

Nepal Traveller

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HUMLA: The Hidden Himalayas
OVERVIEW: NEPAL TOURISM YEAR 2011
RUDRAKSHAS OF NEPAL

Mask Dance
OF KATHMANDU VALLEY

NEPAL
TOURISM
YEAR
2011
NATURALLY BEGINS
HERE IN NEPAL

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SEAN BURCH: HEADS ON 44
TO CONQUER GHT

Sean Burch

heads on to conquer Great Himalaya Trail

Sean Burch has started the much talked about trekking route the Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) for a Guinness World Record - 1700 km in only 60 days. The current estimated time for the trek by expedition companies in Nepal is over 157 days.

Sean is a world renowned multi world record holder in extreme and adventurous sports and mountaineering and is an active explorer. His successes comprise many unbelievable feats, some that have taken him to the pages of the Guinness Book of World Records.

This gigantic expedition is being facilitated by The Nepal Trust, a Scottish Charity and NGO in Nepal (www.nepaltrust.org). The expedition, led in-field by local, indigenous support staff, will pass through 18 of the remotest Himalayan Districts in Nepal covering over 500,000 ft. climbing at attitudes over 20,000 ft.

The route Sean is running has been developed in such way, that it not only passes through the more unexplored and underdeveloped areas of the Himalayas that can greatly benefit from tourism development, but also provides a unique blend of adventure, flora, fauna and culture, that not only enables tourists to be introduced to the tremendous diversity and contrasts the Himalayas household, but also allows them to stimulate employment and income opportunities in the areas that need it the most.

In addition, the route also takes the logistical practicalities into account in order to make it feasible for the private sectors of both Nepal as well from neighboring countries link up with each other and increase Nepal's national tourism supply. Hereby one can think of e.g. supply points, accessibility to higher/lower routes and established trails, official border points, etc.

Below is an overview of the route Sean has accomplished as of now. For more information one can read his daily dispatches at www.seanburch.com.

DAY 1 - PASHUPATINAGAR TO ILAM
DAY 2 - ILAM TO MAGALBURE
DAY 3 - MAGALBURE TO DOBATELY



DAY 4 - DOBATELY TO THERATHUM
DAY 5 - THERATHUM TO MADI
DAY 6 - MADI TO SABKHOLA
DAY 7 - SABKHOLA TO CHALISE
DAY 8 - CHALISE TO PHEDI
DAY 9 - PHEDI TO GUDEL
DAY 10 - GUDEL TO BUDIDANDA
DAY 11 - BUDIDANDA TO PHAPLU
DAY 12 - PHAPLU TO KINJA
DAY 13 - KINJA TO JIRI
DAY 14 - JIRI TO BUSTI
DAY 15 - BUSTI TO PHEDA
DAY 16 - PHEDA TO BALEPHI

DAY 17 - BALEPHI TO MELAMCHI
DAY 18 - MELAMCHI TO CHISAPANI
DAY 19 - CHISAPANI TO KAKANI
DAY 20 - KAKANI TO TRISULI
DAY 21 - TRISULI TO KATUNJE
DAY 22 - KATUNJE TO ARKHET
DAY 23 - ARKHET TO TATOPANI
DAY 24 - TATOPANI TO PEWA
DAY 25 - PEWA TO LIHI
DAY 26 - LIHI TO SAMDO
DAY 27 - SAMDO TO BIMTHANG
DAY 28 - BIMTAHNG TO BAGGARCHAP
DAY 29 - BAGGARCHAP TP PISANG



DAY 30 - PISANG TO YAK HARKA
 DAY 31 - YAK HARKA TO MUKTINATH

**EXCERPTS OF SEAN BURCH'S
 DAILY JOURNAL**

Day 5 – Aug. 25: Therathum to Madi

How serious is this expedition? Woke up to 2 of our team sherpas wishing me luck as both have bowed out to injuries. The assistant guide to knee problems and the cook's assistant to feet sores. I expected the porters to leave throughout the expedition, just not this soon...especially not an assistant guide. I've decided to use pain as a friend, an advantage versus adversary. I wrapped them up in bandages, slapped on some medicated strips, and hoped the pain wouldn't be too bad. Pain is all in the mind...if you can control the mind, the body will follow. Every step I made I tried to make the pain feel good, made me look around at where

