

UPPER BARA SIGRI GLACIER EXPEDITION 1987

Organised by :

SOUTH CALCUTTA TREKKERS ASSOCIATION

1/3, Love Lock Street, Kolkata – 700019

LEADER'S REPORT

PLANNING FOR THE EXPEDITION :

After successful "SWETA GLACIER EXPEDITION" (Peak – 6166 Mt) in last year in the month of May-June, we took decision to explore "BARA SIGRI GLACIER" region this year in the State of Himachal Pradesh. Accordingly we sat altogether in a meeting and decided to climb unnamed peaks 6150 Mt. and 6185 Mt. at the head of Upper Bara Sigri Glacier. The peak 6185 Mt. was first climbed by Danseath Joyce in 1956 and was named by him as Outlook and perhaps after him nobody has attempted the Peak. We collected few information from National Library and from Sri Sourendra Banerjee, a mountaineer friend. He tried to explore the area last year in the month of May but could not reach BATAL due to heavy snow in that region. We could not get detail because possibly 2-3 Expeditions organized from Bengal previously. So we thought if we become successful then we would be able to give all the detail information and photographs of the area. However we made the plans and sent it to IMF for necessary approval. The team was consisting of 12 members.

LOCATION OF THE PEAK :

The Peaks 6150 Mt and 6185 Mt is situated at the head of BARA SIGRI GLACIER with a Lat. 32°17' N and Long 77°37' N.

ARRANGEMENTS AND JOURNEY :

After obtaining the necessary approval from IMF, we started raising our Funds and making arrangements for necessary Food and Equipments and finally a team consisting of 12 members – Sri Ranjan Dutta (Dy. Leader), Sri Sandip Roychowdhury, Sri Gautam Giri, Sri Kanak Kumar Ghose, Sri Anjan Ghose, Sri Subrata Saha, Sri Chinmoy Bhattacharya, Sri Indranath Dutta, Sri Sankar Bhadra, Sri Sutanu Chakraborty, and only Lady member Smt. Sita Ghose, and myself as the Leader left Howrah Station on 25th July, 1987, by I UP Kalka Mail amidst warm farewell from our well-wishers. The Club Flag and Indian tri-colour were handed over to me by Sri Sambhunath Das in the Howrah Station to hoist them at the top of the Peaks. The Team arrived at Chandigarh on 27th July '87. From Chandigarh Railway Station we took Auto-taxi for going to Manali bound Bus station. The Bus started at 6.30 A.M. I told my members (eight) to get down at Kullu and others including myself would go to Manali. The Kullu team would arrange for necessary ration and reservation arrangement for Batal bound Bus. The Manali Team would arrange Porters. We contacted Sri Alam Chand Thakur of Burua Village who had experience of the Bara Sigri area. According to my plan eight members got down at Kullu at 15.30 Hrs and we went to Manali and reached there at 18.30 Hrs. on 27th July 1987. Sri Alam Chand Thakur met us in the evening at our Hotel. I had a long discussion with him viewing our expedition and told him to arrange for HAPs and LAPs.

MANALI – July 28th :

We took our bed tea and having our breakfast we went to the Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports, Manali. There we met the Director Col. Prem Chand and informed him regarding our expedition. With the blessings and good wishes from him we returned to our hotel at 12.00 Hrs. We took our lunch and availed bus for Kullu, and reached at 15.30 Hrs. There we met the rest members

who were in Kullu for necessary arrangement for ration and bus reservation. I heard that all the arrangements were ready and the Bus would start from Kullu at 4.30 Hrs. next morning. We packed up our Rucksack and having our dinner at 20.30 Hrs. We slept.

