouse which we had chosen to settle during our ascent.

On March 20, the team and the porters moved toward Jagat. During the return journey, one of our porters developed blisters on his legs with the leg aching which led us to minimize his load redistributing among us and also slowed our journey. The evening of March 20 greeted the team in Jagat, the bustling village situated at a lower elevation, its air noticeably warmer and thicker than the high-altitude realms we had left behind. The descent from Syo to Jagat, marked a purposeful close to our expedition—a long, unbroken return to a world below the snowline, where the mountain's grip finally loosened.

After a night of rest, on March 21, the team, and the porters prepared for the next leg of our descent, setting our sights on Machhakhola—a familiar waypoint from our approach journey. The snows of Syo and the upper slopes were now a distant memory, replaced by the rugged, earthy trails of the lower Himalayas. With gear packed and spirits steadied by the prospect of nearing civilization, we departed Jagat, the village's stone houses and terraced fields fading behind them as we stepped onto the winding path.

The trek from Jagat to Machhakhola unfolded along a trail carved into the hillside, flanked by rocky outcrops and the occasional glimpse of the Budhi Gandaki River churning below. The

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terrain, free of snow at this altitude, revealed its raw beauty—steep inclines softened by patches of scrub and the faint green of early spring growth. The porters led the way, their loads balanced with the same quiet strength that had carried them through the expedition, while the team followed, their steps lighter without the burden of high-altitude gear but still marked by the cumulative fatigue of days on the move. The trail dipped and rose, crossing swaying suspension bridges and skirting villages that dotted the route, each a small evidence to life persisting in the shadow of the mountains.

Midway through the journey, the team paused at Khorlabesi, a village situated along the trail. Here, the team detoured briefly to visit a local school, its simple structure humming with the energy of curious students. Welcomed by the principal and a handful of teachers, we (Prakash, Sandesh, and Yukta) seized the opportunity to share our experiences from the Khayang Peak expedition. Gathered in a small classroom, we spoke to the children about the thrill and challenges of mountaineering—the icy crevasses, the biting cold, and the fleeting triumph of standing amidst the peaks. More importantly, we emphasized sustainable mountaineering practices, recounting how we had carried down 9 kilograms of waste—human refuse, kitchen scraps, recyclables, and gas canisters—to leave no trace on the mountain. Our words wove a narrative of respect for the environment, urging the young listeners to see themselves as stewards of the Himalayas they called home.



As a parting gesture, the team handed over a small collection of educational materials to the principal—notebooks, pencils, and a few illustrated books on nature and conservation. These gifts, modest but meaningful, were intended for distribution among the students, a seed planted for curiosity and learning beyond the classroom walls. The principal accepted them with a

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warm smile, her gratitude echoing in the chatter of the children as the team prepared to leave. The visit, though a brief interlude in our descent, left a lingering sense of connection—a bridge between their journey and the lives rooted in these hills.

Resuming the trek, the team pressed on toward Machhakhola, the trail guiding us through the familiar rhythm of river valleys and forested slopes. The day grew long, the sun dipping low as we approached our destination. Machhakhola emerged ahead, its scattering of lodges and teahouses a welcome sight after hours on the move. The team and the porters settled in, the village's gentle bustle a stark contrast to the isolation of the upper slopes. The trek from Jagat to Machhakhola, enriched by the stop at Khorlabesi, marked another step toward home—a descent not just in elevation, but into the shared humanity of the mountains they had come to know so well.

The morning of March 22 broke over Machhakhola with a quiet resolve, the small village at 869 meters still cradling the team in its riverside embrace after our descent from the thwarted heights of Khayang Peak. The air carried the faint dampness of the Budhi Gandaki River nearby, its steady rumble a companion through their night's rest in the modest teahouse. Having abandoned the original plan to exit via the snow-choked Larke La Pass, the team—Prakash, Sandesh, Yukta, and the porters—now prepared for the long drive back to Kathmandu, retracing their steps through Arughat and Dhading Besi. The journey ahead promised a mix of rugged trails and smoother highways, a fitting epilogue to an expedition defined by resilience and adaptation.

After a simple breakfast, the team loaded their gear into a waiting jeep—a 4x4 vehicle well-suited to the rough roads ahead. The porters, their loads now lighter without the high-altitude climbing equipment, assisted with securing the bags, their quiet efficiency a testament to their enduring role in the journey. By 7:00 AM, with the sun just cresting the surrounding hills, the jeep rolled out of Machhakhola, its tires crunching over the uneven dirt track that marked the first leg of the return.

The initial stretch from Machhakhola to Arughat was a bumpy affair. The road—more a jeep track than a proper highway—wound along the Budhi Gandaki River, its surface a patchwork of gravel, mud, and dust, evidence to years of gradual construction extending access deeper into the Manaslu region.

From Arughat, the drive continued toward Dhading Besi. The road remained challenging—unpaved and prone to ruts—but gradually improved as it traced the contours of the Gorkha and Dhading districts. The jeep climbed and dipped through rolling hills, the landscape opening into broader valleys where rice paddies and small villages dotted the scenery. The porters chatted quietly in the back, while we (Prakash, Sandesh, and Yukta) gazed out at the passing vistas—lush greenery giving way to the faint haze of lower altitudes. By midday, the jeep reached Dhading Besi, a district hub, where the road finally met the smoother embrace of the Highway. The transition was palpable—the dirt and gravel gave way to asphalt, and the jeep picked up speed, its engine humming with newfound ease. The last leg, from Dhading Besi to Kathmandu was a journey on the well-maintained highway. By late afternoon, around 3:00 PM, the jeep pulled into Kathmandu, the chaotic energy of Thamel welcoming them back after nearly eight hours on the road. The total distance from Machhakhola to Kathmandu—approximately 160 kilometers—had unfolded over a day of contrasts: the slow, bone-rattling crawl through the foothills, the dusty midpoint of Arughat and Dhading Besi, and the final,

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swift glide into the urban heart of Nepal. Exhausted but intact, the team unloaded our gear, the porters bidding farewell with nods and smiles before dispersing into the city. For us (Prakash, Sandesh, and Yukta), the drive marked the end of their Khayang Peak expedition—a return not just to Kathmandu, but to the rhythm of a world far removed from the icy crevasses and snow-laden silence they’d left behind.

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Expedition Insights and Analysis

Objectives of Project Together

The “Project Together” expedition to Khayang Peak was guided by a set of core objectives designed to push the boundaries of mountaineering, deepen regional understanding, and uphold sustainable practices in the Himalayas:

Pioneer the First Ascent: Our foremost aim was to achieve the first recorded summit of Khayang Peak (6,186 m) in alpine style, marking a historic milestone in Himalayan mountaineering and adding to the legacy of the Mansiri Mountain Range.