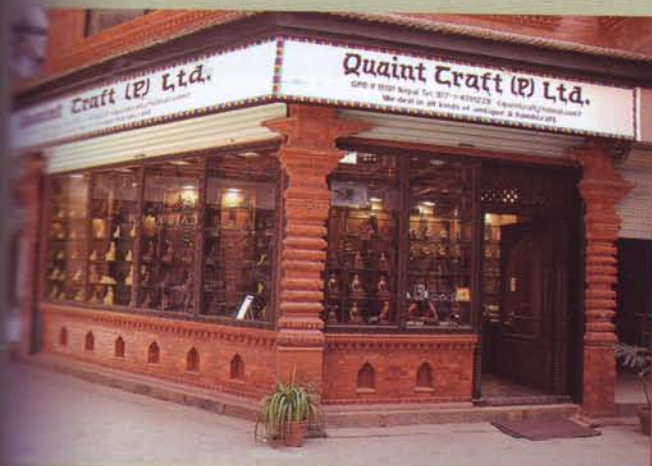
I was, the people I was meeting, the food, culture, architecture...everything. A long day, but surprisingly I felt good (besides the feet of course). We stayed local as always and bought some fresh meat at a village (Chuki) on the way to another homestay. We've lost guys now, so we had to send some supplies back to Kathmandu.

The owner of this house was so happy to have us as guests he whipped out some *rakshi*, which is home-made liquor. I had to taste it due to the fact that I was a guest, but only took 2 sips.

Meanwhile, he got slammed and passed out on my yellow NF bag. He too had lived in his house his whole life, as well as his father's family, and grandfather's.....catching a rhythm here? Had some corn and soup from the family garden. *Wired data Steps taken: 56.131 Hours: 10:16 Miles: 26.12 Gain/Loss Elevation: 10,214 HR l/m: 52/122*

Day 8 - Aug 29: Chalise to Phedi

I left today determined to stay ahead of schedule because in 60 days, a lot can go wrong. Walking along a ridge came a huge clan of Langur monkeys. They are white with brown noses and very distinct features. They were flying and by the time I could get my camera out they were jumping from tree to tree and blended right back into their environment. I did manage to get a few photos of a monkeys but nothing as spectacular as the langur. I was so dehydrated from yesterday's outing I downed 3 liters of water, but still felt parched. It's very hot here in this region of the Himalaya and the obstacles are a plenty. Passed by the Tsaru people who's homes contain very unique Architecture specific to their culture and region. Entered Maoist territory for the first time. These are Maoists who believe in their cause and want to make sure you know...the area I passed had a red flag flying. Counted over



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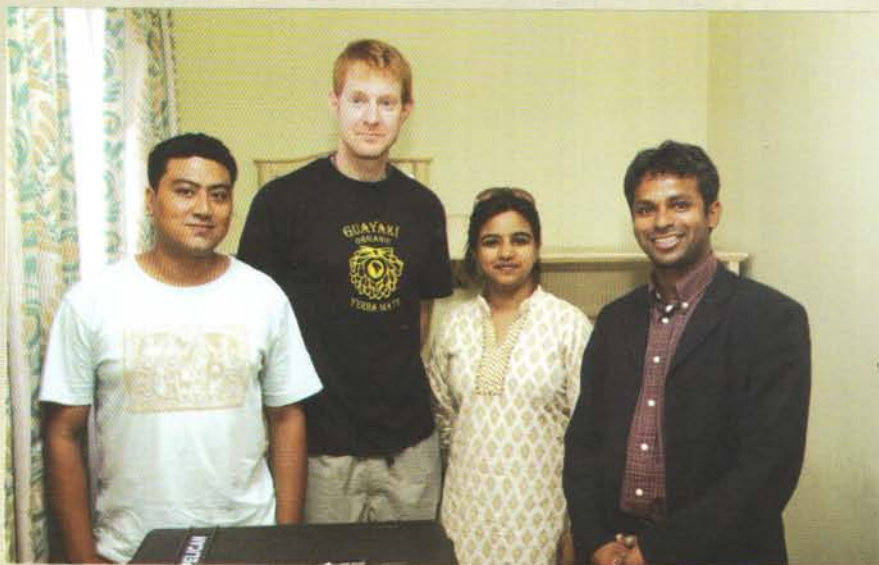


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Raju Ram Paudyal, Chairman



30 mosquito bites on my hands and over 40 on my ankles. Arrived in Phedi at around 5pm feeling like I had taken a stroll for the day...be it a very humid, boot soaking, and extremely sweaty outing, but my body is feeling strong. Phedi used to be a popular stop off for trekkers years ago. The guesthouse where we stayed was plenty busy. Now, we're its only customers in months. Why? Maoists have been scaring tourists away from this region the past years. This is a major reason why I'm crossing the country...to show tourists around the world Nepal's diversity, cultures, architecture, tribes, and that it's all a safe and beautiful country to explore. The best thing about the long days is you can never zone off. You have to be focused every single second of the day because there are so many obstacles to overcome. I don't listen to music, don't worry about the rise and fall of western civilization, just think about the GHT. There are rivers to pass, slippery rocks a plenty to maneuver, steep ridges, muddy lanes....all can cause harm if you do not pay attention, if your mind is not in the game. *Wired data Steps taken: 42,379 Hours: 10:37 Miles: 20.19*

