



THE
KULLU — SPITI — LAHUL
EXPEDITION

1993

THE KULLU — SPITI — LAHUL EXPEDITION 1993

(K.S.L.E. - 1993)

S U M M A R Y

The expedition trekked from Kullu (Parvati valley) to Spiti (Pin valley). In Spiti the Khamengar and the Ratang valleys in the Western Spiti were explored. We returned to Manali via Lahul.

In a month-long trek over high passes, the expedition climbed 2 peaks, crossed 2 passes and reached 2 cols.

The trek started at Manikaran (near Kullu) on the 17th July 1993 when the Kullu valley was just recovering from a heavy week-long downpour. In 8 days of trekking along the Parvati river, the party crossed the Pin-Parvati pass (5400 m) on the 25th. Down into the Pin valley the team reached Sagnam village to replenish the supplies.

Turning west and then north, the team followed the Khamengar river, the major branch of the Parahio river. The South Ratang Pass (5600 m) was crossed on the 3rd August. Two peaks, Khamengar (5760 m) and Parahio (5920 m) were climbed.

In the Ratang valley (now visited after 37 years) various trips were made. One to the head of the valley, which located a pass to the Bara Shigri glacier. The party reached the North Ratang col (5600 m).

In the last stage the party explored the Sanugba Nadi (a tributary of Ratang). From the high Sanugba col (5400 m) various peaks on the Gyundi valley divide were observed.

In 4 days the team trekked along the Ratang river and crossing the river several times, passed the formidable Ratang Gorge. Finally on the 11th August 1993 the party reached Kaja.

The return was by bus over the Kunzum ia, Chandra valley of Lahul and the Rohtang pass to Manali.

28 days were spent in the mountaineering. The total trek was of 222 km, covering an ascent and descent of nearly 15,000 m.

WESTERN SPITI

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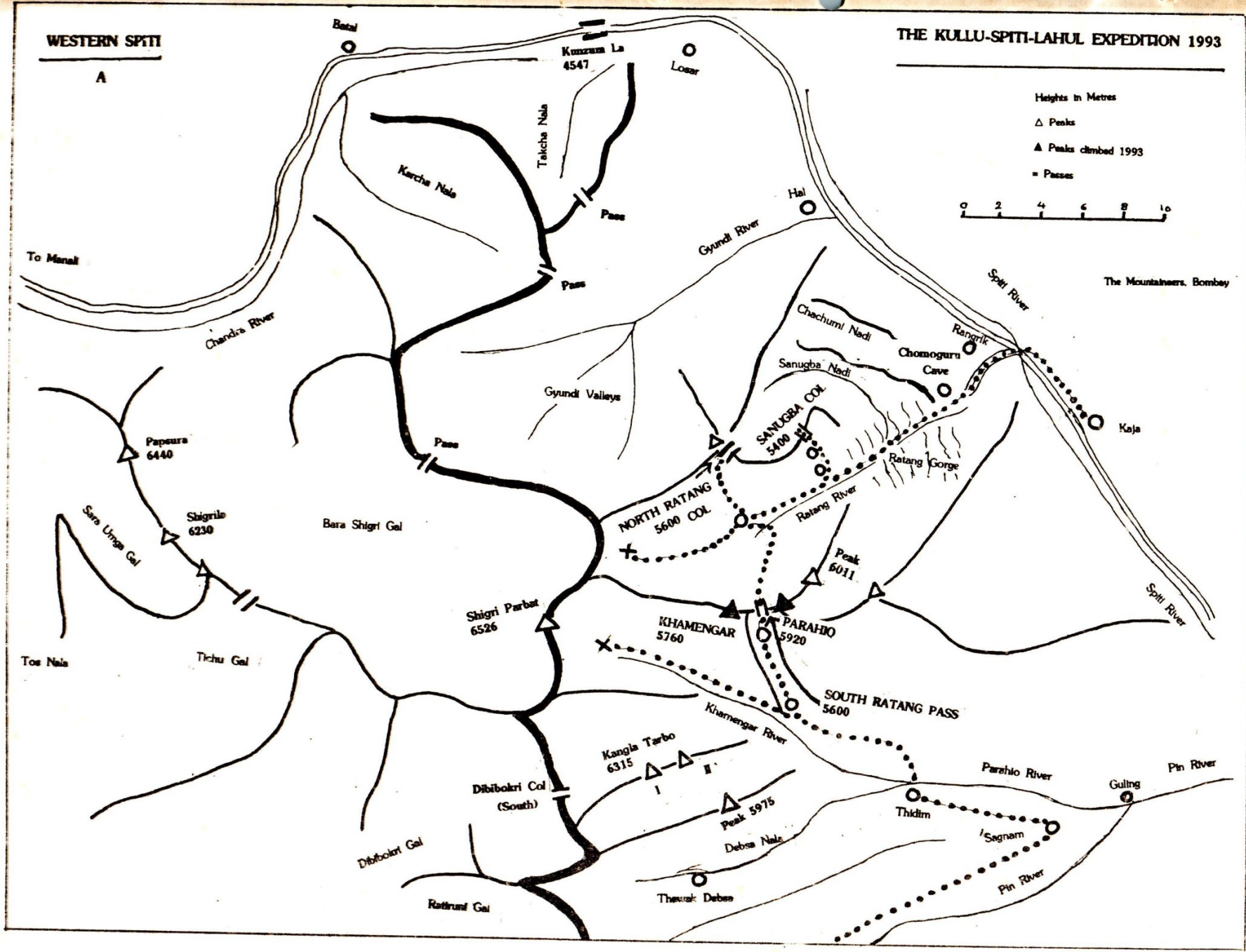
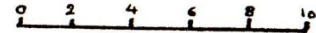
THE KULLU-SPITI-LAHLUL EXPEDITION 1993