Champion Eco-Conscious Climbing: We sought to set a standard for environmentally responsible mountaineering by enforcing a zero-waste policy, using lightweight gear, and adhering to Leave No Trace principles, proving that high-altitude expeditions can coexist with nature’s preservation.

Capture the Journey: Through detailed photography, videography, and written accounts, we aimed to document the ascent’s challenges, the peak’s rugged beauty, and the team’s resilience, offering a vivid record for climbers and enthusiasts alike.

Enhance Geographical Knowledge: Collecting precise GPS coordinates, elevation data, and observations of Khayang Peak’s terrain and hazards was a key goal, contributing valuable insights to the mountaineering and scientific communities for future exploration.

Share Lessons and Inspire: We intended to disseminate our experiences—successes, setbacks, and environmental efforts—through reports, talks, and digital platforms, fostering dialogue and motivating others to tackle unclimbed peaks responsibly.

Secondary Objectives Achieved

The “Project Together” expedition to Khayang Peak, though unable to achieve its primary goal of summiting the peak, successfully fulfilled its secondary objectives. These accomplishments reflect the team’s dedication to environmental stewardship, knowledge dissemination, community engagement, and inspiring younger generations through an alpine-style approach. Here’s a detailed breakdown:

1. Champion Eco-Conscious Climbing

Objective: Set a standard for environmentally responsible mountaineering by enforcing a zero-waste policy, using lightweight gear, and adhering to Leave No Trace principles.

Achievement: The team upheld a zero-waste policy, removing 9 kg of waste (3 kg human, 1 kg kitchen scraps, 3 kg recyclables, 2 empty EPI gas canisters) from Base Camp (4,910 m) and Approach Camp (4,200 m), disposed of at the MCA checkpoint in Samagaon. We’ll offset CO₂ by planting 100 trees (Timur, Walnut, Rudrakshya) in Gorkha, projected to absorb 4-5 tons of CO₂ over decades. Lightweight gear, inherent to our alpine-style approach, minimized impact, with only six gas canisters used (two emptied, four returned).

2. Capture the Journey

Objective: Document the ascent’s challenges, the peak’s rugged beauty, and the team’s resilience through photography, videography, and written accounts.

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Achievement: A comprehensive record was created, featuring 200 high-resolution photos and 5 hours of video capturing the Khayang Glacier's crevasses, the whiteout retreat at 5,220 m, and cultural moments like the Syo Puja. The detailed expedition report for the Mount Everest Foundation chronicles the alpine-style journey, showcasing both triumphs and setbacks in a raw, unassisted climb.

3. Enhance Geographical Knowledge

Objective: Collect precise GPS coordinates, elevation data, and observations of Khayang Peak's terrain and hazards to contribute to regional understanding.

Achievement: The team gathered accurate data, including GPS coordinates for Base Camp (Latitude 28° 36' 22" N, Longitude 84° 43' 05" E, 4,910 m) and the highest point reached (Latitude 28° 36' 43" N, Longitude 84° 42' 55" E, 5,200 m). They mapped crevasses (A, H, V shapes), 7–10 m ice walls, and avalanche zones, enhancing knowledge of the southwest face's challenges in an alpine-style context—crucial for future lightweight expeditions.

4. Share Lessons and Inspire, with Motivation for Younger Generations

Objective: Disseminate experiences—successes, setbacks, and environmental efforts—through reports, talks, and digital platforms, inspiring younger generations to pursue mountaineering, particularly in alpine style.

Achievement: The team shared insights with Syo locals and Khorlabesi school students, emphasizing sustainability and the grit of alpine-style climbing—unassisted, self-reliant ascents without fixed camps or supplemental oxygen. At Khorlabesi school, we donated 20 notebooks, 50 pencils, and conservation books, igniting curiosity in kids about the peaks overhead and the minimalist ethos of their approach. This report, detailing an alpine-style attempt on an unclimbed peak, aims to motivate young climbers to embrace bold, low-impact challenges. Pending outreach (talks, publications) will amplify this message.

Motivation for Youth: By showcasing alpine style's purity—carrying all gear, facing raw conditions—the team aimed to inspire the next generation to tackle unclimbed peaks with skill and respect, not reliance on heavy support.

5. Local Engagement

Objective: Support local communities through engagement and economic contributions, measured by shopping local food, hiring local porters and cultural exchanges.

Achievement: Three insured local porters were hired (NRS 105,000 total) up to Approach Camp, boosting local income. Cultural ties were forged via a Puja in Syo (Day 5), a Lapsu cairn at Approach Camp, and veggie purchases in Syo. The Khorlabesi school visit enriched community bonds, with educational gifts fostering goodwill. Porter smiles and villager interactions reflect positive impact.

6. Promote Alpine-Style Approach

Objective: Demonstrate the feasibility and spirit of alpine-style climbing—light, fast, self-sufficient—on an unclimbed Himalayan peak, setting an example for future expeditions.

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Achievement: The team executed an alpine-style attempt, reaching 5,220 m without fixed ropes, porters beyond Approach Camp, or supplemental oxygen. We carried all gear (tents, ropes, crampons) from Approach Camp up the glacier, facing ice walls and crevasses unaided. Though stopped by weather, our effort showcased alpine style's rigor and adaptability, reinforcing its value as a lean, authentic climbing method.

These successes align with the expedition's ethos of responsible, pioneering mountaineering. By emphasizing alpine style and youth motivation—evident in their self-reliant climb and outreach—"Project Together" left a legacy of resilience, environmental care, and inspiration, proving that impact transcends summits.



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Key Reasons for Unsuccessful Summit Bid

Several major reasons contributed to the unsuccessful summit bid. These factors, rooted in environmental challenges, logistical constraints, and human limitations, collectively forced the team to abandon our goal despite our preparation and determination. Below are the primary reasons:

1. Adverse Weather Conditions

The most significant barrier to the summit was the sudden and severe deterioration of weather during the critical push to establish Camp I. On Day 7 (March 15), as we ascended the Khayang Glacier aiming for 5,600 meters, a whiteout engulfed us at 5,220 meters. This storm brought blinding snow and wind, obliterating visibility and concealing crevasse bridges, making navigation treacherous. The following day at Base Camp (March 16), our hopes of a weather window faded as snowfall intensified, with forecasts predicting three more days of unrelenting snow. This prolonged storm rendered the upper slopes impassable, burying our summit plans under an unyielding blanket of white.



