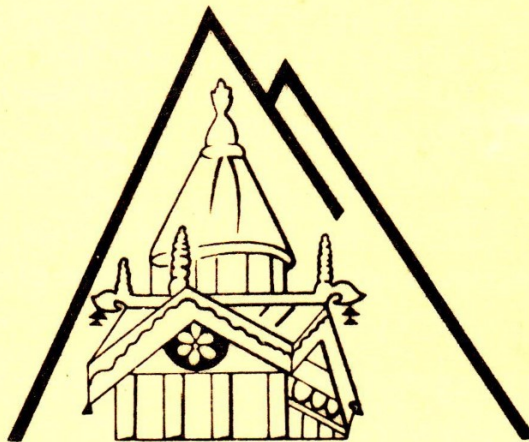


---

**THE  
INDIAN-BRITISH KINNAUR  
EXPEDITION  
1994**

**Co-Leaders: Chris Bonington, Harish Kapadia**



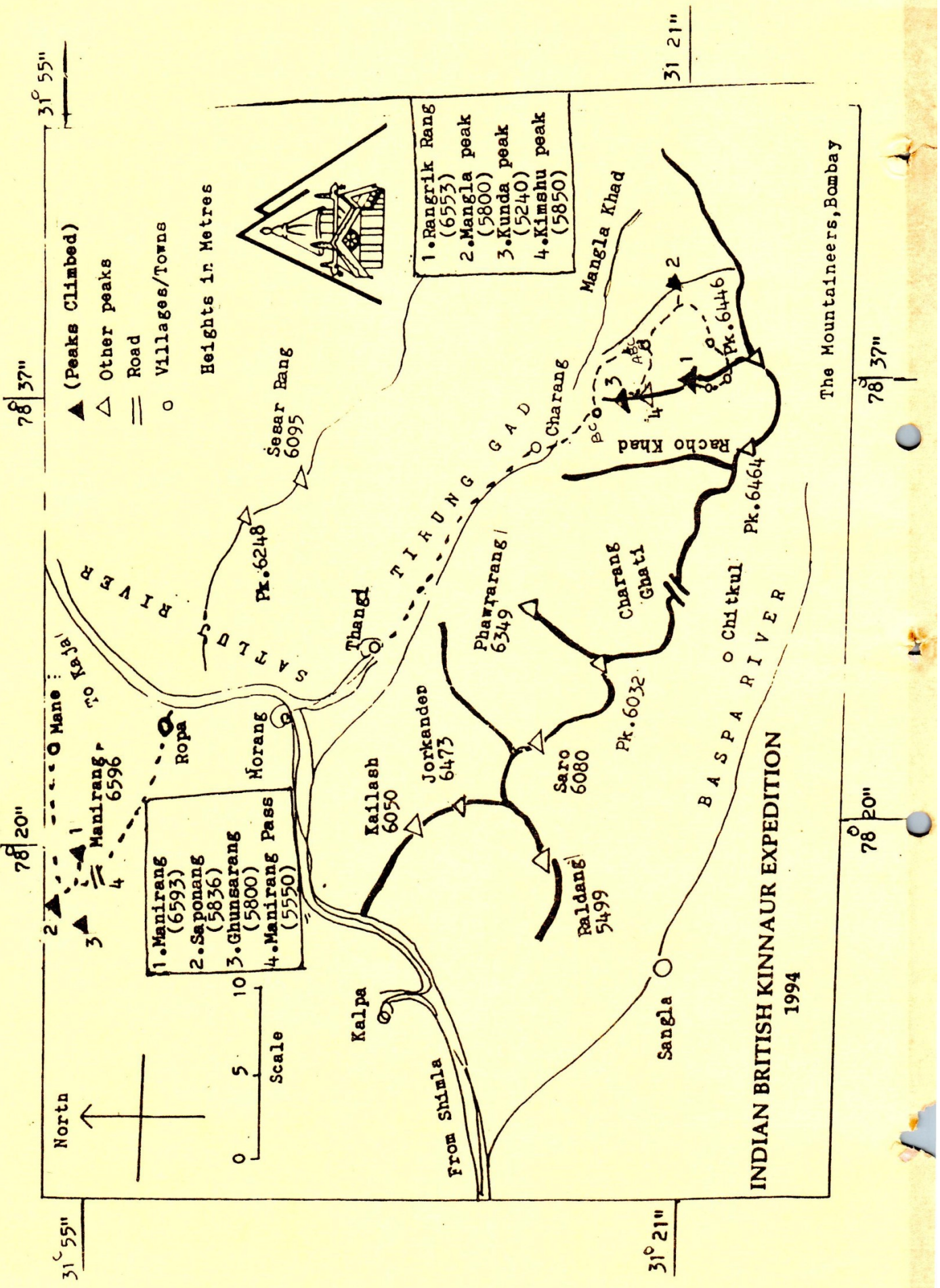
to

**one of the last unclimbed, unexplored  
mountain ranges in the Himalaya**

*in co-operation with* **Goorej**<sup>®</sup>

---

72, Vijay Apartment, 16, Carmichael Road, Bombay 400 026, India  
Phones: (91-22) Resi.: 495 0772, Off.: 201 3227 Fax: 208 5977

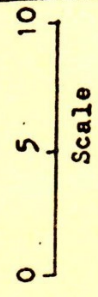


78° 37" 31° 55"

78° 20"

- ▲ (Peaks Climbed)
- △ Other peaks
- = Road
- Villages/Towns

Heights in Metres



North

1. Manirang (6593)
2. Saponang (5836)
3. Ghunsarang (5800)
4. Manirang Pass (5550)

1. Rangrik Rang (6553)
2. Mangla peak (5800)
3. Kunda peak (5240)
4. Kimshu peak (5850)

**INDIAN BRITISH KINNAUR EXPEDITION**  
1994

The Mountaineers, Bombay

78° 37"

78° 20"

31° 21"

31° 21"

SALTED RIVER

BASPARI RIVER

Thandi

Kalpa

Sangla

Sesar Rang  
6095

Horang

Kailash  
6050

Jorkanded  
6473

Phawrarang I  
6349

Saro  
6080

Raldang  
5499

Charang  
Pk. 6032

Charang  
Ghati

Charang

Charang

Charang

Mangla Khad

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang

Charang



THE INDIAN BRITISH KINNAUR  
EXPEDITION 1994

Final Report