KULLU – July 29th :

We woke up at three A.M. and after getting ready started ferrying load from hotel to bus-stand. We started keeping the load on the top of the bus, there we faced problem, however we convinced the bus-conductor and then the Bus started at 4.30 Hrs. We reached Manali at 6.30 Hrs. Batal by bus from Kullu is 8 to 10 Hrs. journey. At Manali we had a talk with the bus-conductor and driver that they would stop the bus at Bhang where our 4 HAPs and 25 LAPs would join with us. Again the bus started keeping the Beas river to its left and gradually it was going upward. At Bhang the Bus did not stop. And we saw all the porters were standing on the road for availing the bus. We shouted to stop the bus but they did not pay heed to us. Again when we were started shouting then the bus stopped after one KM from Bhang. Some of the members got down and went to call the porters. Again the bus started. But such rough behaviour of the bus conductor and driver was beyond our imagination. For example when the bus was running suddenly one Porter's Load fall down from the top of the bus. Immediately we told the conductor to stop the bus for collecting the Load. But he did not care. After some time he stopped and when the porter got down to bring his load the bus started running and again after shouting we could not make the bus stop. However with one short of LAP we reached Mari at 9.00 Hrs. The bus halted for few minutes and again started and at about 12 Hrs. we reached on the top of the Rotang Pass. We were very much pleased for some time seeing the surrounding beauty. The Bus again started and the bus was going down and down and we reached Gramphu at 14.00 Hrs. From there the bus again started and reached Chatru at 15.00 Hrs. We took our lunch over there. And again the bus started and reached Batal via Chota-Dhara at 17.30 Hrs. The bus journey was very tedious because of uneven route and abnormal dirt coming inside the bus. So everybody was exhausted due to long and unsatisfactory journey. After getting down from the bus we had to face a new problem which was abnormal wind passing from south to north. We dumped our load in the camp site and started pitching tents for members and porters. Our cook made a temporary kitchen and arranged for tea. We saw one tea stall there just beside the Chandra river. We enjoyed the beauty of the surroundings and the Chandra river also. Our guide Alam Chand Thakur tried to locate the Karcha Nala which we would have to cross and then keeping Chandra river to our right we would enter towards Bara Sigri Glacier. At 20 Hrs. we took our dinners and declared next day as rest day for acclimatisation because we gained height from 3000 ft. to 13000 ft. within a day.

BATAL – July 30th :

We woke up at 7.00 A.M. and took our bed-tea and after having our break-fast at 8.00 A.M. we decided to reccy the routes of Karcha Nala from which point we would be able to cross the nala. Our guide told me that he was going to Kunjum top for gaining height as well as to acclimatised. I saw Sri Subrata Saha and Smt. Sita Ghose sick, so I told them not to join with us. We started and crossed the Chandra's bridge and then we trekked forward towards Karcha Nala keeping Chandra river to our right. The trekking route was full of boulders and morains. After one hour trekking we reached in front of Karcha Nala and found that four streams were passing out. Some places the depth was nearly waisthigh and was abnormally cold. Then we traversed left and after 3 KM traversing found one Ice-bridge over the Nala. We decided to cross from this point though at least 3 Hrs. trek would increase but the journey would be safe. We returned back to Batal and took our Lunch. From our camp-site we could see the peak White Sail and Devachen. At about 20.00 Hrs. we took our dinner and went into the sleeping bag.

BATAL – July 31st :

We woke up at 5 A.M. and packed our rucksack and tents and after having breakfast at 8 A.M. we started for AMC I. I found all the members were fit except Sri Subrata Saha who was suffering from headache. The route follows the bank of Chandra turns left into Bara Sigri Glacier. After one KM trek we came in front of Karcha Nala and found impossible of crossing this nala because of its current, depth and cold. We traversed towards left for yesterday's Ice bridge. We crossed the ice-bridge and

started trekking towards right and one hour boulder marching we reached the point at which we thought to cross the nala. The whole process delayed our journey by three hours. Now we followed true left bank of Chandra river. The trek was good and at about 16.00 Hrs. we reached AMC – I just below the ridge. The place was beautiful and we pitched our tents on the grassy ground. The water point was very nearer to us. From this point we could see the white-sail along with its Ice-fall and the Devachen was seen also. We took Coffee and snacks and after having our dinner we slept at about 20.00 Hrs.