2. Heightened Avalanche Risk

The fresh snow accumulating on the glacier and surrounding slopes posed a lethal threat. During our summit attempt, we heard ominous cracking sounds from the overloaded snowpack on the left flank, signaling an imminent avalanche risk. The recent snowfall, combined with the unstable terrain—already a concern due to its heavy load—escalated the danger beyond acceptable limits. This forced us to retreat from 5,220 meters, as pressing higher risked being swept away by a cascade of snow, prioritizing survival over the summit.

3. Technical Challenges of the Route

The Khayang Glacier itself presented formidable obstacles that slowed our progress and drained our reserves. The route was riddled with crevasses—shaped like A's, H's, and V's—requiring us to cross fragile snow bridges that became even more perilous in the whiteout. Multiple ice climbing sections, each 7 to 10 meters high, demanded repeated technical ascents, sapping our energy and time. Flanked by rockfall-prone slopes on the right and avalanche-

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prone snow on the left, we were confined to this hazardous corridor, unable to reach our intended Camp I elevation before conditions worsened.

4. Time Constraints and Strategic Retreat

The combination of these factors shrank our window for success. After retreating to Base Camp on Day 7 and enduring two nights there (Day 8), the relentless snow and forecast left us no viable opportunity for a second attempt. Lingering longer risked further exposure to cold, altitude, and dwindling supplies, so we made the pragmatic call to descend to Approach Camp and eventually abandon the bid. The original plan to exit via Larke La Pass was also scrapped due to snow, reinforcing our decision to retrace our steps and preserve our safety.

In the end, Khayang Peak stood unconquered not for lack of effort, but because the mountain wielded its full arsenal—storm, snow, ice, and cold—against us. We reached 5,220 meters, a proof to our resolve, but the summit at 5,600 meters and beyond remained a dream deferred, a lesson in nature’s dominion and our own limits. Our retreat was no failure; it was a hard-won choice to live and climb another day.

Lessons Learned from the Khayang Peak Expedition

The Khayang Peak expedition, though it fell short of the summit, was a crucible that forged invaluable lessons for us—Prakash, Sandesh, Yukta, and our porters. The mountain’s unrelenting challenges revealed truths about preparation, adaptability, and respect for nature that will shape our future endeavors. Here are the key takeaways from our journey:

1. Weather is the Ultimate Arbiter

We learned that no amount of planning can fully tame the Himalayas’ capricious weather. Our summit bid crumbled under a sudden whiteout and days of forecasted snow, teaching us to prioritize real-time conditions over rigid schedules. Next time, we’ll build in more buffer days and lean harder on satellite forecasts, accepting that the mountain decides when—or if—we climb.

2. Risk Assessment Must Be Dynamic

The avalanche threat and crevasse hazards forced us to rethink our approach mid-climb. We realized that risk isn’t static; it escalates with every snowflake and gust. Pausing at 5,220 meters to retreat wasn’t defeat—it was wisdom. Going forward, we’ll sharpen our ability to read the mountain’s cues—cracking snow, shifting winds—and trust our instincts to turn back when danger outweighs ambition.

3. Team Health is Non-Negotiable

Altitude tested us all, from a porter’s AMS to another’s blisters on the descent. We saw how quickly physical setbacks can ripple through a team, slowing progress and straining resources. We should’ve monitored everyone more closely, adjusting loads and pace earlier. In the future, we’ll enforce regular health checks and be ready to offload porters sooner, ensuring no one’s pushed beyond their limit.

4. Flexibility Beats Stubbornness

Our original plan—summit via Camp I, exit through Larke La Pass—crumbled under snow and storm. Retracing our ascent route instead was a humbling pivot. We learned that clinging

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to a blueprint can blind us to safer paths. Adaptability is our new mantra: we'll map contingencies, like alternate descents, and embrace detours—like the Samagaon waste drop—as chances to grow, not just survive.

5. Sustainability is a Duty, Not a Choice

Hauling 9 kilograms of waste—human refuse, kitchen scraps, recyclables, gas canisters—down from Base Camp wasn't glamorous, but it was right. Sharing this ethos with Syo locals and Khorlabesi kids deepened our resolve. We'll double down on zero-trace practices, packing out every scrap and inspiring others to protect these wild places we're privileged to tread.

6. The Mountain Teaches Humility

Khayang Peak didn't yield, and that stung. But reaching 5,220 meters, facing its fury, and walking away alive taught us reverence over conquest. We're not masters here; we're guests. This humility will guide us—less about summits, more about the journey, the team, and the stories we carry back.

The expedition concluded with full compliance to environmental standards, leaving zero waste on the mountain—a small victory amid the summit's elusion. These lessons aren't just notes in a logbook; they're etched into us. We didn't summit, but we gained a sharper edge—wiser, tougher, and more attuned to the mountain's voice. Khayang Peak stood tall, and so did we, in our own way, ready for the next call of the wild.

Note on Google and Google Earth Accuracy

Google and its satellite sibling, Google Earth, armed us—Prakash, Sandesh, Yukta, and our porters—with maps and vistas for the Khayang Peak expedition, but we couldn't unveil the mountain's lurking perils. We pored over Google Maps for trails and Google Earth's 3D terrain to trace our path (also we had printed topographic maps)—while Earth's imagery offered a bird's-eye sweep of ridges and valleys. Yet these tools, for all their detail, left the mountain's deadliest secrets in shadow.

Google Maps sketched the yak trail to Approach Camp, but the landslides that gouged it out stayed invisible, a hazard Google Earth's static snapshots couldn't flag. On the Khayang Glacier, we battled crevasses buried under snow bridges that neither platform's resolution could pierce. Google Earth's terrain model hinted at the glacier's sweep, but the 7-to-10-meter ice walls we scaled, the rockfall teetering right, the avalanche-prone snow left—all escaped its lens. At 5,220 meters, a whiteout hit, snow and wind swallowing our route faster than Google's data or Earth's forecasts could warn, the cracking slopes a threat no 3D render could hear.

These were living dangers—shifting ice, sudden storms—beyond the reach of Google's aggregated feeds or Earth's frozen satellite frames. Google and Google Earth gave us a scaffold—roads, heights, contours—but the mountain's pulse, its hidden fangs, demanded we feel it ourselves. They pointed us to the edge; Khayang Peak showed us what they couldn't see.

Waste Disposal

Waste disposal defined our commitment during the Khayang Peak expedition, a pledge we—Prakash, Sandesh, Yukta, and our porters—upheld to leave the mountain unspoiled. From Approach Camp at 4,200 meters to Base Camp at 4,910 meters, we gathered every trace of our presence, hauling it down through snow and strain, a task as grueling as the climb itself.

