

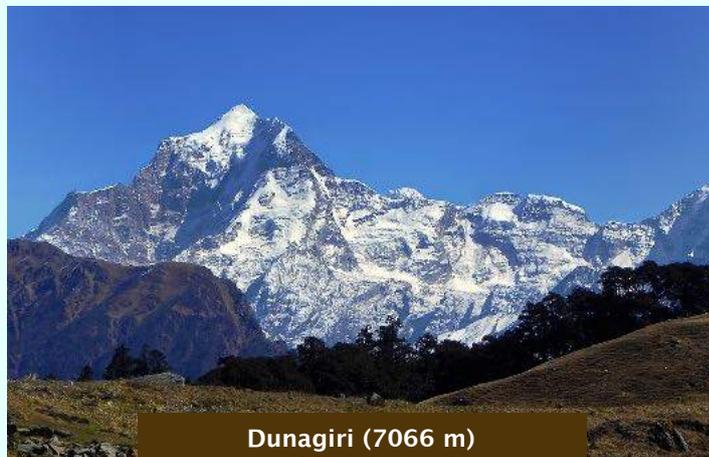
Planning an Expedition in the Indian Himalaya

A Familiarisation for Foreign Climbers & Expeditions

123 New Peaks Opened Up for Climbing

The government of India has declared 123 Himalayan peaks, located in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim, to foreigners "desirous" of obtaining a mountaineering visa for climbing and trekking purposes, in a major boost for the international mountaineering and adventure community.

Foreign climbers and expeditions had to seek permission from the Ministries of Defence and Home Affairs, in order to climb these peaks till recently. Now they can directly apply to the IMF for permits.



Dunagiri (7066 m)
Uttarakhand Himalaya

The list includes 51 peaks in Uttarakhand, 10 peaks in Sikkim, 15 peaks in Jammu & Kashmir, and 47 peaks located in Himachal Pradesh, ranging from above 7000m to trekking peaks, in addition to the peaks already open for climbing. A region-wise summary of peaks is as follows:

Region	New Peaks	7000 m +	6500 m +	6000 m +	Trekking peaks
Sikkim	10	6	1	2	1
Uttarakhand	51	2	14	23	12
Himachal Pradesh	47	0	3	23	21
Jammu & Kashmir	15	0	0	9	6
Total	123	8	18	57	40

Ease of Climbing Initiatives

- The new order issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, also proposes a **Mountaineering Visa (MX)**, in an initiative to simplify the usually tedious and lengthy permission process.
- Time taken to issue a permit by the IMF will be **less than a week**.
- Also rock climbers can now easily get the required **Trekking Permits** for peaks less than 6000m in height, including the newly opened technically challenging peaks, like Kishtwar/ Kalidhar spires and Kullu Eiger.
- Government also proposes to increase the validity of **E-visas** from 1 year to 5 years, and a reduction in **Visa fee**, from 25 dollars to 10 dollars, is also being considered for the peak climbing season.

Peak Fees Exemption by IMF

The IMF will exempt 50% of the Peak Fees to expeditions to the 123 Newly Opened Peaks, for the next one year.

Application forms, regulations and instructions for all Foreign Expeditions are available on the IMF website, on this link :<https://www.indmount.org/IMF/expeapp>.

Select Featured Open Peaks

Dunagiri (7066m), Uttarakhand Himalaya (Kumaon)



Location: Lies in the Nanda Devi group of peaks, at the northwest corner of the Nanda Devi Sanctuary Wall.

Accessibility: Haridwar/Dehradun to Joshimath/Badrinath by road, then trek via Juma, Reeu, Dunagiri village.

Basecamp: Lower Bagni Kharak (4,400m)

Difficulty: Major Mountain Expedition.

Best time to climb: April, May, September, October.

Summit Latitude: 30.515

Summit Longitude: 79.86667

Climbing History:

Not frequented by many explorers, Dunagiri peak is in a way a virgin peak as compared to others in the Uttarakhand Himalaya. The peak was first climbed on 5 July 1939 by Swiss climbers André Roch, F. Steuri, and D. Zogg, via the southwest ridge. In 1975, Joe Tasker and Dick Renshaw successfully climbed a particularly difficult route on the southeast buttress – a significant milestone for alpine-style climbing. In 1978 the first Australian Himalayan expedition by the Australian National University Mountaineering Club made the fourth ascent via the south-west ridge.

Mountain Information:

One of the main approaches to Dunagiri or Dronagiri is through the various ridges all around the main peak, which rises up to 7066 kms and has slowly become one of the preferred climbs for Alpine-style mountaineers. Dunagiri is famous for steep ice-and-rock style of climbing. The main climbing routes are the Southwest Ridge and the Southeast Buttress, with the south-west ridge being more preferred. The ridge borders a shallow plateau for at least a mile, leading diagonally across several tiers of hanging glacier, and ends with a steep snow and ice slope. This ridge then flares up in an aspiring sweep of red rock to a long iced knife-edge, which leads gradually to the top.

