



ALEMAARI ADHYAYA

By TrekNomads

VOL 2 Edition 8, August 2026

TREK *Travel* ADVENTURE

August was the month the mountains ask you a simple question “Who are you on a trail?”

Not your job title. Not your fitness level. Not how many treks you've done before. Just *who are you when the path is ahead and the city is far behind* and the only thing that matters is the next step? We've been thinking about that question a lot this month. Because August brought us every kind of trekker there is.

First-timers standing at a trailhead with shaking hands. Trekkers who've found their rhythm and are quietly looking for what's next. And the ones who keep going higher who stood on summits this month that most people only ever read about.

Three kinds of people with three completely different journeys and all of them ours.

This edition of Alemaari Adhyaya is written for all three. For the first time you showed up. For the moment you realised you could go further. And for the pull toward something higher that doesn't quite go away. Wherever you are — this edition has something for you.

NEPAL. STILL ON OUR MAP.

A Note from the CEO – Naveen Malleth

For the readers of Alemaari Adhyaya

The past few weeks have undeniably been difficult for Nepal. Floods and landslides have challenged communities, disrupted roads, and tested livelihoods, particularly around the Rasuwa region. I know many of you are watching the news, seeing the stories, and asking a very natural question: *“Is it still okay to go?”*

For us, the answer goes far beyond just evaluating whether a trek is physically possible. It is about understanding the reality on the ground, knowing what routes are safely accessible, and realising the profound impact of our presence during a time of recovery.

This is why my message to you today is simple and urgent: **Nepal needs our support, and this is not the time to cancel your trips.**

Our batches are starting this week, and our journeys to the operational regions are continuing exactly as planned. Nepal is vast—much bigger than a single affected corridor and several of the country's major trekking destinations remain beautifully intact and ready for travellers.

We invite you to visit Nepal not only to witness the challenges left in the wake of nature's fury, but to experience firsthand the unmatched resilience, strength, and determination of its people. Come and see a nation that rises, rebuilds, and continues to harbour hope even in the face of immense adversity. Travelling right now means so much more than ticking a destination off a bucket list. Your presence, support, and solidarity mean more than words can ever express.

The heartbeat of Nepal isn't just its mountains; it's the people. The families who run the tea houses, the porters who carry supplies, the drivers who navigate the mountain roads, and the guides who keep the trails moving they are what make Nepal what it is. As a company, we stand resolutely by our entire team of guides, porters, drivers, support staff, and our office team. We are a family, and their livelihoods depend on us moving forward together.

Of course, safety and responsibility remain our absolute priorities. We will continue to monitor every route closely and make decisions based on ground conditions, not just the calendar. Because of this, **we have decided not to operate the Langtang Trek this season.** The access corridor requires significant recovery work, and we must give that region the time and space it needs to heal. Some mountains can wait.

For now, our focus is on travelling where it is appropriate, supporting the people and places we visit, and making sure every Nomad who travels with us does so with the right information. If you are travelling to Nepal this season, go informed, go responsibly, and listen to the people on the ground.

Nepal is rebuilding. Nepal is resilient. And Nepal welcomes you.

EDITOR'S DESK – ALEMAARI ADHYAYA



I feel like I have a lot of things to tell you this month.

Some things are about the mountains. Some are about work. And some, unexpectedly, are about me.

Let me tell you, I finally made it to every trekker's favourite destination the **Valley of Flowers and Hemkund Sahib** on 29th August.

I went as part of the team, so technically, I knew what I was walking into. I knew the trail, the logistics, and how the whole operation worked because I had been looking at it from the inside for months.

And still, I wasn't prepared for it. Standing at the edge of the valley for the first time was strange in a way I didn't expect. I had spent months talking about this place, writing about it, helping people plan for it, telling them what they would see.

And then suddenly, I was there. No photograph really prepares you for 500 species of wildflowers spread across an entire valley. There was something almost overwhelming about seeing a place I had known only through screens and stories become real in front of me.

But somewhere between taking it all in and trying to process what I was seeing, I found myself thinking about something else – Me.