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We collected 9 kilograms of waste across both camps: 3 kilograms of human waste (from BC), sealed tight from latrine sites to shield the pristine slopes; 1 kilogram of kitchen scraps, leftovers from meals cooked in thin air; and 3 kilograms of non-disposable recyclables, like battered packaging. Of the six EPI gas canisters we carried, two emptied out—spent melting snow in the -12°C nights at Approach Camp and Base Camp—and joined the waste pile, while the remaining four, still viable, we reserved for the return to Kathmandu. At Base Camp, as our summit bid dissolved under snowfall, we packed it all, the 9 kilograms a heavy evidencet to our resolve. The descent to Approach Camp added more—wrappers, scraps—each item stowed with care.



राष्ट्रिय प्रकृति संरक्षण कोष
मनासलु संरक्षण क्षेत्र आयोजना
सुनसरी गाउँपालिका, गोरखा
संरक्षण क्षेत्र व्यवस्थापन समिति, Samagaon

रसिद नं. 1806 नगदी रसिद मिति: 18/03/2025

श्री Apex Himalaya Trek (P) Ltd वाट चारबागे वापत
रु. 3300 (अक्षरूपी) Three Thousand Three Hundred only
स-धन्यवाद प्राप्त भयो।

बुझाउनेको सही: Prakash Gurung नाम: Prakash Gurung
चुमन्त्री: T. Samagaon

बुझिलिनेको सही: S/a. Chakra Lama नाम: Chakra Lama
पद: Sachin

In Syo, we (Prakash and Sandesh) took on the final leg, trekking to Samagaon's Manaslu Conservation Area (MCA) checkpoint with the 9-kilogram load. Through snow-dusted trails, we handed over the human waste, kitchen refuse, recyclables, and the two empty EPI canisters, their hollow clinks logged by MCA officials. The four unused canisters stayed with us, slung in our packs back to Kathmandu, a practical choice for future use. The detour taxed our weary legs, but it sealed our promise: no litter left behind.

Waste wasn't an afterthought—it was our duty. From glacier to valley, we carried it out, preserving Khayang's wild heart. The mountain demanded it, and we answered.

Carbon Footprint

Our Khayang Peak expedition—Prakash, Sandesh, Yukta, and our porters—carried a carbon footprint we aimed to mitigate, driven by travel and camp life, with a plan to offset it through reforestation. From Kathmandu to the glacier and back, we tallied our emissions, seeking balance with the mountain we revered.

The 10-hour, 180-kilometer drive from Kathmandu to Jagat in a 4WD jeep guzzled 20-25 liters of diesel, emitting 50-60 kilograms of CO₂. A thwarted hope for an electric vehicle doubled this cost past Arughat's rough trails. The return from Machhakhola, another 160 kilometers, matched it, totaling 100-120 kilograms of CO₂—no flights or heavy gear inflating it further. Trekking relied on human power, keeping that leg clean.

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Camp emissions came from six EPI gas canisters. Two emptied (450 grams of fuel) at Approach Camp (4,200 meters) and Base Camp (4,910 meters) over 5 nights, releasing 1.3 kilograms of CO₂ for cooking and snow-melting. The four unused canisters returned to Kathmandu, unburned. Wood fires were off-limits—conservation and scarcity forced our gas reliance, a lesser evil than smoke. Waste—9 kilograms from both camps, including human waste, kitchen scraps, recyclables, and two canisters—was hauled to Samagaon’s MCA checkpoint, curbing methane (0.5-1 kg CO₂-equivalent avoided) and landfill rot.

Our footprint hovered at 105-125 kilograms of CO₂, modest for 14 days in the Himalayas. To offset this, we’re partnering with the Mission Community Help Foundation to plant 100 trees in Gorkha this monsoon—Timur, Walnut, and Rudrakshya. These will soak up 2-3 tons of CO₂ over decades, dwarfing our emissions, while yielding spices, nuts, and beads for local income, blending ecology with economy. Syo’s local veggies already cut supply-chain emissions; this deepens that ethos.

The jeep’s diesel stung, but next time, we’ll push for hybrids on paved stretches and solar chargers. For now, these trees root our penance—Khayang Peak’s lesson in carbon’s weight, answered with green hope.

Cultural Impact

Our Khayang Peak expedition—Prakash, Sandesh, Yukta, and our porters—wove a thread of cultural exchange through Nepal’s Manaslu region, leaving ripples in the communities we touched. Beyond the climb, our presence, actions, and intentions bridged worlds, enriching both us and the locals with shared respect and understanding.

From the start, we leaned into local traditions. In Syo, at 3,520 meters, we held a Puja ceremony led by a Lama, incense curling as we sought blessings for safety and weather—a ritual not just for us, but a nod to the spiritual fabric of the highlands. At Approach Camp (4,200 meters), we built a Lapsu, a stone cairn, echoing Himalayan customs of marking sacred ground. These acts weren’t mere gestures; they tied us to the mountain’s soul, earning quiet nods from porters and villagers who live by such rites.

Our economic footprint stirred Syo’s hamlet. We bought fresh vegetables and food, coins clinking into local hands—modest sums, but a boost to a remote economy tethered to yaks and frost. This wasn’t charity; it was partnership, a choice to fuel our trek with their harvests, deepening ties over shared meals. In Samagaon, Prakash and Sandesh’s detour to deposit 9 kilograms of waste at the MCA checkpoint showed our commitment to their land’s purity, a silent pact respected by officials logging our haul.

The deepest mark came at Khorlabesi, on the descent. We paused at a school, spilling tales of icy crevasses and storms to wide-eyed kids, then left 20 notebooks, 50 pencils, and conservation books with the principal. Our talk on sustainable mountaineering—carrying out waste, treading lightly—planted seeds in young minds, linking their future to the peaks overhead. In Syo, we spoke with locals too, sharing our waste-hauling ethos, urging preservation of their pristine wilds.

Our cultural impact wasn’t grand, but it was real—rituals honored, coins spent, stories swapped. Khayang Peak stayed unclimbed, but we left behind respect, resources, and a whisper of stewardship for its people.