Chomochior (6322m), East Kishtwar, Kashmir Himalaya

Location: Between the Haptal and Chomochior Glaciers, about five kilometers south of Muni La.

Accessibility: trek to Kishtwar via Galhar, Athole, Machail and Sumcham, through the Darlang Nullah.

Basecamp: At the head of Chomochior valley.

Difficulty: Tough technical peak

Best time to climb: June to mid-October

Summit Latitude: 33.37237157

Summit Longitude: 76.58886109



Image Credit: Marko Prezelj

Climbing History:

In 1988, Roger Everett and Simon Richardson made the first ascent along the west ridge. The area was closed to foreigners, till, in 2015, Kennedy, Novak and Prezelj summited along the south ridge of Chomochior.

Mountain Information:

The approach to the northwest spur is blocked by a steep, chaotic, 600-meter-high icefall, lengthening the approach. Two icefalls lead to the upper glacier, with the left branch leading to an ice couloir. A steep line of icy gullies and grooves leads all the way to the summit. The 1400m line has been graded D+, requiring sustained climbing.

Devachan Peak (6265m), Himachal Himalaya

Location: In Tosh valley, Spiti, to the right of Papsura.

Accessibility: By road from Manali to Tosh village near Manikaran, then trek to base camp via Bhudaban and Sharam Thach.

Basecamp: Tos Saram

Difficulty: Difficult

Best time to climb: June–July till September

Summit Latitude: 32 13 12 N

Summit Longitude: 77 32 42 E



Image Credit: B C Baliga

Climbing History:

Information on early explorations is scarce. The first ascent was during the 1977 British alpine-style expedition in the area, when Paul Bean, Tara Chand and Barry Needle made the first recorded ascent of Devachan. In 1991, Rob MacBrearty and Clinton Wadesworth from New Zealand ascended the East ridge, via a gully on its southern flank.

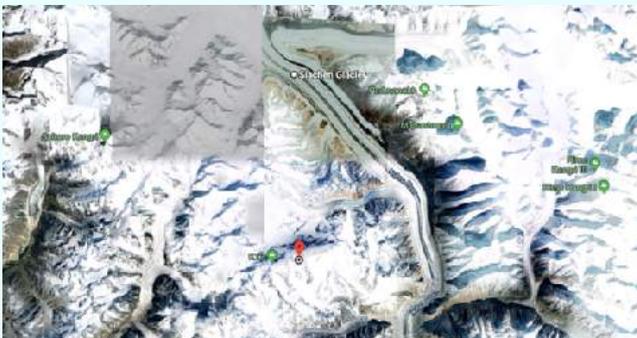
Mountain Information:

Devachan is a tough peak to climb due to difficult glacier conditions and multiple crevasses. Advance Base Camp can be established at the head of the Papsura glacier, beyond a huge icefall. The route goes via the south couloir 50° connecting the west couloir 55° and on to the summit ridge. Grade AD–D.

Virgin Peaks in the Indian Himalaya: Select Featured Unclimbed Peaks

There are some truly exciting opportunities to claim a First Ascent in the Indian Himalaya, which is unexpected in this day and age when almost every nook and corner of this planet has been accessed, explored and mapped. This could be due to sheer remoteness, political obstructions or simple ignorance. The list of unclimbed Virgin peaks, with many of them above 7000 m, can be accessed on the IMF website on this link: <https://www.indmount.org/IMF/getPeaks?type=vp>. Some of the peaks from this list are highlighted below.

Peak 7160, Saltoro Muztagh, East Karakoram



Location: West of Siachen Glacier and east of K12, in the East Karakoram range

Accessibility: Drive from Leh to Siachen glacier base camp, then trek.

Best time to climb: Post monsoon months from April to October

Summit Latitude: 35 18 00 N

Summit Longitude: 77 03 00 E

Mountain Information:

Peak 7160 lies to the east of K12, in the Saltoro Muztagh which is a subrange of the Karakoram range in the Siachen region, near Jammu and Kashmir. It lies near the Line of Control. Peak 7160 is one of the highest unclimbed peaks of the world. There have been no known attempts to climb this peak, partly because of the unsettled political situation and the continued military presence in the area. Now with the opening of the Siachen Glacier area by the military, this peak would be a great opportunity to claim a landmark First Ascent.

6148 m Unnamed Peak, Bara Shigri Glacier region, Himachal Himalaya

Location: In the Bara Shigri glacier region of Lahaul. The peak is located very close to Central Peak (6285m).

