

## MT. THALAY SAGAR (6904 M / 22651 FT) EXPEDITION, 2008

ORGANISED BY :

MOUNTAINEERS' ASSOCIATION OF KRISHNANAGAR  
CHURCH ROAD, KRISHNAGAR-741101, NADIA, W.B.

### LEADER'S REPORT

1. Name of the Association : **Mountaineers' Association of Krishnanagar.**
2. Name of expedition : **Mt. Thalay Sagar (6904 MT./22651 FT.) Expedition, 2008.**
3. Name of the Peak with height in metres and six figure co-ordinates : **Thalay Sagar – 6904 mtr. / 22651 ft. - 30° 51' 29" N / 78° 59' 50" E.**
4. Nominal roll of team :
  - I. **Shri Basanta Singha Roy – Leader of the expedition and climbed Mt. Thalay Sagar (6904 mtr.)**
  - II. **Shri Asok Roy – Reached upto Camp-I (16000 ft.).**
  - III. **Shri Ajoy Krishna Bhattacharya – He was the Equipment In-charge and reached upto Camp – II (17500 ft.).**
  - IV. **Shri Subrata Brahma – He was the Photographer & Medical Officer of the expedition and reached upto Camp – II (17500 ft.).**
  - V. **Shri Biswanath Saha - He reached upto Camp – II (17500 ft.).**
  - VI. **Shri Tapan Roy – He was the Quarter Master and Manager of the expedition. He stayed at Base Camp.**
  - VII. **Shri Bijay Sarkar – He reached upto Camp-I (16000 ft.).**
  - VIII. **Shri Asim Kumar Mondal - He reached upto Camp-I ((16000 ft.).**
  - IX. **Shri Ranjan Kumar – He stayed at Base Camp.**
5. Liaison with local administration and other agencies (name, designation, address, phone No., e-mail ID). Assistance received or hurdles faced if any :

**We had informed the District Magistrate & Superintendent of Police of Uttarkashi District and the Principal of Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi about our mission. However, we received assistance from the Food Supply Department, Uttarkashi and the Divisional Forest Office, Uttarkashi. We had deposited all the necessary papers of our expedition to the concerned officials of the Forest Department of Gangotri and they had charged Rs.3850/- extra, as entry fee to the Gangotri National Park and Rs.50/- per head including members, Sherpas, HAPs and Porters. We had also deposited with them a refundable draft of Rs.5000/- which was purchased in favour of DFO, Uttarkashi.**

After our returning from the expedition on 03/9/2008, the officials of Gangotri Forest Department returned the draft to us. We had taken back 10 k.g. garbage from the mountain at Gangotri but the forest officials did not check whether we had actually taken back the garbage from the mountains or not.

6. Approach March (Road head to Base Camp). Dates, Co-ordinates and altitude of enroute camps. Any significant information, passes negotiated, river crossings etc. Attach route marked on map. :

We hired 29 Porters through “Highland Treks N Tour”, an agency of Uttarkashi to carry our loads from Gangotri to the Base Camp i.e. Kedartal. Trek started from Gangotri (10300 ft.) on 15/8/2008 towards south. Transit camp was established on the true left bank of Kedar Ganga in between Bhojkharak and Kedarkharak at an altitude of 14000 ft. (10 k.m.) Next day i.e. on 16/8/2008 Base Camp was established on the bank of Kedartal (7 k.m. - 15315 ft.).

7. Route opening and setting up of higher camps. dates, description on features encountered, technical / climbing difficulty involved, techniques and equipment utilized to negotiate. Snow and rock condition, location of camps with six digit co-ordinates and altitude. Attach suitably marked maps / sketches. :

From Base Camp (15315 ft.) to Camp-I, the route towards south. We stayed at Base Camp on 17/8/2008 for rest, acclimatization, re-arrangement of our ration and getting ready our equipments. For the next 2 days we were busy to ferry loads to Camp - I. 5 members and 4 Sherpas ferried loads. We proceeded through the lateral moraine ridge. After trekking 1 hour 30 minutes over the moraine ridge, we entered into a glacier. Then we proceeded again over the boulder zone. Myself, Ajay Bhattacharjee, Subrata Brahma and Biswanath Saha and 4 Sherpas with Cook occupied Camp-I. We established Camp-I at an altitude of 16000 ft. (approx.) below the Bhrigupanth Peak on 20/8/2008.