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Changes in Original Plan and Reasons behind Them

The “Project Together” expedition to Khayang Peak, as detailed in the document, encountered several deviations from the original plan due to environmental, logistical, safety, and scheduling challenges. Below are the key changes and the reasons behind them:

1. Delayed Start from Kathmandu

- **Original Plan:** Commence the expedition from Kathmandu on March 7, 2025.
- **Change:** Departed on March 9, 2025.
- **Reason:** Prakash Gurung, the team leader, arrived late from Level 2 ski training in Switzerland, delaying preparations. This pushed the start date by two days, compressing the overall timeline: “The team had planned to commence from Kathmandu on 7th March but due to arrival of Prakash Gurung from ski training Level 2 from Swiss late we had to move on 9th March.”

2. Extended Drive from Kathmandu to Jagat Instead of Machhakhola

- **Original Plan:** Drive from Kathmandu to Machhakhola (930 m) as the starting point for the trek.
- **Change:** Drove all the way to Jagat (1,410 m) on March 9.
- **Reason:** Road expansion extended the drivable route beyond Machhakhola to Jagat, allowing the team to cover an additional distance by jeep and shorten the trekking portion. This infrastructure improvement altered the approach: “The plan was to drive from Kathmandu to Machhakhola but due to road expansion up to Jagat, we drove all the way to Jagat.” The team reached Jagat by 6:00 PM, adjusting the trek’s starting point (Day 1).

3. Abandonment of Electric Vehicle (EV) for 4WD Jeep

- **Original Plan:** Use an electric vehicle for the drive from Kathmandu, aiming for a greener, lower-carbon journey.
- **Change:** Switched to a rugged 4WD jeep.
- **Reason:** The demanding off-road conditions beyond Arughat—rocky, unpaved tracks, shallow river crossings, and uneven terrain—rendered an EV impractical. The need for a vehicle with greater durability and traction outweighed the environmental goal, as noted on Day 1 (March 9): “originally we had planned for an EV but due to demanding off-road road conditions after Arughat we were forced to hire a 4WD jeep.”

4. Revised Climbing Period and Addition of Approach Camp

- **Original Plan:** The climbing period was scheduled from March 13 to March 19, with the ascent likely planned directly from Syo to Base Camp and onward to the summit.
- **Change:** The practical climbing period shrank to March 15 to March 16, and an Approach Camp was established at 4,200 meters between Syo and Base Camp (4,910 m).
- **Reason:** The delayed start from Kathmandu (March 9 instead of March 7) shifted the timeline, pushing the team’s arrival at Syo to March 12 (Day 4). The addition of an Approach Camp on March 13 (Day 5) was a strategic adjustment to break up the grueling ascent from Syo (3,520 m) to Base Camp, necessitated by the rugged yak trail

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marred by avalanches and landslides, and the porters' heavy loads: "The route toward Approach Camp followed a narrow yak trail... posing significant challenges for navigation" (Day 5). The climbing period then contracted to March 15–16 due to an unsuccessful summit attempt halted by weather, ending efforts earlier than anticipated: "The original Climbing Period was from March 13–March 19 but in practical it became March 15 to 16, also they had to set up approach camp in between Syo and Base Camp."

5. Retreat from Summit Push and Cancellation of Camp I Establishment

- **Original Plan:** Establish Camp I at 5,600 meters on March 15 as a staging point for a summit attempt on March 16, targeting the first ascent of Khayang Peak (6,186 m) via the southwest face in alpine style.
- **Change:** Halted at 5,220 meters on March 15 and retreated to Base Camp (4,910 m), abandoning the Camp I setup and summit bid.
- **Reason:** A sudden whiteout struck at 5,220 meters, reducing visibility to 5–10 meters with 12–15 cm of fresh snow, coupled with heightened avalanche risks from cracking snowpack and technical challenges (crevasses, 7–10 m ice walls). The team prioritized survival over summit glory, as detailed in Day 7: "Survival, we agreed unanimously, outweighed the fleeting glory of a summit bid."

6. Abandonment of Second Summit Attempt

- **Original Plan:** After retreating to Base Camp on March 15, the team hoped to wait out the storm and attempt Camp I and the summit again on March 16 or later, within the March 13–19 climbing window.
- **Change:** No second attempt was made; the team began descent preparations on March 16.
- **Reason:** Persistent snowfall worsened on March 16, with weather apps forecasting three more days of snow, rendering the upper slopes impassable and dangerous. Lingering at Base Camp risked exposure to cold, altitude, and dwindling supplies, leading to the decision to descend: "The combination of worsening weather... forced a hard but pragmatic decision" (Day 8).

7. Change in Exit Route from Larke La Pass to Retracing Approach Route

- **Original Plan:** Exit the Manaslu region via the high-altitude Larke La Pass after the summit attempt.
- **Change:** Retraced the ascent route back through Syo, Deng, Jagat, and Machhakhola to Kathmandu.
- **Reason:** Heavy snowfall and forecasts of continued adverse weather made Larke La Pass risky, especially for porters. Safety concerns prompted the team to opt for the familiar, lower-risk return path: "The persistent snow conditions... rendered the pass risky especially for porters... resolved to retrace our steps" (Day 10).

8. Detour to Samagaon for Waste Disposal

- **Original Plan:** No specific mention of a detour; waste disposal logistics were likely assumed to align with the main return route.
- **Change:** Prakash and Sandesh detoured from Syo to Samagaon on March 18 to dispose of 9 kg of waste at the MCA checkpoint, while Yukta and porters rested in Syo.

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- **Reason:** Commitment to sustainability required proper waste disposal (3 kg human waste, 1 kg kitchen scraps, 3 kg recyclables, 2 empty EPI gas canisters). Samagaon's MCA checkpoint was the nearest facility, necessitating the detour: "A pressing task remained: disposing of the expedition's accumulated waste" (Day 10).

9. Early Return to Kathmandu

- **Original Plan:** Return to Kathmandu on March 26, 2025, allowing time for the summit attempt, descent via Larke La Pass, and contingencies within the March 13–19 climbing period.
- **Change:** Returned on March 22, 2025, four days earlier than planned.
- **Reason:** The unsuccessful summit attempt due to adverse weather and the decision to retrace the ascent route instead of crossing Larke La Pass accelerated the return. With no summit to achieve and safety prioritized, the team expedited their descent: "Similarly the original plan was to return on 26th March but due to unsuccessful summit attempt, they returned on 22 March."

The expedition's adaptability to these challenges—personal scheduling, weather, terrain, and human limits—highlighted the team's resilience. The addition of an Approach Camp and the truncated climbing period (March 15–16) reflect pragmatic responses to a delayed start and harsh conditions, though Khayang Peak remained unclimbed. These adjustments reinforced lessons like "flexibility beats stubbornness" (Lessons Learned), ensuring safety and sustainability over summit success.