AMC-I – 1st Aug :

The morning was very pleasant. The sky was blue but in the early morning I heard the same bad news regarding headache of Sri Subrata Saha. Throughout the night he could not sleep. However the other members were quite fit. After having our heavy breakfast we started marching towards AMC – II at 8.00 Hrs. First we gained the Ridge and then we could see the snout of Bara Sigri Glacier towards our left. In the front we could see the Peaks Devachen and Whitesail. As per our Guide's version a peak which was seen towards our left ridge was Ashoke Parbat. We trekked towards left and march was completely on boulders. The Lalana ice-fall was seen after entering lateral margin of Bara Sigri Glacier. We had to cross many ridges and lateral morains and ultimately just before the rockfall zone area we decided to make our AMC – II. We reached over there at 16.00 Hrs. We pitched our tents on the boulders and our cook arranged for snacks and tea. We were all exhausted and took rest for some time. We studied the map there and then after gossiping and enjoying the evening we took our dinner and entered into the tents with a plan for moving towards AMC – III on the next day.

AMC-II – 2nd Aug :

I had to spend sleepless night yesterday because of serious illness of my jfellow Tent member Sri Sandip Roychowdhury and Sri Subrata Saha. Both of them could not sleep because of headache. So yesterday in the tent I took a decision that the sick members should not go to the higher camps, because if anybody found abnormally sick in the higher camps then there will be no alternative to getting him down because we had no Medical Officer with us. At about 5.30 A.M. I came out from my tent and talked with Dy. Leader Sri Ranjan Dutta regarding the two members' physical conditions. Then after a discussion that two sick members along with Sri Gautam Giri, I took the decision that two sick members along with Sri Gautam Giri and Smt. Sita Ghose would stay over here for a day and after proper acclimatisation they would start for the AMC – III on 3rd Aug Accordingly I conveyed my decision. The other members including myself would proceed for AMC – III. But after sometime Sri Subrato Saha came to me and told his willingness of getting down today because of his serious headache. But Sri Sandip Roychowdhury wanted to join with us for the higher camps. But on seeing his face I told him not to go towards the higher camps. But on seeing his face I told him not to go towards higher camp today. He should go tomorrow. It would be better for him. Then I tried to make convince Sri Subrato Saha but failed. Actually he had lost his confidence at that moment. Ultimately I changed my decision and told them to go down. I watched the sacrifice of Sri Gautam Giri and Smt. Sita Ghose. They themselves told me for going down to help the sick members. The total dream of them were shattered although they were quite fit. But Mountaineering is such a sports where sacrifice is the main thing which they did wholeheartedly for successfully expedition. Everybody kept silent for the time being. Then I told my members those who would approach for AMC – III should get ready and accordingly we packed our Rucksack and Tents and we started trekking for AMC – III. I told Sri Gautam Giri if possible they could have come to Base Camp after two days. We would not talk with each other for about an hour since we were all upset. The trekking route was as usual full of boulders and we had to cross the moraine ridge covered with hard ice. We climbed up on the South-East direction. On our right we could see Gorgeousness of the White Sail and many other High Peaks are also seen. After a tiresome 6 Hrs. trek we reached a point on the glacier after crossing ice ridge, where the marks of previous expedition (probably Army) were seen. However after one hr., we came to the front of a big boulder and decided to establish our AMC – III at 17.30 Hrs. We pitched our tents and went inside. We took our coffee and dinner at 19.00 Hrs. and went into the sleeping bags. We were all kept quite because of off-mind. We were very much tensed because of illness of our members who had gone to lower camps.

AMC-III - 3rd Aug :

We woke up at 5.00 P.M. and took our bed-tea. Then we packed our rucksack and tents. I informed Alam to send the Porters with Load. Their plans was to keep all the loads to Base Camp and they would return to Lower Camps on the same day. Accordingly the Porters moved from AMC – III to Base Camp at 7.00 A.M. We took our breakfast and started marching towards Base Camp at 8.30 A.M. Our proposed Base Camp area was on Concordia. The route towards our Base Camp winds gently over the lateral moraines of the Bara Sigri, but it is a long long Glacier. We reached at our Base Camp at about 2.00 P.M. The whole route was full of boulders and on our way to B.C. we ultimately crossed Central Lion Nala and then we could see massive Kullu Pumori towards our right hand and we could see for the first time our targeted peak 6185 mt. We pitched our tents after cleaning the boulders. We were not happy there because 4 members had left us before two days at AMC – II. At about 16.00 Hrs. we took snacks and coffee and after we discussed among ourselves regarding our further programme. Ultimately at 19.00 Hrs. we took our dinner and declared that next day we would retrace the route of our Camp – I as well as we would ferry our loads towards Camp – I at about 21.00 Hrs. we went into sleeping Bags.