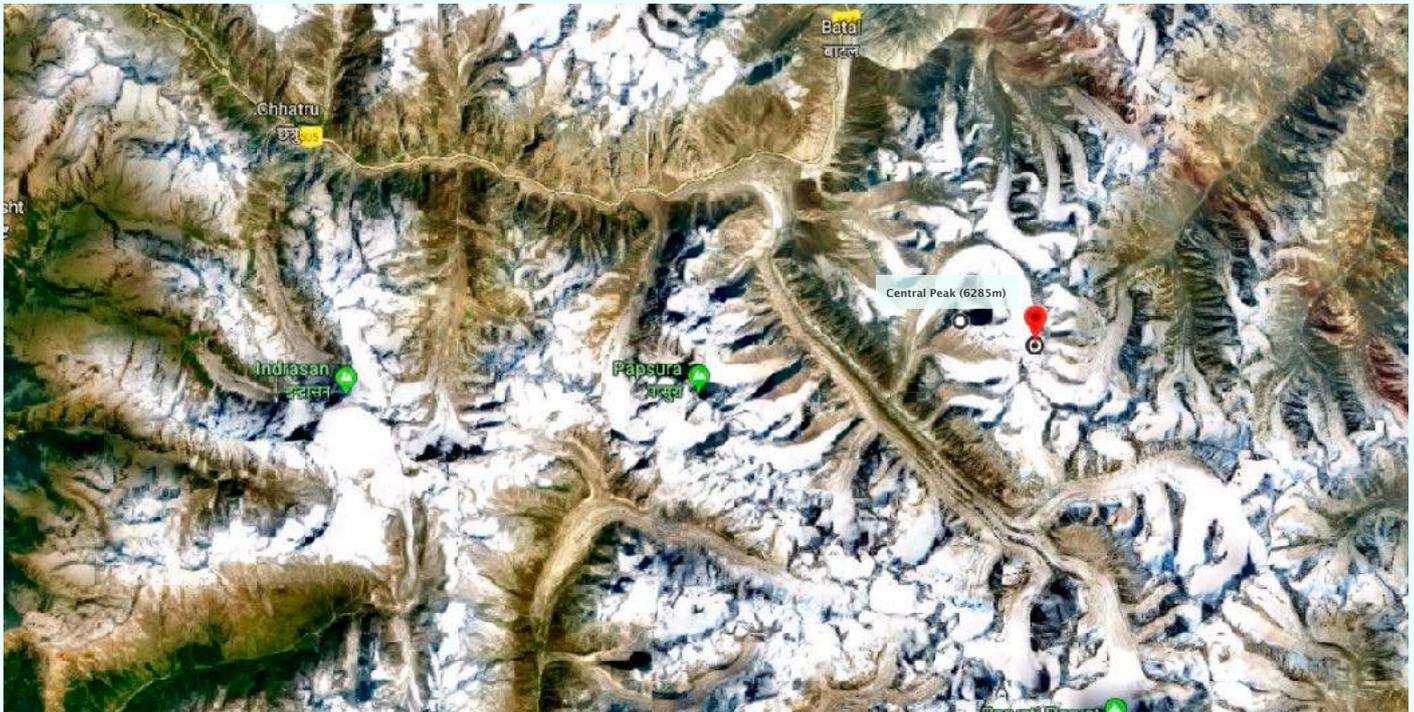
Accessibility: By road from Manali to Batal, over the Rohtang Pass and down into the Chandra River Valley, then trek into the Bara Shigri glacier area.

Basecamp: Bara Shigri

Best time to climb: June to September

Summit Latitude: 32 14 00 N

Summit Longitude: 77 42 00 E



Climbing Information: The Lahaul region is considered as one of the finest and most accessible Himalayan–Alpine regions in the Indian Himalaya. Bara Shigri glacier, a 30–km long glacier, the second longest glacier in the Indian Himalaya after Gangotri, lies within this region, flowing northwards and feeding the Chenab river.

The glacier is located at 3950m, and is home to several peaks. Multiple explorations have been undertaken in the Bara Shigri glacier area, since the early 1900s, with many peaks attracting multiple attempts, including Indrasan, Papsura, White Sail, Dharamsura, and Parbati Parvat.

Many technically challenging unclimbed and unnamed peaks, with elevations of 6000m and above, continue to remain exciting opportunities as First Ascents, including the 6148 m Unnamed peak. The peak lies close to Central Peak, with base camp located in the glacier.



The IMF has been regularly conducting its Climbathon training series in this area, due to the immense and varied possibilities for climbers. Some of the training teams have even managed to make First Ascents during their programme. There are several exciting and unclimbed peaks still available in this beautiful region.