Day 12 - Sep. 2: Phaplu to Kinja

Those leeches love me, and I'm not flattered. Another full day of heavy rain that started almost immediately after breakfast. 'Crazy path' for 3.5 hours in the rain didn't help things either for an afternoon delight. There is a change...although I don't like downhill, I've come to accept them. You accept the things that are, and change the things you can. Since I'm not listening to any music there is ample time to be in the moment, be completely present with where I am at that time. I listen to the waterfalls, the rain splatter on my hat, the rivers rushing over the rocks, the dialogue of passing Nepalese, the birds chirping to one another. These expeditions make me

feel like a completely different person than when I'm back in the states. I feel like a 'living' human being, one who is learning, accepting, opening my eyes to the real world. Saw in the distance the Thuchuncheli Monestary in Junbesi (over one thousand years old), and took a picture with school children of the Tami tribe on their walk to school right after I finished breakfast in Tumbuk. I wish I could play the tourist and just stop and spend the day in an area, but I'm on a schedule, and I have a goal...one that I think about every moment, of every second, since I started running West from the Nepal/India border. *Wired data Steps taken: 61,250 Hours: 12:25 Miles: 28.76 Gain/Loss Elevation: 11,762 HR l/m: 41/128*

Day 17 - Sep. 6: Balephi to Melamchi

Good morning, I'll have my usual 5,000ft of climbing before breakfast please. As the photo shows, the road ain't pretty on you. Does get the heart pumping though...earn your meal is what's the rule. Back to feeling close to 100% besides the usual aches and pains. As usual, we had some locals who like to join in on the trek. Happens everyday...they just sidesaddle right behind you and before you know it, there are anywhere from 2 to 15 people following you...kids, teenagers, men, women, it doesn't matter. I feel like Forrest Gump on his run across America. The kids are the most interesting. They get as close as they can to you, and just stare. I had about 10 kids walk over 8km with me today. They kept repeating the same old questions you already know about. Not everyone is so cheery as mentioned...passed a town of drunks at 3:00pm, and 4 guys started following me for about 2 miles. Sometimes they come up to you and try and get close, but usually never grab. Arrived in Melamchi, where a fight had broken out right in the middle of town. Some man with

no leg started to yell at the sirdar if he was willing to be the next fighter. A swell bunch of chaps they were, yes sir. *Wired data Steps taken: 62,002 Hours: 14:07 Miles: 29.38 Gain/Loss Elevation: 9,811*

Day 25 - Sep. 15: Pewa to Lihi

Thanks to National Geographic for the live interview. Managed to run in to Lihi ahead of schedule and set up the BGAN terminal and phone in the fog and rain within a blaze area. The areas within Manaslu Nat. Park for very primitive shelters for staying...camp sites are terrific, but if you're trying to maximize time, eat, and sleep, and deal with the rain - a roof over your head, whatever it may be works best. How this is unlike normal treks - staying in local shelters, porters are switched out on a consistent basis - they can go for 12 hour+ days, no leisure or 'relax' time, 2-5 minute stops are my maximum rest period when running/trekking. The goal at the end of the day is to reach the next stopping point injury free, for me and the team. Interview with NGS provided by Kal Superfood and USSecurenet. *Wired data Steps taken: 47,986 Hours: 10:52 Miles: 22.24 Gain/Loss Elevation: 10,211*

Day 30 - Sep. 20: Pisang to Yak Kharka

Woke up to a live interview with CNN...they will be interviewing me weekly (Sunday 9pm EST) for the remainder of the expedition, and then do daily coverage as I get closer to the Tibetan border. Thanks to Anna Coren, the anchor, pleasure speaking with her. The only way I could get a signal was by hanging over the 3rd floor balcony of a guesthouse for about 30 minutes. Lost yet another porter to sickness, dropping out like low ambition humanity. I still feel very weak, and on top of that, I pulled a muscle running into Manang. I'm a disaster...the pain is shooting all the way down my right leg. Tomorrow we have to go over the Thorung La Pass....straight up, and then straight down. A sufferfest awaits. *Wired data Steps taken: 42,267 Hours: 10.05 Miles: 20.03 Gain/Loss Elevation: 8,616*

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Tel: 00977-1-4428552/4428729/4428691
Fax: 00977-1-4428691
E-mail: shakti@travels.wlink.com.np
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