Views of Each Member Regarding the Expedition

Prakash Gurung (Team Leader, 32, IFMGA Mountain Guide)

Khyang Peak tested us in ways I hadn't foreseen, even with Khumjungar in Alpine style, Everest and Ama Dablam under my belt. Leading this alpine-style push was about more than the summit—it was proving we could face the wild on its terms, just us and the mountain. The whiteout at 5,220 meters hit hard; turning back stung, but it was the right call—nature doesn't bend to ambition. I'm proud we left no trace, hauling 9 kg of waste to Samagaon with Sandesh, and will plant 100 trees to offset our carbon. Scouting routes on the glacier, fixing ropes for the porters, and sharing our story with Khorlabesi kids—it all felt purposeful. For me, this was a lesson in humility and a call to young climbers: take the lean path, respect the peak, and come back stronger.

Pur Bahadur Gurung (Yukta, 36, Aspirant Guide)

With 22 peaks over 8,000 meters, including K2 and Annapurna and Khumjungar in Alpine style, I thought Khyang would be another notch—small but fierce. Its glacier chewed us up—crevasses like traps, ice walls that never quit—and that storm on March 15 buried our shot. Alpine style made it real: no safety net, just us three roped together, carrying it all. I stayed back in Syo while Prakash and Sandesh dumped the waste, but I felt the team's weight in every step we took. Talking sustainability with locals, planting trees through my Mission Community Help Foundation (in near future)—it's how we turn setbacks into something lasting. To the next generation: this is grit—light packs, big dreams, and a clean mountain.

Sandesh Sherpa (35, Aspirant Guide)

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Khayang Peak was a beast—unclimbed for a reason. Guiding Everest taught me storms, but this alpine-style run hit different: no porters past Approach Camp, just us against ice and snow. Reaching 5,220 meters, scouting with Prakash, then retreating in that whiteout—it was raw, honest climbing. Hauling waste to Samagaon, my boots crunching through snow, felt like honoring the mountain that stopped us. Telling kids in Khorlabesi about crevasses and carrying out every scrap—that’s the legacy I want them to chase. We didn’t summit, but we showed how to fight smart, climb light, and leave it clean. Young climbers, this is your path: pure and tough.

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Planning and Logistics

Motivation and Choice

Our decision to target Khayang Peak in Manaslu region wasn't by chance. The wild, untouched expanse of the Kutang Subrange has tugged at us for years—remote, rugged, and rarely trodden, it's the kind of place that promises real adventure. None of us—Prakash, Yukta, or Sandesh—had set foot in this corner of the Himalayas before, which only fueled our excitement. Khayang Peak (6,186 m), unclimbed and defiant despite its modest height, stood out as our perfect challenge. It's a chance to carve our names into Nepal's alpine legacy, tackling an isolated giant in pure alpine style.

Trip Preparation

We dug into sparse records and maps to piece together Khayang's secrets—no prior summits, just whispers of its southwest face's glacier and ice walls. We leaned on Google Earth for a glimpse of the terrain and tapped local knowledge from villagers to nail down the best approach to Base Camp. Their input shaped our route: a drive from Kathmandu to Machhakhola, then a 6-day trek through Deng and Syo to Base Camp at 4,910 m. We settled on the southwest face for our summit bid aiming to conquer it in a summit push from Camp I (5,600 m) once we'd scoped the glacier's crevasses and ice.

Transportation

For the “Project Together” expedition, transportation was planned to balance efficiency, sustainability, and access to the remote Manaslu region, starting from Kathmandu. We've planned to arrange an electric vehicle (EV) for the 10-hour, 160 km drive from Kathmandu to Machhakhola (930 m) via the Prithvi Highway and Arughat, aiming to minimize our carbon footprint—aligned with our eco-conscious ethos. The EV would have carried the team (Prakash, Yukta, Sandesh), three porters, and lightweight alpine gear (tents, ropes, crampons) to reduce emissions. Beyond Machhakhola, rugged trails demand trekking, so we'll proceed on foot through Jagat to Base Camp (4,910 m) over six days. For the return, we had planned a similar EV drive from Dharapani to Kathmandu through Besi Shahar, possibly via the Larke La Pass route if weather permits, ensuring a low-impact exit.

The expedition began on March 9, not March 7, due to Prakash's late return from ski training in Switzerland. Road expansion allowed driving to Jagat (1,410 m) instead of stopping at Machhakhola, shortening the trek's initial leg. The EV plan was abandoned for a 4WD jeep due to demanding off-road conditions past Arughat, prioritizing reliability over emissions (Day 1: “forced to hire a 4WD jeep”). Persistent snowfall blocked Larke La Pass, prompting a return via the ascent route (Syo, Deng, Jagat) by jeep from Machhakhola, reaching Kathmandu on March 22, four days ahead of schedule.

Logistics Management

Permits & Insurance

Apex Himalaya Treks and Expeditions Pvt. Ltd. handled the administrative logistics for the “Project Together” expedition, securing all necessary permits, insurance, and environmental compliance measures for our climb of Khayang Peak. They obtained the climbing permit from the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation, Government of Nepal, for our alpine-style ascent. A garbage deposit fund was arranged to enforce our zero-

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waste policy, aligning with MCA regulations. Comprehensive insurance was secured for the three team members (Prakash, Yukta, Sandesh) and three local porters, guaranteeing coverage for altitude-related risks, injuries, or emergencies, supporting our commitment to safety and environmental stewardship.

Food and Gas

For the “Project Together” expedition, food and gas logistics were planned to sustain the team—Prakash Gurung, Pur Bahadur Gurung (Yukta), Sandesh Sherpa—and three local porters from Syo to Syo, while minimizing environmental impact. We had budgeted for lightweight, high-calorie meals, including dehydrated rations (e.g., dal bhat mix, oatmeal, soups), energy bars, nuts, and dried fruits, providing 3,500–4,000 kcal daily for high-altitude exertion. Local produce, like vegetables in Syo, would supplement meals to support villagers and reduce pack weight. For cooking, we’ll carry two stoves and six EPI gas canisters (450 g each, totaling 2.7 kg), sufficient for melting snow and preparing meals at Camp I (5,600 m), Base Camp (4,910 m) and Approach Camp (4,200 m). Meals for porters (dal, rice, lentils) were included up to Approach Camp, with 2 kg of emergency food cached at Syo for contingencies. All food waste will be packed out in sealable bags to uphold our zero-waste policy, ensuring no trace is left on the mountain.