BASE CAMP – 4th Aug :

We woke up at 6.00 A.M. and took our Bed tea. At about 8.00 A.M. we started sorting of foods for the higher camps. To took our breakfast and packed up the foods for higher camps and our lunch in our rucksack. On that day Sri Chinmoy Bhattacharya was found sick, he was suffering from cough trouble. On enquiry he told that in the night he could not sleep because of abnormal cough trouble and saw blood in his spit. We were very much worried and told him to stay over here along with Sri Anjan Ghose and one HAP. At 9.00 A.M. we six members along with HAPs started for Camp I. We had to trek although the Glacier and found Crevases, we negotiated these Crevases cautiously. The nature of the boulders were very peculiar there. We could see on our right massive Kullu-Pumori and Jaldi-Jaldi. And on our left we could see some unnamed peaks. The area was really fantastic and everywhere was surrounded with peaks. Our targeted peaks 6185 mt. and 6150 mt. were always straight to us on the route. At 13.00 hrs. we reached Camp I. It was on the left lateral moraine of Bara Sigri Glacier. There we could see the Ganthers Peaks and Mt. Parvati's range towards our right. We dumped our load and spent one hour and started for B.C. at 14.00 Hrs. and reached at 16.30 Hrs. We took coffee and talked with Chinmoy regarding his illness and found him not fit. However, I discussed with my members for tomorrow 's programme and told them we would shift our base camp to Camp – I tomorrow. I had a plan of climbing the two peaks. At 20.00 hrs. we took our dinner and went into the sleeping bags. The night past very badly because my tent partner Chinmoy could not sleep due to his abnormal cough trouble. He sat in the tent throughout the night.

BASE CAMP – 5th Aug :

We came out from the tent at about 6.00 A.M. and after having our tea. I told my Dy. Leader Sri Ranjan Datta that he along with Kanak, Indra and Sankar would go to Camp I. Myself and Sutanu would stay at Base Camp and Chinmoy and Anjan would go down to Lower camps because of Chinmoy's illness. Accordingly Chinmoy and Anjan packed their rucksacks and started their descend with one HAP. The other four members along with two HAPs started for Camp – I at 9 A.M. We spent the whole day at Base Camp and decide that we would go to Camp – I tomorrow and would return to Base Camp same day.

KANAK'S DIARY :

On our way to Camp – I we had to negotiate many Crevases. On our right was the dividing moraine ridge of Kullu-Pumori and on our left was the rocky and scree zone coming down to the Leons group of glaciers. Due to bad weather condition presumed by our guide we had to make a forced Camp – I at an altitude of 4900 mt. On the Slaty moraine ridge dividing the Sigri Glacier and the Leons Group of glacier. We could see the Peaks, Tiger's tooth, Lalkuila (probably) and Cathedral. Behind the peak Jaldi-Jaldi the top view of Kullu-Makalu was seen angularly in the direction of our Base Camp site. On our right was the Peak Jaldi-Jaldi and again in the angular front side was Kullu Pumori. On our left was

the muddy wall of an Unnamed peak 6115 mt. and on angular left frontside was the peak Ganther. Our peak 6185 mt. was beside the range of Mt. Parvati (6632 mt.).

BASE CAMP – 6TH Aug :

Myself and Sutanu along with one HAP started for Camp – I at 9.00 Hr. and reached our Camp – I at 13.00 Hrs. We spent over there for an hour. The weather gradually became deteriorated and immediately we started for Base Camp at 17.30 Hrs.

KANAK'S DIARY

CAMP-I – 6th Aug :

A gloomy morning. There was a heavy snow fall the last night. The sun peeped for the first time at 9.30 Hrs. We decided not to waste time even for this bad weather because we were anxious of the other members and wanted to meet them as early as possible.