I thought about the person who, not too long ago, wasn't sure if she belonged here. If she was experienced enough. Qualified enough. "Mountain enough."

I remember how easily doubt could take over all the things I thought I wasn't ready for, all the things I thought other people knew better than I did. And there I was, standing in the Valley of Flowers.

EDITOR'S DESK – ALEMAARI ADHYAYA

Being behind the scenes of a trek also made me notice something I usually don't get to see this way. The work that goes into making a trek feel simple for someone else.

The planning that starts weeks before people arrive. The little details that have to fall into place. The people working quietly in the background. The logistics that most trekkers never have to think about because they're busy doing exactly what they came there to do walking, looking around, taking it all in.

If you want to know what that experience was really like, scroll a little further down. I've written about it in more detail what it felt like to be there, to see the Valley of Flowers not only as someone visiting it, but also as someone who had spent months helping other people get there.

August also brought us something else. Three new winter treks launching – trails we've been quietly building toward for a while. And the question of who each trail is actually for started shaping this whole edition.

Wanderer. Trekker. Mountaineer.

Three words. Three kinds of people. Three completely different relationships with the mountains.

This is the edition where we introduce that idea and ask you to figure out which one you are right now. Not forever. Just right now.

— Arshalakshmi

Editor, Alemaari Adhyaya



Stories from August



Stories from August



INTRODUCING SOMETHING NEW

Every edition of Alemaari Adhyaya has been written for everyone. This one is written for you specifically.

Because after years of watching people arrive at trailheads filled with nervous first-timers, seasoned Himalayan trekkers, people attempting their first summit we've started to understand something. The question isn't just where do you want to go. It's who are you on the trail right now.

So from this edition onward, we're introducing three trail categories not by rankings, not by judgements. Just honest descriptions of three different relationships with the mountains and three different sets of trails that speak to each one.



- **Wanderer (Start Here)**

You're new to this. Or returning after a long gap. The mountains are calling but you're not sure yet what they're asking of you. You want something real without it being overwhelming. You want to come back having done something that surprised you without feeling like you were in over your head.

- **Trekker (Go Further)**

You've done a few trails now. You know the rhythm. You're not a beginner anymore but you haven't found your ceiling yet. You're looking for something that challenges you properly more altitude, more days, more terrain. Something that makes the previous ones feel like they were building toward this.

- **Mountaineer (Go Higher)**

The trails aren't enough anymore. You want a summit. You want crampons, technical terrain, the kind of objective that asks for months of preparation and gives back something that doesn't have a name yet. You've been doing the maths on what's next and the number keeps going up.

Which one are you right now?

Find your section below and find your next trail inside it.

WANDERER – START HERE

There's a specific kind of courage in showing up for the first time.

It's okay to feel something that makes you slightly nervous, packing a bag you've never packed before, standing at a trailhead wondering if you've made a mistake. That feeling, right at the beginning, before the trail has done anything to you yet.

That's where this section lives.

These are the trails for the person who is beginning. Who is returning after a long time away. Who wants something real without it being overwhelming. Who needs the mountain to meet them where they are and knows they're not quite sure where that is yet.

All of these have upcoming departures. All of them are the right place to start.



[Mardi Himal Base Camp](#)
[\[Premium\]](#)



[Har Ki Dun Trek](#)
[\[Premium\]](#)



[Kuari Pass Trek](#)
[\[Premium\]](#)



[Brahmatal Trek](#)



[Kedarkantha Peak Trek](#)
[\[Premium\]](#)



[Sandakphu-Phalut Trek](#)
[\[Premium\]](#)

TREKKER – GO FURTHER

You've been here before.

Not this trail specifically but this feeling. The one where you know how to pack now. Where you don't check the forecast every hour the week before departure. Where the first day nerves have been replaced by something quieter and more certain.

You're not a beginner anymore. But you haven't found your ceiling yet either.

That's the most interesting place to be on a trekking journey past the uncertainty of the first time, not yet at the edge of what's genuinely hard. Looking for the trail that makes everything before it feel like it was building toward something. These are those trails.