Heights in Metres

△ Peaks

▲ Peaks climbed 1993

= Passes



The Mountaineers, Bombay

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PEAKS CLIMBED

<u>Name/Height</u>	<u>Date Climbed</u>	<u>Summitters</u>
1. KHAMENGAR (5760 m - 18,900 ft) 2nd ascent	2 August 1993	Harish Kapadia Kesar Sinh
2. PARAHIO (5920 m - 19,425 ft) 2nd ascent	2nd August 1993	Kaivan Mistry Yog Raj Surat Ram

PASSES CROSSED

1. Pin-Parvati Pass (5400 m - 17,716 ft)	25 July 1993
2. South Ratang Pass (5600 m - 18,372 ft)	3 August 1993

COLS REACHED

1. North Ratang Col (5600 m - 18,372 ft)	5 August 1993
2. Sanugba Col (5400 m - 17,716 ft)	8 August 1993

Members : Harish Kapadia and Kaivan Mistry. (Vijay Kothari, Kekoo Colah and Saif Bijliwala joined for the first part).

Supported by : Harsinh Sr., Harsinh Jr., Kesarsinh (Kumaonis), Yog Raj Thakur and Suratram (Manali)

Period : 11th July 1993 to 15th August 1993.

Sponsored by : The Mountaineers, Bombay

BOMBAY

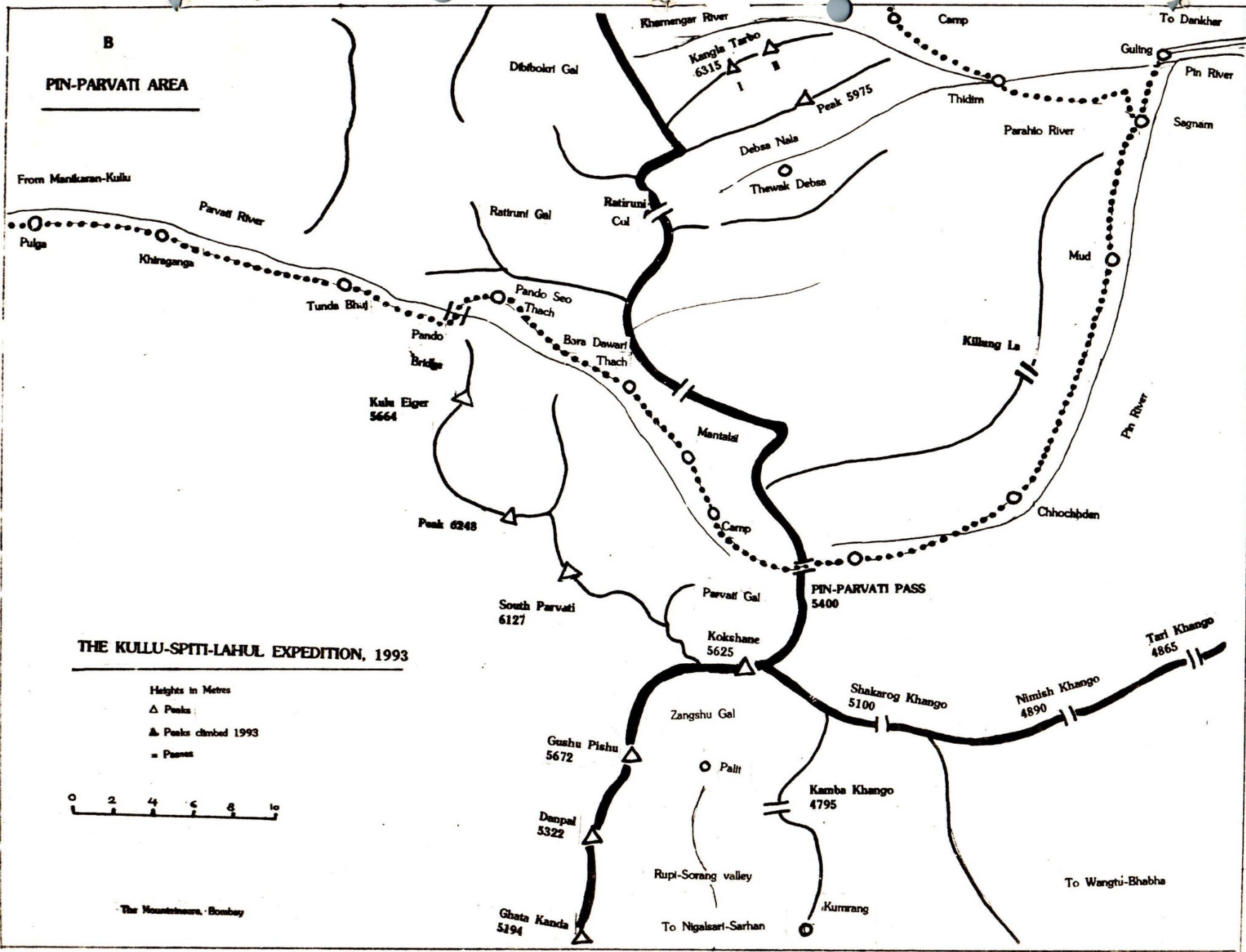
22nd August 1993.

HARISH KAPADIA
Leader

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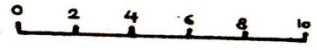
PIN-PARVATI AREA



THE KULLU-SPITI-LAHUL EXPEDITION, 1993

Heights in Metres

- △ Peaks
- ▲ Peaks climbed 1993
- Passes



The Mountaineer, Bombay

THE KULLU — SPITI — LAHUL EXPEDITION 1993

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DETAILED REPORT

The team reached Manikaram (via Manali - Kullu) on the 15th July, 1993. Entire North India was in the grip of heavy rains and floods. We were throughout hampered by this unprecedented rainy weather this year.

Our intention was to cross over a high pass to Spiti and explore the valleys in the Western Spiti to complete our exploration of Spiti. In 1983 and 1987 we had explored many valleys of the Eastern Spiti and climbed many peaks there.

The Spiti area (west of the Spiti river) is now open for Indians without requiring any permits for entry or photography, and with minimum formalities for the foreigners. Thus after many years we could roam freely, with cameras.

PREVIOUS HISTORY

The first pass, Pin-Parvati (5400 m) was crossed by Sir Louis Dane (1884), F. Skemp (1906) from Spiti and H. Lee Shuttleworth (1921) from Kullu.