We descended to the bed of Bara Sigri Glacier and marched towards S-E. We crosses 4-5 Crevases of 6-7 ft. width and had to cut steps on both sides of them. We started at 10.30 Hrs. with an ambition to reach this Summit Camp site on a gully dividing the Peak 6185 mt. and unnamed peak 6320 mt. Some humps were crossed and flat lands in the foot of Kullu-Pumori was come by. In front of us was rock-band dividing the Sigri glacier and Parvati valley.

Weather condition further deteriorated. Blizzard started at 13.30 Hrs. resulting in a white out at 14.00 Hrs. Visibility was zero. We could not see each other and even the route but just managed to move with the help of compass. Time ran out and destination was still far away. We saw a hip of boulders at about 17.00 Hrs. and decided to pitch tents there. Blizards stopped at 20.30 Hrs. Again absolutely clear sky. We were on a black island in the sea of white ice field. We could see the impression of our peak 6185 mt. although very far away and prayed that at least there should be no snowfall tomorrow.

BASE CAMP – 7th Aug :

We were spending time in tension. We were two. Four members were on the higher camps and six members were at Batal. However myself and Sutanu along with HAP started for Camp I. At about 11.00 Hr. we reached Camp – I. According to my plan they would climb 6185 mt. high peak today and would returned to Base Camp. Accordingly we waited anxiously in Camp – I upto 17.00 Hrs. But they did not returned. Ultimately I wrote a message for them and started for Base Camp. Immediately after returning to Base Camp we entered in to the tents. We could not talk with each other. In the mean time HAP asked me regarding the Dinner. I told him to prepare dinner for all. At about 20.00 Hrs. I came out from the tent and anxiously looking towards Camp – I side. All on a sudden I saw a torch light and saw Kanak, Indra, Ranjan and Shankar along with Guide Alamchand Thakur and Bikram Chand Thakur were coming to Base Camp. I greeted them for successful attempt of 6185 mt. high peak and served them with tea and snacks. I listened to their description. All of us were glad. We took our dinner at 23.00 Hrs. and got into sleeping bags.

KANAK'S DIARY

Summit Camp – 7th Aug :

All our members had to put up in a single tent last night. We spent practically a sleepless night. Got ourselves ready at 3.45 Hrs. The whiteness of 6185 mt. could be observed in the late moonlit night. We understood that the last night we had camped in an ice-field with sketchy crevases by the side of Kullu-Pumori. Our Peak was at the extreme left of the Parvati Range. Main peak of Parvati could not be seen from that place.

According to our Dy. Leader's decision we three along with Guide and one HAP started at 4.30 Hrs. pushed to our left. Crossed snow field. We negotiated a large number of crevases of width 5-6 ft. We crossed snow-humps of gradient 45d-60d. Even at 5.40 Hrs. there was loose snow at some places and gradually one gradient increased. Now we could see the Parvati Valley on our right (looked like a frozen river). We took rest at the bottom of a slope coming down after a breach from 6185 mt. and 6150 mt. (breach because we were in front side of the peaks designed with some crevases). Now we negotiated a snow slab joining peaks 6320 mt. and 6185 mt. which was about 600 ft. high and of a gradient 70d. From the top of the slab our peak looked flat. On our right was 6150 mt. peak and left was 6185 mt. high peak. We thus avoided a crevasse zone again a bit flat area and we crossed two walls of same height as previous one but higher gradient to attain the Col leading to Kaza. From this point our peak was about 1000 ft. But snow was not deep enough and the way started to become sleeper. The gradient now became 75d – 80d and we roped up ourselves after taking rest and having some dry food.

Gradually we were nearing the top of 6185 mt. high peak. From this peak a ridge goes directly to 6150 mt. peak. At an altitude of 6165 mt. we saw the peak 6185 mt. was encircled by unfathomed crevasses 3-4 ft. width at the mouth but conical in shape with increase in depth. After trying for 40 mts. we managed to find a route to the top and climbed the hump-shaped 6185 mt. top at 11.40 Hrs. which was attached to the Parvati Range after a depression. Although the height as per Survey of India is 6185 mt. yet our altimotere read at 6195 mt. on the top. Along with me were Indra Nath Dutta, Shankar Bhadra, HAP Alam Chand Thakur and Bikram Chand Thakur on the top. We hoisted the Indian tricolor and our Club Flag on the top.