From Camp – I to II – The first one and half hour trekking from Camp-I to Camp-II was through the lateral moraine towards south. It was an easy walk over the boulders. Another 1 and half-hour trekking was upwards through the northern rocky slopes of Thalay Sagar peak. 5 members and 4 Sherpas ferried loads from Camp-I to Camp-II on 21/8/2008. Ranjan Kumar and Asim Mondal who stayed at Base Camp returned home due to unavoidable circumstances. We took 3 hours to reach Camp-II and 2 hours for returning Camp-I. Next day i.e. on 22/8/2008 we were confined to Camp-I due to very bad weather. On account of illness of Ajay Bhattacharjee, we took the decision that the next day i.e. on 23/8/2008, Ajay will go back to Base Camp along with Subrata Brahma and Biswanath Saha. On 23/8/2008, myself along with 4 Sherpas occupied Camp-II at an altitude of 17500 ft. on a rock base. Subrata and Biswanath along with Ajay left Camp-I in the morning and returned there after reaching Ajay to Base Camp. Next day i.e. on 24/8/2008 Subrata and Biswanath along with Cook (Tilbahadur) occupied Camp-II. Camp-II was situated at the junction of north slope of ice and rock of Thalay Sagar peak. From there we got clear view of Jogin group of peaks towards west and Base Camp area towards north.

From camp-II to Camp-III i.e. Summit Camp – Total climbing up this route is through ice, snow and rock wall. All along the routes from Camp – II to Camp – III i.e. Summit Camp, we fixed about 4000 ft. polypropylene rope. First we climbed up an ice wall and entered into a crevasse zone towards south. Then we moved towards south-west through on a snowfield. After 1 hour proceeding through over the snowfield, we started climbing the north wall of

Thalay Sagar peak with the help of rope. Gradient was 60° to 70°. Due to huge open and covered crevasses, we could not climb up easily. We had to climb up to the bottom of rock wall of Thalay Sagar avoiding these crevasses. For ensuring our safety from avalanche from the hanging icefall of west ridge which connects Jogin Group of peaks and Thalay Sagar peak and huge crevasse, we avoided the easy high gradient snow gully to reach Camp-III. We preferred to climb through the bottom of the difficult rock wall instead of the snow gully.

We took 3 days i.e. 24/8/2008 to 26/8/2008 to fix ropes from Camp-II to Camp-III (21000 ft.). We also ferried loads simultaneously with fixing ropes. 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2008 was our rest day. On 28/8/2008 myself along with Pasang Sherpa, Pemba Sherpa, Phurba Gyalgen and Tashi Sherpa started climbing to occupy Summit Camp at 7.00 a.m. Subrata Brahma, Biswanath Saha and Til Bahadur (Cook) stayed at Camp-II. We traversed through the bottom of the vertical north rock wall towards south-west and after climbing up 1500 ft., we turned towards south. From there the route was mixed with rocks, ice and snow. Rock piton and snow stake used in this route. We found many old ropes on this route. We took long 9 hours to occupy the summit camp. The Summit camp was established on a snow slope and on the junction of snowy west ridge which connects the Jogin group of peaks and vertical rock wall of Thalay Sagar. We pitched 2 tents on a vast snow slope. When we reached the summit camp, at that time high-speed wind was blowing there.

8. Detailed report on Summit Climb / attempts with list of summiteers / highest altitude achieved with date. A detailed description of entire climb including features encountered, technical / climbing difficulty involved, techniques and equipment utilized to negotiate, snow, ice and rock condition.

On 29/8/2008 we started at 8.00 a.m. for route opening to summit. After climbing up 200 ft. over the snow slope towards east, we faced the vertical rock wall. We tried to avoid the vertical rock wall and find route through the bottom of the rock wall. Sometimes we managed to avoid the wall by traversing. We started fixing ropes through that rock wall. It took 5 hours to fix 500 ft. climbing ropes on this rock wall. We feared about the high-speed wind, which we had to face previous day. So we returned Summit Camp at 2.00 p.m. But there was no wind.