An expedition jointly organised between 8 British and 5 Indian climbers was highly successful in climbing 6 peaks, attempting 1 peak and crossing a high pass. The team operated in the unvisited Tirung valley in Kinnaur and later, in the Manirang valley of Spiti.

The expedition took six months of planning and obtaining permissions and was in the mountains in for 50 days, in June-July 1994.

KINNAUR

The first phase of the expedition was totally successful with the first ascent of Point 6553, named Rangrik Rang after the Gompa Rangrik (meaning God Built) immediately below the mountain. Chris Bonington, Muslim Contractor, Jim Fotheringham, Graham Little, Jim Lowther, Divyesh Muni, Paul Nunn and Pasang Bodh, reached the summit at 2 pm on the 20th June by the North East Ridge. This was the first Indian-foreign expedition allowed right into the Kinnaur since 1933.

The expedition made First Ascents of Mangla (5800 m) and Kunda (5240 m) and narrowly missed the ascent of Kimshu (5850 m).

Travel-Approach :

The expedition gathered at Bombay by 27th May and travelled by train and bus to Delhi, Shimla and Kinnaur. Thangi, the roadhead was reached on the 1st June. With about 30 donkeys carrying the baggage the expedition marched via Lambar (2875 m - 9 km), Shurtingting (3410 m - 12 km) to Charang (3600 m - 7 km). From here a reconnaissance of two glaciers of Racho Khad was carried out in a long day. The base camp was established on the junction of two Racho Khad valleys, at Racho Dogri (4170 m - 6 km).

Build Up

After the reconnaissance of the Racho Thach and Racho Khad Glaciers it was seen that the only feasible route to the summit was by the Racho Khad (East) Glacier. Advance base was established on the 10th June at 4870 metres on the stone covered glacier on a pleasant open site with a good view of the formidable north face of Rangrik Rang and the steep snow head wall leading to the col giving access to the North East Ridge.

At this stage the weather broke and most of the team returned to base camp, while Graham Little and Jim Lowther decided to stay at advance base. The team returned to advance base on the 14th and that same day Little and Lowther moved up to Camp 1, which they had stocked with their gear during the bad weather, at the foot of the head wall at 5260 metres.

The following morning, supported by Divyesh Muni and Pasang Bodh, they pushed the route two thirds the way up the head wall, fixing rope as they went, from rock island to island. One run out entailed a hundred and thirty metres, necessitating tying two ropes together; the snow was of such poor quality it was impossible to obtain secure belays. They retreated to advance base while others pushed the route.

On the 16th, Paul Nunn, with Divyesh Muni and Pasang Bodh, filmed by Jim Curran, put out another three rope lengths on increasingly awkward ground, and on the 17th, Chris Bonington and Jim Fotheringham completed the route to the col at 5700 m, fixing a most awkward traverse and going over the major obstacle of a giant serac, getting magnificent views to the north east of the mountains of Tibet and to the east of Kamet, a magnificent rock and snow pyramid, in the Garhwal.

#### The Ascent

On the 18th June, Contractor, Curran, Little, Lowther, Muni, Nunn and Bodh moved up to the col and Little and Lowther continued up during the night to take advantage of the frozen snow to establish Camp 3 at 6000 metres by a snow notch in the ridge.

The following morning Bonington and Fotheringham, who had taken a day's rest, set out from Camp 1, caught up with the others above the col so that, that evening the entire team were encamped at Camp 3 on a series of platforms hacked out of the snow by the crest of the ridge.

#### Summit day

The team set out at 0500, climbing in four ropes of two with Little and Lowther breaking trail. Jim Curran had decided to stay at Camp 3. The ridge, facing north east, got the sun from the very beginning and as a result the snow conditions were poor and at times dangerous with unconsolidated snow lying on ice. At about 6200 metres and ice wall barred the ridge giving a short stretch of steep ice climbing. A fixed rope was left on this section. Beyond the wall the ridge stretched in a crescent towards the summit which was reached at around 2 pm.

The view was magnificent with the mountain of the Garhwal, Gangotri, Kullu, Spiti and Tibet stretching in a superb panorama. The summit itself, was quite flat with space enough to pitch a few tents and even

more amazing, at the side of some rocks was a small pool of melt water. The team spent a couple of hours on top before starting down, getting back to the top camp at about seven o'clock.

### The Descent

It is always tempting to end an expedition account on the summit, but all too often the descent is filled with incident. This was the case, the following day when descending the head wall from the col. It was swept by falling stones. Graham Little was hit on the head by a large block and was only saved from death or serious injury, by his crash hat. Muslim Contractor was also hit on the jaw, but fortunately it was only a glancing blow. Others had near misses.

### Other Climbs

During the days Rangrik Rang was being climbed, Harish Kapadia and Kaivan Mistry were busy exploring and climbing surrounding lower peaks.

On the 19th June, teaming up with Prakash, they climbed a fine looking peak of 5800 m, named Mangla. It was a fairly steep scree and snow filled. NW ridge by which they climbed. Top offered excellent views of the passes on the Tibetan border and the Mangla Khad valley.

On the 20th, they again left early to attempt the fine looking peak of 5850 m, Kimshu, which was in the centre of two Racho Khad glaciers. Reaching the north col, Kapadia diverted south, to climb a small peak on the ridge, Kunda (5240 m). Mistry with Khubram and Suratram continued along the north ridge of Kimshu, reaching about 5780 m due to poor scree and exposure.

### The Return

The entire team joined in the celebrations for the climbs at the base on 22nd and 23rd June. The glacier streams were all in spate on the descent and the return down the Tirung Gad with the donkey train was particularly awkward.

### Conclusion

This has been an extremely successful expedition in which good organization and team work took eight members to the summit of this superb unclimbed peak which dominates the Tirung Gad in Kinnaur. Great efforts were taken to leave no trace of our presence on either the mountain or the approach, though the fixed rope on the head wall was left in place because of the high danger of rock fall.

This mark the end of the first phase of the expedition, with the return to the UK of Chris Bonington, Jim Fotheringham, Graham Little and Jim Lowther. The rest of the team moved to Spiti to attempt Manirang (6593 m).

### SPITI

The second phase of the Indian-British expedition was equally successful. Third ascent of Manirang (6593 m) was made on 10th July. First Ascent of Saponang (5836 m) and Ghunsarang (5800 m) were made. Finally a crossing of the Manirang Pass (5550 m) allowed a return via the Ropa valley, back to Kinnaur.

### Travel and Approach

After four days of rest team travelled by jeeps to Spiti, reaching Sichling on 30th June. Kanam monastery, where the Hungarian Scholar Csoma de Koros had stayed, was visited enroute. On 1st July, the Spiti river was crossed to reach Mane village (3600 m). With donkeys baggage was transported to a base camp at 4840 m, little above Saponang (4500 m). By ferrying an advance base was established at 5360 m on 5th July, little below the Manirang Pass.

### Manirang (6593 m)

Manirang was first climbed in 1952 by a South African team of Dr and Mrs. J. de V. Graaff. The peak was unsuccessfully attempted by a Bombay team in June 1988, and the Second Ascent was made later in September 1988 by Parachute Regiment expedition of the Indian Army, led by Colonel Balwant Sandhu.

On 6th July Kapadia, Contractor and Muni found a site for Camp 1, 5700 m, where earlier teams had made their final camps. We decided to establish one more camp on SW ridge and with this decision two ropes were fixed ahead.

On the 7th all the climbers moved to Camp 1 and on the 8th Kapadia, Nunn, Contractor, Muni and Curran set up Camp 3 (6050 m) in a fantastic portion on the SW ridge, overlooking the west face. Unlike the First Phase of the expedition the weather had been doubtful throughout this period.

On the 9th July Nunn and Curran set out early on the ridge above Camp 2 and Kapadia, Muni and Contractor followed soon after with the aim of completing the ascent. A 350 m slope of bare ice thwarted these efforts, as the lightweight attempt allowed little equipment to be

carried. The ridge was deceptively difficult to climb and promised to cause problems in the descent later. More equipment was required. To facilitate a compact ascent by Nunn and Muni the next day, Contractor, Curran and Kapadia went down to ABC.

Throughout the afternoon and night there was thunder, lightning and storm, which made them fear that an attempt may not be possible. However, 10th July dawned clear, and leaving at 4.30 a.m., with all the available ice and rock equipment (7 ice-pitons and 5 rock pitons), Climbing solo, they found that the ice-slope had retained a thin layer of snow, allowing fast progress to the rock bands under the summit by 8 a.m. The rock band was mixed ground and was disappointingly loose, giving insecure and dangerous climbing for about five rope-lengths to the summit at 9.45 a.m.

The reward was a magnificent panorama. After an hour they began the descent, which took longer than the ascent on insecure rock and ice. By 2.15 p.m. they reached the top of icefield, which was rappelled to reach the easy ground and Camp 3 by 4.15 p.m.

On 11th July they joined others at the advance base and down to Mane village with donkeys.

#### Other Peaks

After supporting the effort on Manirang, Mistry with Suratram and Khubram climbed two lovely peaks situated to the west of the advance base. On the 9th July a shapely peak of 5836 m, Saponang, was climbed via the col and the north ridge. Next day, Ghunsarang (5800 m) was climbed by the east ridge. This snow-dome peak was located on the side valley in the southwest.