[Everest Base Camp Trek](#)
[\[Premium\]](#)



[Annapurna Circuit Trek with](#)
[Tilicho Lake \[Premium\]](#)



[Manaslu Circuit Trek](#)
[\[Premium\]](#)



[Goechala & Dzongri Trek](#)
[\[Premium\]](#)



[Annapurna Base Camp](#)
[\[Premium\]](#)



[Everest Base Camp via Gyoko](#)
[Ri & Chola Pass \[Premium\]](#)

MOUNTAINEER – GO HIGHER

There's a moment every serious trekker recognises.

You've come back from a trail – a good one, maybe one of the best you've done and something is different about the way you're looking at the calendar. Not where next. Something else. Something with more altitude in it. A number that keeps appearing in your head. A summit you've been circling around for longer than you'd like to admit. That's where this section begins.

Not for everyone. Exactly right for the person who's been quietly doing the maths and keeps arriving at the same answer.



[Mount Kosciuszko](#)



[Mount Kilimanjaro Expedition](#)



[Everest Base Camp with Island Peak Expedition](#)



[Everest Base Camp with Lobuche Peak Expedition](#)



[Mera peak Expedition](#)



[Friendship Peak Expedition](#)

WE'RE ARE EXPANDING OUR MAP: ALL WORTH YOUR ATTENTION.

Every season, we watch trekkers come back from their summer and monsoon trails from valley crossings and wildflower meadows and Himalayan base camps and ask the same question as the calendar tips toward winter.

What can I do when the snow comes?

For a long time, the answer was the same familiar list. Kedarkantha. Brahmatal. The established winter routes that everyone knows and that are genuinely excellent — but genuinely crowded now in a way they weren't a few years ago.

So we went looking.

Not for harder trails. Not for more remote objectives just for the sake of remoteness. For trails that offer something specific — the kind of winter mountain experience that feels unhurried, untouched, and genuinely earned. Trails where the silence at camp isn't interrupted by the sounds of fifty other trekkers doing the same thing at the same time.

We found three.

All three start from **Manali or Rishikesh**. All three run from **October through the winter months**. All three have been tested, recced, and built with the same care we bring to every TrekNomads experience. And all three are now open for bookings.

This is what we've been waiting to tell you.



DYALISHERA BUGYAL TREK – UTTARAKHAND'S TREK OF THE YEAR 2026-27



Some Himalayan trails are famous for a reason. Others are waiting for their turn.

Dyalishera Bugyal is one of those trails.

Located in Uttarakhand and reaching an altitude of around 4,023 metres, Dyalishera Bugyal takes you into a landscape of wide alpine meadows, mountain ridges and expansive Himalayan views. It is the kind of trek where the trail itself becomes the experience long meadow walks, changing landscapes and the feeling of being far away from the usual crowds. And for 2026–27, we're putting Dyalishera Bugyal in the spotlight.

Why Dyalishera Bugyal?

This trek is interesting because of the combination of high-altitude terrain and open bugyal landscapes. Unlike trails that are dominated by dense forests or narrow valleys, Dyalishera opens up as you gain altitude. The landscape becomes broader, quieter and more dramatic, with alpine meadows stretching across the ridges. At approximately 4,023m, it also offers a proper high-altitude trekking experience without immediately moving into the technical mountaineering category.

The trail starts from Rishikesh the gateway to the Garhwal Himalayas and drives through the Panch Prayag, the five sacred confluences of the Alaknanda River, before reaching Joshimath. From Kharcho Village, the trekking begins through dense oak and rhododendron forest, climbing gradually to the alpine clearing of Dhurkund Camp, then higher to Dobriya Camp at 11,200 feet. Summit day is the day the trail reveals everything it's been building toward. Leaving before dawn, the forest falls away and the trail opens into the vast sweeping meadows of Dyalishera Bugyal at 13,200 feet 4,023 metres. What waits up there is a 180-degree panorama of Garhwal giants that most trekkers never see from this angle – Nanda Devi, Dronagiri, Chaukhamba. Trishul. Nanda Ghunti. All of them on the same horizon, at the same time, in the same frame.

