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Rangwang Kangri, North Ridge; Lingthran Kangri, West Ridge

India, East Karakoram

Rajesh Gadgil, Dilip Lagu, Ashish Prabhu, Rajendra Shinde, and I, all from the Himalayan Club, left Leh on July 22 and drove to Rongdo village (3,300m) in the Nubra Valley. From there we trekked to the sulphur springs at the entrance to the Chhurn Nangma Valley, where we established base camp at 4,560m. Later, advanced base was located up this valley at 5,100m, and after a few days of acclimatization and stocking the camp, we all moved there on August 7.

On the 11th, we shifted to Camp 1 (5,500m) on the moraines of the Chhuchen Glacier, from which we decided to attempt unclimbed Peak 6,040m at the southern head of the glacier. As the distances were long, we first needed to make a summit camp below the mountain, from where on the 15th we climbed to the summit via the west flank and north ridge. Our climb coincided with the 75th anniversary of Indian independence, so we name the peak Rangwang Kangri ("Independence Peak," 34°27'39.88"N, 78°3'34.20"E). The summit was reached by Gadgil, Prabhu, Shinde, and me with five high-altitude supporters, Bipin, Cheruk, Keshu, Paste, and Pemba.

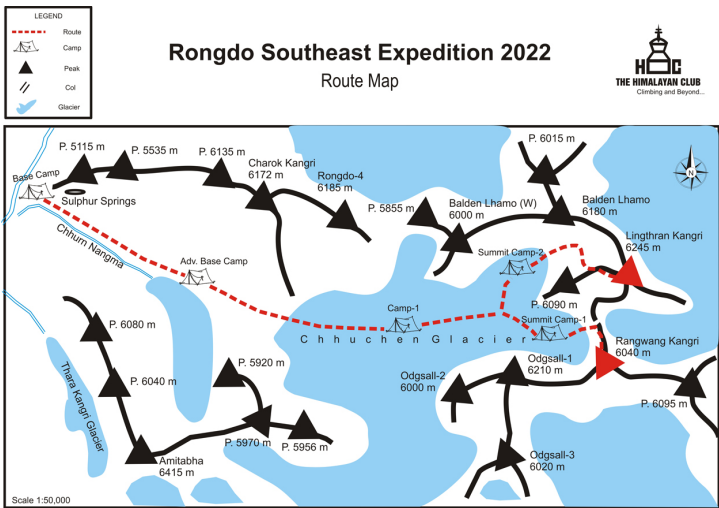
Views from the top left us with mixed feelings. We were thrilled to be on the summit, but to the east could see the Kunzang Lungpa glacier flowing toward the Shyok River, dark and bare, devoid of any snow. Huge crevasses had opened, giving an inhospitable look and feel. We could clearly see the effects of global warming. The sight deterred us from carrying out our original plan to cross over and explore the Kunzang Lungpa.

To the northwest lay unclimbed Peak 6,245m (previously dubbed Island Peak by a 2015 Indian expedition), the highest in the area. The eastern flanks did not look good, due to loose rocks and bare glacier ice, so we decided to explore its western side. After only a day back at Camp 1, we explored an approach, found a feasible route, and moved to a new summit camp on the 19th. We made our first attempt next day. Fresh snowfall made the approach difficult, and by the time we had reached the col between Peaks 6,245m and 6,090m to the west, it was 10 a.m. We had just crossed a huge snow bridge over the bergschrund and estimated it would take us three hours to reach the summit and descend to the col, by which time the snow bridge would have softened or collapsed. We decided to return to camp.

On the 21st there was heavy snowfall that kept us in our tents, but by late evening the skies cleared. Leaving camp at 3 a.m., we reached the col by 8 a.m., having fixed 500m of rope on the north-facing ice slope below. We fixed another 600m of rope on the west ridge of Peak 6,245m. Gadgil, Cheruk, Keshu, Paste, Pemba, and I reached the summit and named it Lingthran Kangri ("Island Peak," 34°28'31.51"N, 78°3'47.40"E). The weather remained unstable, so we dismantled our camps and wound up the expedition.

— Divyesh Muni, India

Images



Sketch map of the route followed by the 2022 expedition to Rangwang Kangri and Lingthran Kangri.

Article Details

Author	Divyesh Muni
Publication	AAJ
Volume	65
Issue	97
Page	306
Copyright Date	2023
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions