



Skywalk on DHAMPUS



extra days, depleting most of our rations. With little ration left, we had to be cautious about our next steps: scaling the Dhampus Peak. If we attempted to climb the peak as planned, we would have

boundaries and test our limits. Eventually, fear and confusion gave way to the irresistible pull of the Himalayas. We all agreed on scaling the mountain. That decision made us feel relieved and excited. But we didn't have much time for celebration. We had to start our summit push

looked ominous. The sky was darker than usual. Moinul Bhai, Arif, and I started for the summit of Dhampus. Amidst the darkness, we veered left from the main ridge line but kept moving forward despite the challenging terrain. Battling the steep, jagged rocks, we reached the pinnacle of the ridge line

the darkness, I went momentarily numb. The gentle hues of the sky, the enchanting alpenglow casting its magic on the towering white peaks, the distant brown mountains of Mustang, and the jagged silhouettes of Dhaulagiri's peaks -- all transported me to another realm. On top of that, the beauty of the Hidden Valley below added to the spectacle.

Hours later, as we traversed the ridge line, we encountered a formidable rock wall blocking our path. Unsure whether to navigate the ice field or ascend the wall directly, my hesitations were gone seeing Moinul Bhai climbing the rock face. Initially, it was awkward with gloved hands, but soon the challenge took my focus entirely. We eventually conquered the wall, overcoming the obstacle with determination and teamwork.

The long ridgeline that leads to the top starts after that. We kept going up slowly, towards the top. Tired and with hearts beating wildly, we couldn't afford any distractions. At 10:30am, we finally made it to the top. We finally conquered the 6,060-metre peak.

A sense of emptiness engulfed me as we stood on top of the white mountain under a bright blue sky. The misty clouds were moving up from below and the surroundings were being bathed with the purest of sunlight. It even felt like the place didn't belong to Earth. Those moments and feelings are still hard to describe with words.

But amid those ambiguous thoughts, I felt one thing unmistakably: "I am alive." All this turmoil, pain, and sacrifice are for this transient state, this fleeting joy!

After some time on the top, it was time to go down. As we prepared to descend, the memory of those moments, infused our journey with a sense of fulfillment. Despite the challenges that lay ahead on our return journey, the memories of conquering a Himalayan peak without any external support filled us with a deep sense of satisfaction.



run out of food. However, we still had to complete our journey navigating a dangerous glacier even to reach Doban.

Would it be wise to cross such a difficult path with empty stomachs?

On the contrary, we were in great shape. The conflicting urges left us stuck between a rock and a hard place. All knew was that we had to trek for 5 days to reach the next human settlement. In between, everything was barren land. And we also knew we had to take a calculated risk to achieve the goal of the expedition.

We knew we had to push our

that night to reach Dhampus, a giant 6,000-meter peak in the middle of the Himalayas.

By 7:00pm, everyone ate dinner and went to sleep in their sleeping bags. Unfortunately, Hypnos, the god of sleep, seemed unwilling to bless me. By midnight, I found myself wide awake. I guess the excitement was too much even for a god to calm my nerves, even if he was willing.

I prepared myself hastily and put on the gears. When I got out of the tent, it was snowing a little. We had checked the weather report before taking the decision, but the night

in just two hours.

As we took a well-deserved break, our gaze was drawn repeatedly to the mesmerising sight of the Nilgiris.

However, a sudden loud noise, accompanied by intermittent flashes of blue lightning startled us. It also created one of the most surreal scenes I ever witnessed by illuminating the surrounding peaks. However otherworldly the experience was, I felt a twinge of fear urging me to retreat.

Yet, an inexplicable pull took all of us forward, as if something guiding us towards Dhampus.

As the first rays of light pierced

SALEHIN ARSHADY

As the clock struck 4:00pm, I caught sight of two tiny figures descending from the rocky slopes of the Tukuche massif. With each passing minute, the figures gradually grew more recognizable: Samiur and Arif were returning after scaling Little Tukuche (5879m), one of the formidable peaks of the Dhaulagiri range.

Back in June 2016, these fits were exciting, proud moments for all of us. We were able to climb a difficult peak like Little Tukuch in the Alpine style directly from the Dhampus Base Camp. We just achieved one of our long-cherished dreams.

After the initial excitement passed, a serious question replaced the joy of achievement: what should we do now? Caught between a serious logistical crisis and the temptation of conquering the unknown, we had to make a decision.

Ten days ago, on August 28, we



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embarked on the formidable journey of trekking the entire Dhaulagiri circuit independently, without the aid of guides or porters. Our objective of the expedition of Dhaulagiri circuit -- one of the most challenging and remote routes in the Himalayas -- was twofold: to complete it unassisted and ascend two Himalayan peaks using alpine techniques on the route.

Success would not only mark a personal achievement for us but it would also serve as a testament to the capabilities of Bangladeshi mountaineers, demonstrating our ability by conquering Himalayan summits on our own.

We started our journey from Marpha village in Mustang, Nepal, a lovely old settlement nestled in the picturesque Kali Gandaki valley. Our initial plan was to reach Doban -- the next human settlement -- in seven days.

However, unexpected rain forced us to stay at Yak Kharka for seven



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