



AAC Publications

Kuchela Dhura (6,294m), north face and east ridge

India, Kumaun Himalaya

From the summit of Kuchela Dhura, a sharp, three-kilometer ridge runs southwest toward Nanda Kot (6,861m), and the idea of climbing it came to mind in 2011, when I was on the upper section of nearby Changuch (AAJ 2012). In 2012 I organized an expedition that reached this ridge from the northwest and then followed the crest northeast until stopped at 6,206m by a V-shaped notch. The IMF asked me to lead another attempt in the post-monsoon season of 2013. In June, while at the end of the Lawan (a.k.a. Lwa) Glacier, having crossed Traill's Pass with two friends, I saw through the mist the icefall on the north face. My intuition told me the peak had shown us the way.

Negotiating landslides, busted trails, and wiped-out bridges as a result of the June 16 disaster in Uttarakhand, deputy leader Wallambok Lyngdoh, Vineet Kumar Saini, Karan Kumar Shandilya, Banshgainlang Nongkynrih, Ram Prasad Lodha, Vijay Rautela Gwaldom, Chitramohan Singh Chauhan, our medical officer Dr. Anand Vaidya, C. Zormsanga, and I trekked from the road head via Martoli to a base camp at 4,173m, on the true right bank of the Lawan Gad—the same approach as used to climb Nanda Devi East. On August 30 we established advanced base (4,922m, 30°19'27.9"N, 80°05'34.8"E) to the south.

The next day we began on the icefall, fixing 400m of rope. In total we would fix 1,000m before establishing summit camp at 6,064m. The route up the icefall and across to our high camp involved crevassed slopes up to 60°, traverses below seracs, and the crossing of avalanche runnels, before we reached a large bergschrund below an unnamed top of 6,041m on the ridge further east. From here a rightward traverse over avalanche-prone terrain led to 50° snow slopes. On September 4, Wallambok Lyngdoh, Vijay Singh Rautela, Chitramohan Singh Chauhan, and I set off from advanced base with camping equipment and three days' food, and, following the ropes, pitched tents not far short of a saddle on the rutted ridge leading from the unnamed top toward Kuchela Dhura.

We rested one day and left at 4 a.m. on the following. Above camp, a slope of ca 100m led to the saddle, from where we traversed right, across slopes of 50-60°, and over two 20m and 50m snow humps, to reach the highest point (30°18'22.2"N, 80°05'19.6"E) via a moderate 30-35° snow slope.

We stayed there eight hours, in order for the weather to clear and allow us to take a good selection of summit pictures. We returned to the tents at 5 p.m.

On the 7th we broke camp and descended, removing all garbage and ropes. We made it to base camp the same day. All coordinates are from GPS units.

Abridged from a report by Dhruv Joshi, India

Images



The north side of Kuchela Dhura and an unnamed 6,041m summit to its left. Route of ascent shown.



Lyngdoh_Kuchela_2014_SummitCamp Summit camp (6,064m) with the top of Kuchela Dhura behind. The route first gained the col above the left-hand tent, then climbed up right before following the broad ridge back left, over two snow humps, to the third and highest top at the far end of the ridge.



Climbing through the icefall on the north face of Kuchela Dhura with the Lawan Gad far below.



Traversing above the icefall toward summit camp.

Article Details

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Author | Dhruv Joshi, India |
| Publication | AAJ |
| Volume | 56 |
| Issue | 88 |
| Page | 344 |
| Copyright Date | 2014 |
| Article Type | Climbs and expeditions |