DYALISHERA BUGYAL TREK – UTTARAKHAND'S TREK OF THE YEAR 2026-27



The best time for this trek is **September to December** when the skies are clearest and the mountain views are at their sharpest. The trail is rated easy to moderate, which means it is accessible for fit beginners while being genuinely rewarding for trekkers with experience. The altitude gain is gradual, the forest sections are beautiful, and the Himalayan Monal and Bharal that live in this region make the approach as interesting as the summit.

[Dyalishera Bugyal](#) has been officially declared Trek of the Year 2026-27. Because this is the time to discover Dyalishera before it becomes another name everyone already knows. It has the ingredients we look for in a great Himalayan trek – altitude, terrain, landscapes and a trail that feels like an adventure rather than a checklist.

If you've already done the popular Himalayan treks and are looking for something different, Dyalishera Bugyal deserves a place on your list.

Read our latest blog and explore the trail, landscapes, mountain views and everything you can expect on this trek.

Read the full blog : [Here](#)

Explore the full itinerary and book your slot: [Check out](#)

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PATALSU PEAK TREK – A HIMALAYAN SUMMIT ABOVE MANALI



Some treks take you to a beautiful destination. [Patalsu Peak](#) takes you to a summit.

Rising to around 4,200 metres above sea level, Patalsu Peak stands above Solang Valley near Manali, offering an accessible introduction to high-altitude summit trekking in Himachal Pradesh.

For someone looking to experience their first Himalayan summit, Patalsu brings together the right mix of challenge, altitude and mountain terrain. You don't need prior mountaineering experience, but you do need good fitness, preparation and the willingness to work for the summit.

Why Patalsu Peak?

The trek begins in the Solang Valley, gradually taking you through dense pine, oak and deodar forests before opening into the alpine landscapes around Shagadugh, at approximately 3,200 metres.

The forest section is an experience in itself. The region is home to Himalayan wildlife and birds, including the Himalayan Monal and Khaleej pheasant, while the trail steadily gains altitude toward the higher camps. As you move above the tree line, the landscape changes completely. Forest gives way to open meadows, rocky terrain and eventually snow-covered slopes, depending on the season.

The Summit Experience

Patalsu isn't simply a walk to a viewpoint. Summit day starts early. From the higher camp, the trail gets steeper as you climb toward the summit. In winter, snow and ice add another layer of challenge, making proper equipment and technique especially important.

At approximately 4,200m, the summit opens up to wide Himalayan views, with peaks and ranges including Hanuman Tibba, Friendship Peak, Deo Tibba and the Dhauladhar ranges visible from the top. And that's what makes Patalsu different from a typical Manali trek you are working toward an actual summit.

PATALSU PEAK TREK – A HIMALAYAN SUMMIT ABOVE MANALI



Patalsu in Winter

Winter transforms the trek. Snow-covered trails, freezing temperatures and steeper sections make the climb more demanding, but they also bring a completely different character to the mountain.

TrekNomads provides the technical equipment required for the winter summit attempt, including boots, crampons, harness and ice axe, along with the necessary guidance during the climb. The focus isn't simply on reaching the top. It's about understanding how to move safely and confidently in high-altitude and winter conditions.

Who Is Patalsu Peak For?

Patalsu works well for trekkers who want to move beyond conventional trekking and experience their first high-altitude summit. You don't need previous mountaineering experience. What you do need is good physical preparation, the ability to handle long and demanding days, and a willingness to train before the trek.

At 4,200m, Patalsu is challenging enough to feel like a genuine summit while still being an achievable step into the world of Himalayan peak trekking for prepared beginners.

If your next goal is to go beyond trekking trails and stand on your first Himalayan summit, Patalsu Peak is a mountain worth starting with.

Explore the full itinerary, upcoming departures and inclusions : [Here](#)

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MANGANKOT MAJHACH LAKE TREK – THE ONE WITH THE FROZEN BEER LAKE



Let's start with the name. **Frozen Beer Lake.** Yes, that's actually what people call it. Tucked away at around 3,200 metres above Shila Camp in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu Valley, the lake freezes over during the deep winter months. When the light hits the ice just right, it takes on a colour that explains the name almost immediately.

But the frozen lake isn't the only reason to know about the [Mangankot Majhach Lake Trek](#). This is one of those trails that gives you a little bit of everything — snow-covered forests, alpine clearings, a high-altitude lake, a traditional Himachali village and a 3,500-metre summit. And it does all of that without taking you too far from Manali.

A Winter Trek That Doesn't Feel Like Every Other Winter Trek

The trek begins a short drive from Manali before the trail disappears into forests of deodar, oak and pine. As you climb higher, the dense forest gradually gives way to open alpine landscapes. In winter, snow changes the character of the trail completely covering the forest floor, filling the clearings and making the approach to Mangankot Top feel far more remote than the distance from Manali might suggest. The route is graded Easy to Moderate, making it accessible to fit beginners while still offering enough terrain and altitude for experienced trekkers to enjoy.

But what really sets Mangankot apart is what happens beyond the usual summit-and-back experience.

A Village in the Middle of the Mountains

On Day 3, the trail takes you to Majhach Village, a traditional Himachali settlement that offers a completely different side of the mountains. This is where you'll see Kath-Kuni architecture an old Himalayan building technique that uses alternating layers of stone and deodar wood.

MANGANKOT MAJHACH LAKE TREK – THE ONE WITH THE FROZEN BEER LAKE



These structures weren't designed simply to look beautiful. They were built to handle the cold, snow and conditions of mountain life. Walking through the village gives you a glimpse into how communities have lived in these mountains for generations.

For a trekker, it's a welcome change from simply moving from one campsite to another.

The forests add another layer to the experience, with Himalayan Monal and other mountain birds found in the region. During winter, you may even come across wildlife tracks in the snow.

The highlight, of course, is the climb to Mangankot Top at 3,500 metres. The summit section can be steep and snowy, but the views of the Pir Panjal and Dhauladhar ranges make the effort worthwhile. After the summit, you descend back to Shila Camp for a well-earned evening at camp.

A frozen lake, a traditional mountain village, winter forests and a 3,500-metre summit all in one trek from Manali. That's Mangankot Majhach Lake.

Explore the full itinerary and book your slot: [Here](#)

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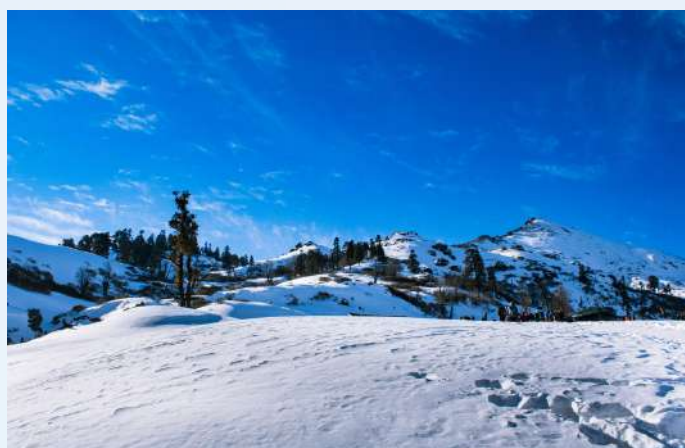
5 MORE WINTER TREKS TO EXPLORE THIS SEASON



Kuari Pass Trek [Premium]



Sandakphu-Phalut Trek [Premium]



Kedarkantha Peak Trek [Premium]



Brahmatal Trek



Ladakh's Zaskar Valley Exploration [Premium]

2 WINTER TRAINING TO EXPLORE THIS SEASON



Basic Ski Training In Auli



Ladakh Ice Climb Training



My First Himalayan Trek to the Valley of Flowers & Hemkund Sahib

For the longest time, Valley of Flowers was one of those places I had only heard about from other people.

I've heard trekkers talk about the flowers, the rain, the long walk to Ghangaria, the climb to Hemkund Sahib and, of course, that first moment when the valley opens up in front of you.

Working with TrekNomads, I had also seen plenty of photographs from the trail. I knew what the route looked like. I knew the itinerary. I knew what trekkers were signing up for.

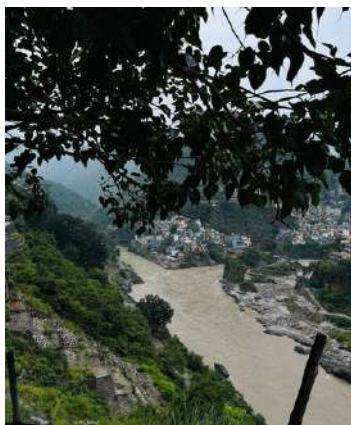
But somehow, I had never experienced it myself.

Until 29 August 2026. It was the last second Valley of Flowers batch of the season, and this time I wasn't looking at someone else's photographs or hearing someone else's story. I was going to walk the trail myself. And honestly, I wasn't quite prepared for how different it would feel to finally be there.

One thing I noticed even before the trek properly began was how much thought goes into the itinerary. The TrekNomads Valley of Flowers & Hemkund Sahib trek is a 9-day itinerary, which includes a dedicated acclimatisation day.

At first, a longer itinerary can make you wonder, Why nine days for a trek that some companies finish in fewer?

After doing it myself, I understood.



The extra time gives your body time to adjust, your legs time to settle into the rhythm of trekking, and the team time to understand how everyone is doing before heading deeper into the mountains. And I was about to experience exactly why that matters.

Day 1: Bangalore → Dehradun → Rishikesh

My journey started from Bangalore to Dehradun and reached around 2:30 PM. At the airport, I took a prepaid taxi to Ginger Hotel. The moment I looked outside my room, I got that *welcome to Devbhoomi, welcome to the Himalayas* feeling. By evening, the weather changed completely with heavy rain.

I had travelled solo, so I headed out alone for the Ganga Aarti at Triveni Ghat. I got completely drenched, but somehow that made the evening even more memorable.

There was a small moment when I really felt that I had come all the way from Bangalore alone. That feeling didn't last very long.

Day 2: Dehradun → Auli

The next morning, after breakfast, we started our drive towards Auli. The journey itself was beautiful - winding roads, mountains getting bigger, the weather changing as we climbed higher. We reached Auli around 5 PM. It was cool, misty and noticeably colder. Not winter-cold, but enough to make me realise that I was finally getting closer to the kind of terrain I had only seen in photographs.

We were welcomed with hot tea and settled into our rooms. At 7 PM, our Trek Leaders, **Bhejender Chauhan** and **Pankaj Rawat**, welcome us with traditional **Pahadi Topi** or **Garhwali Topi** along with briefing us about the next day the route, distance, packing, acclimatisation and what to expect. We also had everyone introduced themselves, and just like that, seven people from different parts of the country started becoming a group.





Acclimatisation Trek - Gorson Bugyal

Our acclimatisation trek started around 8:30 AM. The trail took us through the forest, with clouds constantly moving in and out. At times it was clear, then suddenly misty, followed by light drizzle or rain.

Our main goal for the day was the **Padiyar Devta Temple**.

We reached around the temple area and had our packed lunch at about 1 PM. After that, we continued a little further into the meadows before starting our descent.

The rain made parts of the trail slippery, so we had to be a little more careful with our footing. But by then, the group had already started finding its rhythm.

We completed the acclimatisation trek around 5:30 PM. At 7 PM, we had our regular health check. The trek leaders checked everyone's vitals before we moved into the actual high-altitude section of the trek.

This was the point where I started understanding why the acclimatisation day was part of the itinerary. You don't just need to reach a higher altitude. Your body needs time to understand what you're asking it to do.

Gorson Bugyal itself was beautiful with wide meadows, changing clouds and mountains appearing and disappearing around us. It was a good introduction to what the next few days were going to feel like.

Day 4: Auli → Pulna → Ghangaria



This was the day things became real. We left Auli and travelled towards **Govindghat**, then took a jeep to **Pulna**, the roadhead from where our actual trek would begin. Until now, I had been travelling through the mountains. From this point onwards, I was going to walk through them.

The **Pulna to Ghangaria trail is roughly 10–11 km**. After reaching pulna ,we adjusted our backpacks, checked our shoes one last time and started walking towards Ghangaria, the base village for both Valley of Flowers and Hemkund Sahib. And from the very first few steps, I realised something. This trek was going to be as much about the journey as the destination. The trail kept climbing, but the landscape kept changing just enough to make you forget that you had been walking for hours.

You would cross a section surrounded by mountains, then suddenly find yourself walking beside a stream. A little further, there would be a small shop tucked into the trail, trekkers stopping for Maggie or chai, and then the trail would disappear around another bend.



There were people heading towards Hemkund Sahib, first-time trekkers, women, children and groups of all kinds. Everyone had a different reason for being on the trail, but for those few hours, we were all moving in the same direction. And then there were the mules. You quickly learn one of the unwritten rules of mountain trails **when you hear them coming, make space**. The little bells tied around their necks would announce their arrival before you could even see them. **That constant ting-ting became another part of the soundtrack of the trail**. But the sound I remember most was the river.

It felt like it had been travelling with us from the very beginning of this journey. From Rishikesh to the mountains and now from Pulna towards Ghangaria, the sound of flowing water was almost always somewhere around us. Even when you are trekking solo, you don't really feel alone.

There is something comforting about having that river beside you – sometimes close enough to see, sometimes hidden behind the trees or rocks, but almost always there, flowing in the same direction as you. Its sound follows you. You hear it when you're walking. You hear it when you stop. And after a while, that sound almost starts echoing in your head.

There were small mountain shops along the route where trekkers stopped for chai and Maggi. You'd see people sitting, eating, drying themselves off and getting ready for the next stretch.

We continued towards our lunch point. And that lunch was probably one of the simplest and most satisfying meals I've ever had on a trek – **dal, chawal and sabji**. However, post lunch we still had around 5 km to go.



The Last 5 Kilometres. Okay, this is where things got real.

My excitement was still very much alive. My legs? Not so much. They'd basically started a quiet protest somewhere around kilometre 8km, and by now they were full-on negotiating with me "can we just, stop for a bit?" That heavy afternoon tiredness rolled in too. The kind where even mid-walk, your brain is like, "wait, are we napping right now?" But the trail had other plans. More streams to cross, more stone-paved climbs, more altitude sneaking up on us step by step. Every turn felt like it was teasing us *"just a little more"* and then, naturally, another little more right after.

And that's exactly when something our trek leaders kept saying finally clicked for me: *"Patience is the key in the mountains."* I don't think I'll forget that line anytime soon. Because here's the thing: you cannot fight a mountain. You just can't win that one. All you can really do is: Walk. Breathe. Take a break when your body asks for it. And keep going.

At one point, we also stopped and drank water straight from a freezing mountain stream, and honestly? That first cold sip after hours of walking felt like magic. Pure, simple, ridiculously refreshing.

And through every single bit of this – the tired legs, the slow climbs, the "are we there yet" moments, our trek leaders Bhejender and Pankaj were right there with us. Sometimes walking ahead, sometimes hanging back, always keeping an eye out. Making sure nobody was silently struggling. Helping us all find our rhythm again.

Around 5 PM, we reached Ghangaria. I thought, Finally. We made it. Except... we hadn't. Our hotel was still further ahead. So we walked a little more and finally reached Preetam Hotel. That day, I had completed an 11 km trek in a single stretch for the first time in my life. I was exhausted. And honestly, very happy.





Valley of Flowers & Hemkund Sahib

The next two days were the ones I had been looking forward to most — Valley of Flowers and Hemkund Sahib.

We started early, with breakfast at 6:30 AM and packed lunches ready. The usual plan is to visit Hemkund Sahib first, but with the rain intensifying and the route at risk of closing, we reversed it and headed to the valley first. By 7:30 AM, ponchos on, we began the roughly 4 km walk in.