#### Manirang Pass (5550 m)

While all the baggage and others travelled via Mane village and Spiti, Kapadia, Contractor and Mistry decided to return via the Manirang Pass to the Ropa valley in Kinnaur directly. This traditional trade route is now in total disuse and broken.

From the ABC the pass was crossed easily on the afternoon of the 11th July to Rankali. Traversing highly exposed scree in the gorge the party camped at Liti Thatch (4150 m - 8 km). Sumdo was beautiful camping ground but the gorge ahead, about 500 m higher, was most exposed and horrible route on disused scree without any water for 8 km. After a long hard day the party descended to Ropa and Giabong. A final taxi ride by a drunken driver almost killed them !

Conclusion

The full party gathered at Kalpa on the 13th and reached Delhi on the 16th. Same day Indians left for Bombay and the two Britishers for London ending the 50 day expedition.

This was a magnificent team effort, made possible by all members and their supportive porters working in union. Happily it also proved a further proof of successful Indian-British endeavour.

SUMMARY

PHASE I

- |    |                          |   |  |
|----|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1. | RANGRIK RANG<br>(6553 m) | First Ascent<br>via NE ridge<br>on 20th<br>June 1994                | Chris Bonington<br>Jim Fotheringham<br>Muslim Contractor<br>Graham Little<br>Divyesh Muni<br>Jim Lowther<br>Paul Nunn<br>Pasang Bodh |
| 2. | MANGLA<br>(5800 m)       | First Ascent<br>via NW ridge<br>on 19th June 1994                   | Harish Kapadia<br>Kaivan Mistry<br>Prakash Chand   |
| 3. | KUNDA<br>(5240 m)        | Climbed via<br>South Ridge<br>on 20th June 1994                     | Harish Kapadia   |
| 4. | KIMSHU<br>(5850 m)       | Attempted via<br>North Ridge<br>Reached 5780 m<br>on 20th June 1994 | Kaivan Mistry<br>Prakash Chand<br>Khubram  |

PHASE II

- |    |                      |   |  |
|----|----------------------|---|--|
| 1. | MANIRANG<br>(6593 m) | Third Ascent<br>via SW ridge<br>on 10th July 1994<br><br>Attempted till<br>6300 m<br>on 9th July 1994 | Paul Nunn<br>Divyesh Muni<br><br>M.H. Contractor<br>Jim Curran<br>Harish Kapadia<br>(in addition to the<br>final summitters) |
|----|----------------------|---|--|



- |    |                           |  |  |
|----|---------------------------|--|--|
| 2. | SAPONANG<br>(5836 m)      | First Ascent<br>via N ridge<br>on 9th July 1994            | Kaivan Mistry<br>Khubram<br>Suratram               |
| 3. | GHUNSARANG<br>(5800 m)    | First Ascent<br>via East ridge<br>on 10th July 1994        | Kaivan Mistry<br>Suratram                          |
| 4. | MANIRANG PASS<br>(5550 m) | Crossed on<br>11th July 1994,<br>to Ropa in<br>three days. | Harish Kapadia<br>M.H. Contractor<br>Kaivan Mistry |

Co-Leaders : Chris Bonington and Harish Kapadia

Members : Muslim Contractor, Jim Curran, Jim Fotheringham, Vijay Kothari, Graham Little, Jim Lowther, Kaivan Mistry, Divyesh Muni, Paul Nunn and Joginder Sing Gulia (L.O.)

Supported By : Pasang Bodh, Harsingh (Sr.), Prakash Chand, Khubram, Suratram, Harsingh (Jr.), Kesar Singh (Sr. and Jr.), Dewan Singh and Nima Bahadur.

Period : 29th May 1994 to 30th June 1994 (1st Phase)  
1st July, 1994 to 17th July 1994 (2nd Phase).

CO-SPONSORED BY VERIPHONE LTD. (U.K.) AND GODREJ (BOMBAY)

*H. Kapadia*

HARISH KAPADIA

*Chris Bonington*

CHRIS BONINGTON

BOMBAY  
18th July 1994.