Col. J.O.M. Roberts in 1939 missed its location and crossed by another pass to Spiti. Now it is crossed by many parties and by the Shepherds too.

Khamengar valley was passed by a British team in 1956 (P.F. Holmes and G.W. Walker) as their return route. They had climbed extensively in the Ratang valley, first in 1955 (T.H. Braham and P.F. Holmes) and in 1956. Our South Ratang Pass (5600 m) and two peaks were first climbed by the 1956 team.

The entire north India experienced one of the heaviest monsoon this year. Kullu valley was flooded and roads blocked. We were delayed and daily afternoon rain was common occurrence. In Spiti, it had rained 4 inches in one day - their entire yearly rainfall. The rain had damaged tracks and destroyed large mountainsides. We had to cut new tracks on the scree/slopes at many places. In light of the havoc caused by the rains everywhere we were lucky not to be rained-out or seriously delayed. Though it made things tougher and lot of hard work was involved.

Khamengar Valley

The Debsa nala and the Khamengar river join to form the Parahio river which after a short run joins the Pin valley. We turned west and camped at Thidim (Thango opposite). Turning northwest we entered the Khamengar valley, which was visited till its head and all the peaks studied. Kangla Tarbo (6315 m) in the Khamengar valley is a beautiful sharp peak and worshipped. It is the highest peak of the Western Spiti (not counting the peaks on the Lahul-Spiti watershed). The Pin, Parahio, Khamengar and Debsa valleys have been declared as the 'Pin Valley Ibx National Park'.

We turned north in a side nala to reach South Ratang Pass (5600 m). It was situated between Khamengar (5760 m) on the west and Parahio (5920 m) on the east. Both the peaks were climbed by us. The descent into the Ratang valley was steep, exposed and over crumbly rock. We had to rappel down and guide the porters. The main Ratang river was reached the same day.

Ratang Valley

On the 4th August we shifted to the upper Ratang valley to camp at the foot of Ratang Tower. Harish went ahead to explore the head of the valley and saw the snow-ice pass leading to Bara Shigri. We also saw a large herd of Ibx.

In the meantime a party had climbed up to the North Ratang Col (5600 m) at the eastern shoulder of Ratang Tower (6170 m). No route to descend to the Gyundi valley was available. We returned to the Ratang valley and by further search could not find a suitable pass to cross over to the Gyundi valley with our laden and unequipped porters.

Sanugba Nadi Valley

By the 5th August we came down the Ratang valley. On the 6th we moved up the unvisited Sanugba valley, a tributary of the Ratang river. We climbed up for 2 days and finally reached the Sanugba Col (5400 m). We could observe and photograph many unclimbed peaks on the Gyundi divide. No crossing was possible.

Ratang Gorge

We decided to return along the Ratang river. It took us three days and several river crossings. For 2 days we passed through stupendous high walls which were frightening and perhaps geologically and geographically

important. It was tiring but great walk and we saw many bharals scrambling fearlessly on the rock walls. Finally we reached a maindan at the foot of the ancient Chomoguru Cave (named after a legend) on the 11th August 1993.

Few more river crossings and suddenly we came upon a pucca metalled road inside the gorge.

The road was built to go along the 5 km long water-tunnel of the hydro-electric project on the Ratang river. It supplies most of the electricity to Spiti. Soon we were in the broad Spiti river valley and at Kaja. Thus ended our 222 km trek in 28 days, visiting the Khamengar and Ratang valleys after 37 years.

Gyundi Valleys

Though we could not cross over to the Gyundi valleys in the north, we could gather enough first-hand information. The energetic gaddis (shepherds) of Mandi district have built route fit for horses into Gyundi from Batal - Karcha nala, Losar - Takcha nala and from Hal - Gyundi gorge. Many gaddis camp every year in the Gyundi valleys and bring their supplies on horses by various routes.

We travelled by the daily bus from Kaja to Manali (via Kunzum la, Chandra valley, Rohtang pass) in 12 hours and proceeded to Bombay.

Bombay

22nd August 1993.

HARISH KAPADIA
Leader.