The rain never let up. The trail kept shifting streams crossing the path, temporary bridges already strained by the downpour, thick vegetation, mushrooms, wildflowers, and mist wrapped around everything. Our trek leaders paused often to share insights on the flowers' medicinal uses, the ecosystem, and the valley's history. I'd seen photos of this place many times, but understanding what I was actually looking at made it feel entirely new. We spotted Milk Parsley, Himalayan Goldenrod, Showy inula, Himalayan Balsem, Himalayan Fleece Flower, Mountain Angelica, and Fading Himalayan Aster along the way.

By 10 AM, we reached the main valley. The rain kept us from the riverbed worth prioritising if weather permits, as it feels like the true completion of the journey. Still, I wasn't disappointed. I stood there letting the rain and mist hit my face, taking in a valley that wasn't the postcard-perfect version I'd seen online. It was mine. We had lunch and headed back to Ghangaria.

The next morning was for Hemkund Sahib. The climb was steep, as expected, but by now our group had found its rhythm steady steps, breaks when needed, always moving forward. Reaching Hemkund Sahib felt different: quieter, tougher, more personal. Standing there afterward, surrounded by mountains and cold air, we realised how much our bodies had adapted in just a few days. What once seemed daunting now felt achievable, built up gradually with each day.

We returned to Ghangaria tired but happy for two days, two very different experiences, and the sense that the trek had finally come alive.

The next morning, we descended from Ghangaria to Pulna and continued towards Badrinath.

We visited Badrinath and then went towards Mana, known as the last village on the Indian side of the Indo-Tibetan border. From there, we travelled back to Auli. The following day, we headed towards Rishikesh, stayed overnight and then started our journey back home the next day.

Somewhere along the way, I realised that the seven people who had started this trek as strangers didn't feel like strangers anymore. We had walked together, waited for each other, shared food, complained about the rain, laughed and exchanged stories from our lives and travels.

And suddenly, the journey was over.

What I Took Back

This trek gave me more than just photographs and a few days away from Bangalore.

I got to see TrekNomads from a completely different side. Working behind a desk, you know the itinerary, the operations and the planning. But being on the trail makes you realise how much goes into making a trek feel simple for someone else.

You have to be ready for changing weather, tired trekkers, route conditions, food, logistics and a hundred little things that may never be visible to the person walking.

A big part of that experience was also our trek leaders, **Bhejender Chauhan and Pankaj Rawat**. From the first briefing in Auli to the last day, they were constantly around us — checking our pace, answering questions, keeping an eye on how everyone was doing and making sure we knew what was coming next. There were moments when my legs were saying enough, but they kept reminding us to slow down, stay patient and keep moving. That support makes a difference when you're tired and standing in the middle of a mountain trail wondering how much farther you have to go.

I'm genuinely grateful to both of them for making my first Valley of Flowers and Hemkund Sahib trek feel safe, comfortable and memorable.

And of course, a special thank you to **Naveen Mallesh, Founder**, for giving me the opportunity to experience this side of the world and to the entire team that made those nine days happen.

I came back with sore legs, a lot of stories, and a new appreciation for the people who make these journeys possible.

For someone who kept saying, *"Not this time,"* 29 August turned out to be a pretty good time after all.



CAN YOU FIND YOUR WAY UP?

Every trek has a few wrong turns.
Trace the trail, avoid the dead ends and find your way to the summit.





until SEPTEMBER

August doesn't really leave us quietly. It left us with wet shoes, tired legs, a camera full of photographs, and a head full of moments you didn't expect to remember so clearly.

This month, we walked through flowers and mist in Bhyundar Valley, climbed towards Hemkund Sahib, watched trekkers find a little more confidence with every step, and saw another side of the mountains that doesn't always make it into photographs.

We also watched Nepal begin another trekking season through a difficult time. Some trails continue, some need to wait, and some journeys have had to be put on hold. But the mountains, and the people who call them home, remain.

August reminded us that adventure isn't always about reaching the summit. Sometimes it's about showing up, taking the next step, and knowing when to wait.

There are more trails waiting for us as the seasons change. More stories to hear. More mountains to walk into.

Until the next edition, keep a little space for the mountains in your plans and maybe a little mud on your shoes.