Next day we started for fixing ropes at 8.00 a.m. Within 2 hours we reached the previous day's position and then we started climbing up a snowy ridge. It was an easy climb but more risky. Both the sides of that ridge were sheer fall. Again we started traversing through the bottom of the vertical wall of Thalay Sagar. Now we faced a vertical wall which is about 100 ft. It was very difficult and risky to fix ropes on this wall but Sherpas managed to fix ropes in this route through a chimney like crack and after fixing total 1300 ft. climbing ropes throughout the whole day, we returned to summit camp at 6.00 p.m. That day also we did not face any high speed wind in the camp.

We had already fixed 1800 ft. rope from Summit Camp to last rock wall of Thalay Sagar. Only 300 ft. snow wall was left. So we planned to climb Thalay Sagar next day i.e. on 31/8/2008. Snowfall started at night and it continued till morning and we could not proceed for summit on 31/8/2008 but forced to stay at tents due to bad weather.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2008 myself, Pasang Sherpa, Pemba Sherpa and Phurba Gyalgen prepared ourselves for Thalay Sagar summit at 3.00 a.m. We were worried about weather.

So we had planned to reach the summit of Thalay Sagar as early as possible. Rope was already fixed, so we had the idea about the probable time to summit. At 4.10 a.m. we started our summit climbing from Camp-III (21000 ft.) with the help of Head Torch. Tashi Sherpa stayed at Summit Camp. At that time weather was good but too cold and dark. First 200 ft. we started climbing towards east over the snow slope. Then we tied ourselves on the fixed rope and started difficult climbing with the help of Jumar.

We could not view anything except the focusing zone of head torch. After one hour climbing, our eyes got relief and we viewed the morning sunrays on Kedarnath and Bhatrikuntha peaks towards south. Straight downward we viewed our summit camp on the snowy ridge. Towards west we clearly viewed the peaks of Gangotri groups and Jogin groups. Towards north-east, we viewed Bhrigupanth and it was so close that we might touch the peak from that point. Due to darkness we could not view Base Camp or Kedartal towards north. Next one hour we were busy with photography and climbing with the help of Jumar over the sharp snowy ridge or traversing rock walls. At 7.00 a.m. we reached the top of last vertical rock wall of Thalay Sagar. Upto this point we had fixed ropes the day before the previous day. Next 300 ft. was just low gradient snow slope. We started climbing this snow wall. From there we viewed clearly our Base Camp i.e. Kedartal. As I noticed the sunrays on Kedartal, I confirmed that it was 7.40 a.m. because I knew the timings of reaching sunlight at our Base Camp. After 10 minutes i.e. at 7.50 minutes we reached the top of THALAY SAGAR (22651 ft.).

The top of Thalay Sagar was just like semi circle. North side is corniced and sheer fall and other 3 sides were snow slopes. We started movie and still photography all around. We viewed all the peaks clearly and also identified them. Puja was performed and then we unfurled National Flag and Club Flag. We stayed 1 and half hours on the top of Thalay Sagar. At that time all the sides were open due to clear weather. We viewed all the peaks of Gangotri region. From the west of Thalay Sagar summit we viewed clockwise – first we saw Gangotri-I (21885 ft.) and group of peaks far behind towards west and in the front row of this group, Jogin-I (21205 ft.) and group of peaks. Then towards north – far below is Base Camp i.e. Kedartal and the glaciers, then Bhrigupanth (22220 ft.) closely. Far behind over the Bhrigupanth, are Matri, Chirbas, Sudarsan, Srikailash and many other peaks. Then in the front row towards east is Meru (east) (21156 ft.) and group of peaks, next row is Manda (21543 ft.) and then over the Meru Sharkfin is Shivling (21467 ft.). Next row is Bhagirathi-I (22487 ft.) and group of peaks, then Basuki (22881 ft.) and Satapanth (23206 ft.). Extreme last row is Kamet (25447 ft.). Towards southeast is Chowkhamba-I (23420 ft.) and group of peaks. Towards south are Kedardome (22402 ft.), Kedarnath (22870 ft.), Bhatrikuntha (21575 ft.) and Kirtistambh (20614 ft.). Towards southwest below are Phating glacier and Khatling glacier. We started climbing down at 9.20 a.m. and reached Summit camp at 11.50 a.m. safely. We were able to take back all climbing ropes except pitons and some carabineers. Tashi Sherpa greeted us with hot drink.

Next day i.e. 2/9/2008 we started climbing down from Summit Camp at 8.00 a.m. after collecting all the garbage. The climb down was very difficult because we were rappelled with the help of polypropylene rope. At 2.30 p.m. we reached Camp-II (17500 ft.) at that time Tilbahadur was there. I advised Tilbahadur to reach Gangotri that evening and send 12 Porters on 03/9/2008 for carrying loads from Base Camp. Here I understand that the previous day i.e. on 01/9/2008, Subrata, Biswanath and Tilbahadur winded up Camp – II due to shortage of ration. They planned that on 01/9/2008 they went back to Base Camp with all loads at Camp-II and again came back next day with empty Ruck Sack so that they could

carry the extra loads which the summit camp members took back from summit camp. Til Bahadur moved for Porters to Gangotri from Camp-II at 2.30 p.m.

Due to exhaustion and empty stomach, I took much time to reach Base Camp. Asok Roy and Biswanath Saha waiting for me in between Base Camp and Camp-I and when we reached Base Camp safely, the time was 9.00 p.m. Sherpas and other two members reached Base Camp before evening. We had no problem because throughout the whole day the weather was beautiful.

Next day i.e. on 03/9/2008, we repacked our loads after drying and cleaning all the equipments. Weather was very bright. 12 Porters reached Base Camp at 9.00 a.m. from Gangotri and we left Base Camp i.e. Kedartal at 11.00 a.m. after cleaning the area. We reached Gangotri at evening on the same day.

#### 9. Weather summary.

Upto Base Camp i.e. Kedartal we faced occasional rain. The next day we reached Base Camp i.e. on 17/8/2008. We could not move due to rain and cloudy weather. On 22/8/2008 we were confined at Camp-I due to bad weather. But after that throughout the expedition period except on 31/8/2008, we got good weather. On 31/8/2008 at summit camp we could not move from our tent due to whiteout and occasional snow.

10. Waste and garbage disposal report including spotting of garbage left behind by earlier expeditions with leads if possible :

Garbage from Camp-I, II and III area was collected and taken back at Base Camp. The area of Base Camp was cleaned and all the bio-degradable garbage was buried. The non-bio-degradable garbage weighing about 10 k.g. was taken back and dropped same at Gangotri.

11. Expenditure details with category wise breakdown (equipment, food, portage, medical etc.). Attach Chartered Accountant's audited statement of accounts.

(Chartered Accountant's Audit Report enclosed.)

Food	-	32015.00
Sherpa / HAP / Porter	-	204623.00
Equipment hire charges & purchase	-	60731.00
Transport	-	34257.00
Photography	-	7460.00
Peak booking fees & entry tax	-	15350.00
Insurance	-	3096.00
Postage & others	-	<u>3564.00</u>
Total expenditure	-	<u>361096.00</u>

12. Suggestions :

13. Photo Evidence : All photos should be with date and time electronic impression. Shoot wide angle formats for official requirements. The following photos should be submitted : -

- a) One group photograph of only team members at Base Camp.
- b) A few appropriate photographs from base camp onwards till highest / summit camp.
- c) Sufficient number of photos to depict progress from summit camp to summit.
- d) Most of the summit photos should be shot in wide angle view with sufficient coverage below the horizon to depict background features. (Just like the portraits of members, sky, clouds and the snow ridge on which standing make up for poor evidence to substantiate any summit claim). The Summit photos must include the following :
  - i. All around view from summit.
  - ii. Prominent peaks around the summit.
  - iii. The photographs of the last camp from the summit, where feasible.
  - iv. Photographs of glaciers / any other important features from the summit.
- e) Photographs of camp cleaning operation and garbage disposal.

**26 Photographs (2 sets) along with detailed caption enclosed as per direction of IMF.**

14. The report should be appended by the Leader's signature with date.

Date : 05/11/2008.

Signature of Leader  
( Basanta Singha Roy )

Address : "NIKETAN"  
181A, Raipur Road  
P.O. Naktala  
Kolkata – 700 047.  
E-mail : basanta\_singha@rediffmail.com  
Mobile : 09433465868.