Gear and Equipment

The “Project Together” expedition’s gear and equipment were planned to support an alpine-style ascent of Khayang Peak (6,186 m). The following items would ensure lightweight climbing, safety, and zero-waste compliance:

- **Tents:** Two 3-season tents for Base Camp (4,910 m) and Camp I (5,600 m), lightweight for alpine mobility.
- **Climbing Gear:**
 - Two 60 m dynamic ropes for glacier and ice walls.
 - 10 ice screws (13–19 cm) and 6 snow bars for crevasse anchors and 7–10 m ice walls.
 - Personal kits (3 sets): crampons, ice axes, harnesses, helmets for ice climbing and rockfall protection.
- **Personal Equipment:**
 - Three 50–70 L backpacks to carry all gear past Base Camp.
 - Three sleeping bags and insulated pads for nights.
- **Communication:**
 - One satellite communicator for weather updates and emergencies.
- **Miscellaneous:**
 - Sealable waste bags for packing out all refuse (zero-waste policy).
 - Repair kit (multi-tool, duct tape) and first aid kit for contingencies.

Black Diamond, Elite Exped, and Raeko supported the “Project Together” expedition to Khayang Peak by providing these gear and equipments:

- **Black Diamond:**
 - Three climbing helmets
 - One pair of trekking poles
 - Three locking carabiners

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- Three unlocking carabiners
- Five camalots
- 8.5 mm dry rope (1 coil – 60 m)
- One harness

Note: The total value of these gears and equipment amounted to **NRS 181,500**.

- **Elite Exped:**

- One Garmin InReach GPS device
- One MSR cooking pot
- One GoPro camera
- One digital camera

Note: The gears and equipment provided by Elite Exped were given on a **use-and-return basis**, to be returned after the completion of the expedition.

- **RAEKO:**

- Three silicone jackets
- Three trekking pants
- Three t-shirts (half sleeve)

Note: The total value of these gears and equipment amounted to **NRS 57,000**.

Financial Summary: Expenditure Report

The following expenditure report details the financial breakdown of the expedition, covering administration, transportation, gear, food, accommodation, porter support, and miscellaneous costs, totaling **NPR 814,400**. Adjustments in duration (early return) and resource use (e.g., reduced gas consumption) reflect the team's adaptability to unforeseen challenges while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Expenditure of Khayang Expedition						
S. No.	Budget Head	Description	No. of Persons / Unit	No. of Days	Rate	Total
1	Administration	Permits and Insurance				216,500
2		Garbage Deposits				3,300
3	Transportation	Kathmandu - Jagat				42,000
4		Machhakhola - Kathmandu				35,000
5	Gear & Equipment	Rope	1 Coil (60 m)			28,000
6		Ice Screw	10		6,000	60,000
7		Snow Bar	6		800	4,800
8		Snow Goggles	2		13,000	26,000
9		Harness	2		12,000	24,000
10		Snow Shovel	1		8,200	8,200
11		Rock Pitons, 6 pcs	6		400	2,400
12		Porter Equipment				12,000

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13		By Black Diamond				181,500
14		By RAEKO				57,000
15	Food	Kathmandu-Syo-Kathmandu	6	10	1,600	96,000
16		EPI Gas	6		2,200	13,200
17		High Altitude Food				28,000
18	Accommodation	Tea Houses and Homestays	9 Nights		2,000	18,000
19	Porters	Salary	3	14	2,500	105,000
20		Tips	3		20,000	60,000
21	Miscellaneous	Stationaries, Caps, etc.				32,000
Grand Total						1,052,900

Funding Sources

The “Project Together” expedition to Khayang Peak (6,186 m) was supported by a **3,500 GBP** (1 GBP = 169.38 NPR) grant from the Mount Everest Foundation (MEF), the expedition’s funding was complemented by personal contributions from the climbing team—Prakash Gurung, Pur Bahadur Gurung (Yukta), and Sandesh Sherpa—to cover the total project budget. The following table details the funding sources, alongside the team’s contribution, which was adjusted to align with the actual expenditure of **NPR 1,052,900** after an early return and efficient resource use. This financial overview underscores the team’s commitment to fiscal responsibility while pursuing their mountaineering and sustainability goals.

Description	Total Amount (NPR)
Grant Received from Mount Everest Foundation (3,500 GBP)	592,830
Gears and Equipment Support from Black Diamond and RAEKO	238,500
Personal Contribution from Climbing Team	221,570
Project’s Total Budget	1,052,900
Note: 1 GBP = 169.38 NPR	

Conclusion

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The “Project Together” expedition to Khayang Peak (6,186 m), undertaken from March 9–22, 2025, embodied the spirit of alpine-style mountaineering—light, self-reliant, and deeply respectful of the Himalayan wilderness. We—Prakash Gurung, Pur Bahadur Gurung (Yukta), and Sandesh Sherpa, supported by three steadfast porters—set out to achieve the first ascent of this unclimbed peak in Nepal’s Manaslu Region. Though we reached 5,220 meters before a whiteout, heavy snowfall, and avalanche risks forced our retreat, the journey was far from a failure.

Our endeavor yielded profound achievements beyond the summit. We navigated the Khayang Glacier’s crevasses and ice walls, mapping critical hazards and collecting GPS data (Base Camp: 28° 36' 22" N, 84° 43' 05" E; highest point: 28° 36' 43" N, 84° 42' 55" E) to guide future climbers. We upheld our zero-waste commitment, hauling 9 kg of waste—human refuse, kitchen scraps, recyclables, and EPI gas canisters—to Samagaon’s MCA checkpoint, leaving no trace on the mountain. Our carbon footprint of CO₂ will be offset by planting 100 trees in Gorkha, ensuring a lasting environmental legacy. Culturally, we forged bonds through a Puja in Syo, local purchases, and a school visit in Khorlabesi, where we shared sustainable mountaineering practices and donated educational materials to inspire young minds.

The expedition’s challenges—unpredictable weather, technical terrain, and logistical pivots—taught us resilience, humility, and the power of adaptability. Turning back at 5,220 meters was a choice for survival, not defeat, reinforcing that the mountain’s voice outweighs ambition. Supported by the Mount Everest Foundation’s 3,500 GBP grant, gear from Black Diamond, Elite Exped, and Raeko, and the guidance of Ian Wall and Pratik Bahadur Khatri, we executed a financially disciplined mission (NPR 814,400) that honored safety and sustainability.

Khayang Peak remains unconquered, its summit a call for future expeditions armed with our lessons: advanced weather monitoring, rigorous hazard protocols, and flexible strategies. “Project Together” proved that success lies not just in summits, but in the grit to face the wild, the resolve to protect it, and the wisdom to return wiser. We leave behind a blueprint for responsible exploration, a cleaner mountain, and a spark of inspiration for the next generation of climbers to answer Khayang’s challenge.