We were satisfied but at the same time felt sorry for the members who had sacrificed their chances for rescuing other sick members.

Looking N-W (i.e. direction of Base Camp) we could see wall of Parvati Range to our left with the main peak at a distant corner of the range the Parvati Valley dividing Kullu-Pumori and Parvati. We could see peaks which we could not identify, behind the peak Kullu-Pumori. On our right was the Col leading to Kaza and behind it were steep peaks which we could not recognize. Peak 6320 mt. was angularly situated to our right. In front of us was our Summit Camp.

We started our return journey at 13.00 Hrs. after taking snaps of the surroundings and reached the summit camp at 15.00 Hrs. by glissading 2000 ft. We met there with our Dy. Leader Sri Ranjan Dutta and after taking rest we started for Base Camp. We reached Camp – I at 18.00 Hrs. and again after taking rest we started for Base Camp and reached there at 22.00 Hrs. in moonlit night.

BASE CAMP – 8th Aug :

We woke up at 7.00 A.M. and after having our breakfast we packed up our rucksack, food and equipments and started for AMC – II at 9.00 Hrs. On our way we took our packed lunch and rested for a while and ultimately reached AMC – II at 16.00 Hrs. We pitched our tents and having our snacks and dinner we slept.

AMC-II – 9th Aug :

We started for Batal at 9.00 A.M. and after a long trek we reached AMC I at 12.00 Noon. On our way we met WHMI Advance Course team who were going to Concordia for climbing the peak Kullu-Pumori. Again we started from AMC – I at 13.30 Hrs. after having our lunch and reached in front of Karcha Nala at about 17.00 Hrs. On our way to Batal we met the Japanese team who were going to climb the peak Tiger's tooth. However, we tried to cross the Karcha Nala, but seeing the depth, current of water we changed our decision and traversed our right for the ice-bridge. We crossed the ice-ridge and ultimately & reached Batal at 19.00 Hrs. We asked the tea stall owner regarding our members who were there. We heard they left Batal on 6th Aug We took our dinner at 21.00 Hrs. and slept.

BATAL – 10th Aug :

We availed the bus at 11.00 Hrs. and reached Manali at 20.00 Hrs. There we met our members who were waiting for our return. Everybody was glad to hear regarding successful attempt of 6185 mt. high peak. We took our dinner in the Hotel and met Miss Munmun Chatterjee who came over here with a target of Snow Cone Peak in the Bara Sigri Glacier.

MANALI – 11th Aug :

We spent the whole day at Manali and purchased various articles. We went to our Guide Sri Alam Chand Thakur's House and took our lunch there. In the evening we came into our Hotel and after gossiping took our dinner.

MANALI – 12th Aug :

We woke up at 3.00 A.M. and packed up our rucksack and all other materials. We went to the Bus stand and availed Chandigarh bound bus at 4.30 A.M. We reached Chandigarh at 17.00 Hrs. and availed Kalka bound bus and reached Kalka Rly. Station at 18.30 Hrs. We purchased the Railway tickets and availed 2 Dn. Kalka Mail on the same day and reached Howrah Station on 14th Aug 1987 at 8.00 A.M.

CLEANING OPERATION IN THE MOUNTAIN :

It is apprised that all of us were very much aware of keeping the mountain clean. So when we had left our camps and Base Camp we had to clean the area. We had to burnt all the garbage which we had used there.

BEHIND THE SUCCESS :

I must be thankful to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, New Delhi, Youth Service Department, Govt. of West Bengal and many well-wishers of Calcutta. Also my heartiest thanks to different business house of Calcutta who raised their helping hands to success our programme.

Dated, the 16th Nov., 1987.
Calcutta.

SHYAMAL DEY
LEADER
UPPER BARA SIGRI GLACIER EXPEDITION
ORGANISED BY
SOUTH CALCUTTA TREKKERS ASSOCIATION