



## AAC Publications

---

### **Uttarakhand Peak Access, Avalanche Disaster**

India, Western Garhwal, Gangotri

**Since 2004, foreign parties attempting peaks of the Garhwal and Kumaon in the state of Uttarakhand have been required to pay double peak fees.** One fee, as per normal in India, was paid to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, the other to the government of Uttarakhand (Forest Department). In late July 2022, Uttarakhand announced it would no longer levy these separate fees on mountaineering expeditions. In addition, it would open 30 “unscaled” peaks (many of these actually have been climbed) and 10 trekking peaks (from around 5,200m to 5,965m). The dual peak fees and considerable extra bureaucracy had deterred expeditions, and the government hopes this new incentive will provide a boost to Uttarakhand’s tourism industry.

In 2022, climbers visiting the Himalaya for the standard autumn season were beset by a prolonged monsoon and huge amounts of snowfall. In what has been described as India’s worst mountaineering tragedy, 29 people were killed in an avalanche on Draupadi ka Danda II (5,670m) in the Western Garhwal. The victims comprised instructors and trainees taking part in an advanced course with the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM). The incident took place on October 4 when a slab avalanche released a few hundred meters below the summit and swept the party into a crevasse. Draupadi ka Danda II (approximately 30°50'9.98"N, 78°48'31.47"E) is a popular training peak from the NIM base camp in the valley to the northwest, which flows down to the Bhagirathi River.

— Lindsay Griffin, AAJ

**Images**

Article Details

Author	Lindsay Griffin
Publication	AAJ
Volume	65
Issue	97
Page	313
Copyright Date	2023
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions