



SHAKIL'S MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

The story of a pledge to walk gently on earth



Ikratul Hasan Shakil is a mountaineer who has scaled Everest and completed The Great Himalayan Trail.

IKRAMUL HASAN SHAKIL

The mountains' call – sometimes in silence, sometimes in the rustle of dry leaves, sometimes in the babble of waterfalls, and sometimes in the roar of glaciers. Once someone hears that call, they can no longer remain confined within walls. My "Sea to Summit Everest Expedition" was just such a journey – an outer test of endurance that became an inner story of self-discovery.

This expedition began on February 25, 2025, standing at the edge of the Inani Beach in Cox's Bazar. I carried a message: reduce single-use plastic and carbon emissions. How much do we really respect nature? Does our way of life violate its balance? My walk from the Bay of Bengal toward the Himalayas was a search for answers.

The word Himalaya stirs a chill of vastness and wonder. Higher and higher I climbed, as the noise of the world fell away – replaced by pine shadows, glittering peaks, and the cries of unseen birds, each turn a page of a living novel.

Yet the mountains are more than beauty. In the simple lives of those who dwell here – their warm smiles, their hospitality, and their quiet harmony with nature – I discovered a truth: strength is born of simplicity, and progress lies in the joy of needing less.

My "Sea to Summit" journey was never just an expedition. It was a call to conscience, a vow to walk gently on this earth, to fight plastic waste and rising carbon levels, and to honour nature with every step. Over 1,372 kilometres, through rivers, highways,

villages, and finally Everest's perilous heights, I carried this mission.

When people asked my goal, I answered with pride: "To build a clean, green, and conscious world." And so I walked on – through sun and storm, rain and snow – unshaken in spirit, unwavering in dream.

The Sea to Summit expedition gave me so much. It gave me sleepless nights, anxiety, tears, fear, and countless unpleasant experiences. But all the pain and suffering faded when nature embraced me in its colourful shawl, when I was overwhelmed by the selfless love of strangers. They didn't know me, nor I them – yet somehow, a spiritual connection formed.

It would be my own Odyssey if I wanted to put into words the memories I gathered on the way. The confined space of a page won't

allow me to do that. But nature was my guide, all the way to the summit of Everest.

For example, when I reached Mahasthangarh and started my walk along the almost lifeless Karatoa river early in the morning, a drizzle began, as if nature itself wanted to make our journey more beautiful. By the time I reached the Shibganj upazila market, the rain intensified, as if nature was asking us to pause for a moment. So, I obliged. There is no way I could violate the command of nature.

I must mention the beauty of rural Bangladesh. Walking along the earthen roads, where dust mingles with the simplicity of village life, is itself a lesson for hardened hearts. Along the way, I came upon surreal alleys – towering trees on either side swaying in the breeze, as if their leaves were singing. A little further

lay small villages, and beside them stretched vast paddy fields. One feels tempted to dive into that sea of green, yet the journey must go on!

And as fatigue crept in, nature had its own way of rejuvenating the soul. After a day of exhausting walking – scorched by the sun and drenched in sweat, when the body felt almost numb – a dip in the river or a splash of bucketful, soul-cold water drawn from an ancient well was enough to awaken life again.

This journey wasn't mine alone; it belonged to everyone who loves nature, believes in change. A stranger, who gave me a glass of water, an inspiring word from another, they were all part of my journey. My friends were there, but without them, it was impossible to finish the daunting task.

After 64 long and exhausting, and eventful days, in which I walked 1,372

kilometres across Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, I reached Everest Base Camp at an altitude of 5,364 metres on April 29.

After resting there for a few days, on May 6 at 1:30am, I set out from Base Camp toward Camp 1 with three climbers from Taiwan, myself, and three Sherpa guides. As we crossed the dangerous and deadly Khumbu Icefall, dawn broke. Then one night at Camp 1, two nights at Camp 2, and after completing the rotation, we returned to Base Camp. We waited for good weather to push for the summit.

On May 15 at 1:00am, we began the summit push from Base Camp. We reached Camp 4 by noon on the 18th. After a few hours of rest, we set out for the summit at 7:45pm. Through fierce winds and snowfall, we climbed all night.

And at the final edge of this journey, on May 19, 2025, at 9:30am Nepal time, I raised the flag of Bangladesh on the summit of Mount Everest, the highest peak in the world.

If people ask me why I did this, I have one answer: to create awareness that we are a part of nature and we are responsible for preserving it. I have completed this expedition in 84 days, not to set any record. I did it to convey the message.

I know there are many who share the dream of building a clean, green, and conscious world. I know I am not alone.

When the cold wind of the Himalayas touches my face, I realise how pure life can truly be. And it is in search of that purity that I walked – from sea to summit.



Want to share your travel experiences with us? Please send your stories to holiday@thedailystar.net

PHOTO: IKRAMUL HASAN SHAKIL