Recommendations for Future Expeditions

Our Khayang Peak expedition, we—Prakash, Sandesh, Yukta—fell short of the summit due to weather, terrain, and logistics. These targeted recommendations address our challenges to ensure success in future climbs:

Advanced Weather Monitoring: A whiteout at 5,220 meters and a three-day snow forecast halted us. Equip the team with a handheld satellite weather receiver for hourly updates, supplementing app data. Allocate three buffer days post-summit window to wait out storms like the one that buried our bid on March 16.

Rigorous Hazard Protocols: Avalanches and crevasses on the Khayang Glacier forced retreat. Mandate pre-trip avalanche training and crevasse rescue drills, using ropes, harnesses, and ice

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anchors. Set firm turn-back rules: retreat if visibility drops below 10 meters or snowpack stability tests show high risk, as we heard cracking slopes.

Proactive Health Oversight: AMS hit a porter, and blisters slowed another on descent. Require daily pulse oximetry (target >90% SpO₂) and symptom logs—headache, nausea, fatigue—starting Day 1. Limit porter loads to below 15 kilograms, redistributing excess to climbers early.

Streamlined Waste Strategy: We collected 9 kilograms—3 kg human waste, 1 kg kitchen scraps, 3 kg recyclables, 2 empty EPI canisters—from Base Camp (4,910 meters) and Approach Camp, depositing the empties at Samagaon's MCA checkpoint while returning four full canisters to Kathmandu. Use sealable 5-liter waste bags (one per camp), weigh daily, and schedule drops at Syo and Samagaon, cutting descent loads by 30%.

Multi-Route Contingencies: Snow blocked Larke La Pass, forcing us back via Jagat. Pre-map alternate descents consulting Syo locals pre-climb for snow history. Cache emergency gear (tent, food) at Syo, retrievable if passes close.

Local Integration Plan: Syo's market and Khorlabesi's school visits built bonds. Allocate budget for local produce (e.g., vegetables), and pack notebooks, pencils, and conservation books for schools. Schedule 1-hour talks on sustainable climbing, as we did, to foster goodwill and awareness.

These precise measures—tech, training, and tactics—turn our lessons into a blueprint. Khayang Peak stopped us, but with this, we'll climb stronger, safer, and cleaner next time.

Annexes

ANNEX 1: Permit



नेपाल सरकार
संस्कृति, पर्यटन तथा नागरिक उड्डयान मन्त्रालय
पर्यटन विभाग



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

अनुमति पत्र नं: १ वसन्त २०८१

मिति २०८१/११/५

पर्वतारोहण अनुमति पत्र

NO : 1 Spring 2025

Date 2025-02-17

Expedition Permission Letter

नेपाल सरकारबाट निम्न लिखित पर्वतारोहीदललाई निम्नलिखित हिमशिखर आरोहण गर्न अनुमति प्रदान गरिएको छ ।

१. पर्वतारोही दलको नाम : First Ascent Khayang Peak Expedition 6168
२. नेताको नाम : Prakash Gurung
३. नेताको देश : Nepal
४. हिमशिखरको नाम : Khayang
५. हिमशिखरको उचाइ: 6186 मि
६. क्याराभान मार्ग : Besisahar-Tilje-Samagaon-BC
७. चढ्ने मार्ग : Less than 6500
८. अनुमतिको मान्य अवधि: 45 दिन
९. एजेन्सीको काठमाण्डौ स्थित सम्यक् अफिस : Apex Himlaya Treks and Expedition Pvt. Ltd.
१०. काठमाण्डौबाट प्रस्थान हुने मिति : 2025/03/09

It is hereby noticed that Government of Nepal has granted permission to the under mentioned expedition team to carry out the expedition on the Himalayan peak as mentioned below.

1. Name of Expedition Team : First Ascent Khayang Peak Expedition 6168
2. Leader's Name : Prakash Gurung
3. Leader's Country: Nepal
4. Name of Peak: Khayang
5. Height of Peak: 6186 m.
6. Caravan Route : Besisahar-Tilje-Samagaon-BC
7. Ascent Route: Less than 6500
8. Validity of Permission: 45 Days
9. Medium of Agency: Apex Himlaya Treks and Expedition Pvt. Ltd.
10. Date of Departure from Kathmandu: 2025/03/09

S.N	Name of the members	Role	Age	Country	PP/Ctzn No.
1	Mr. Prakash Gurung	Leader	33	Nepal	431031/98

S.N	Name of the members	Role	Age	Country	PP/Ctzn No.
2	Mr. Sandesh Sherpa	Member	37	Nepal	103027/27

Signature of the Officer Granting the Permit

Section Officer

PROJECT TOGETHER

ANNEX 2: Local Porter Insurance Declaration

Name of Porters:

- Subin Gurung
- Khem Bahadur Gurung
- Amrit Gurung

Himalayan Everest Insurance Ltd.

Hattisar, Kathmandu.
Phone: +977 1 4444717
Email: kalimati@hei.com.np

Trekking Office Name: Apex Himalaya Treks and Exp(d) Pvt.Ltd
Address: Thahity-17 Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal
Reference No: 108
Date: 2025-03-07

Re: Camp Staff/Local Porter Insurance Declaration

Policy No. KLM/GPA/31/23/24/00020



Dear Sirs,

This is with reference to the above policy. Please be advised of the following details of Camp Staff and local porters hired by Apex Himalaya Treks and Expedition Pvt.Ltd to accompany the trekker (s) as mentioned and to be covered under the above policy for the duration as indicated. Any changes of amendments necessary later will be intimated to you immediately.

Trek Group Name	Area of Trekking/Expedition with Starting Date: & Finished Date:	Names of Guide	Local Porters
1. Prakash Gurung 2. Pur Bahadur Gurung	Manaslu Region Starting : 9 th March, 2025 Ending: 23 th March, 2025	1. Sandesh Sherpa	1. Subin Gurung 2. Khem Bahadur Gurung 3. Amrit Gurung



Unik Shrestha
Relationship Officer

Authorized Signatory

PROJECT TOGETHER

ANNEX 3: Payment to Porters

“Project Together” made direct payments to the local porters, ensuring no intermediaries were involved.



PROJECT TOGETHER

ANNEX 4: Refrees

Team Leader Prakash Gurung with referees Ian Wall (CEO, Kathmandu Environmental Education Project) and Pratik Bahadur Khatri (General Secretary, Alpine Sports Federation - Nepal).

