

Press release

Mashreq's Global Climb2Change Initiative Takes on India's Himalayan Trails to Combat Environmental Degradation

- Mashreq launches its Climb2Change clean-up mission in India, targeting the Himalayan trails of Kheerganga and Hampta Pass.
- Following impactful expeditions in Nepal, Pakistan, and Egypt that resulted in the clean-up of 6.8 tons of waste, this phase strengthens Mashreq's global sustainability drive.
- The mission focuses on waste removal, community engagement, and promoting responsible tourism in the fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

Dubai, UAE, September 29, 2025: As the Himalayas face an unprecedented surge in tourism, Mashreq, leading financial institution in the MENA region, has announced the next phase of its global Climb2Change initiative, to help combat the growing waste crisis in the breathtaking trails of the popular Himachal Pradesh. The cleanup expedition will take place in India from September 29th to October 18.

This clean-up expedition marks another significant step under Mashreq's global initiative, Climb2Change, which integrates the bank's ongoing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) efforts and milestones. With an ambition to scale and clean up 14 mountain sites around the world, including 7 peaks and 7 base camps, Climb2Change underscores Mashreq's commitment to sustainability and its ambition to accelerate environmental and social impact. The expedition builds on the momentum of its highly impactful phases in Nepal, Pakistan and Egypt.

Ahmed Abdelaal, Group CEO of Mashreq, stated: *"Bringing Climb2Change to India marks a powerful extension of our global sustainability journey and reinforces Mashreq's unwavering commitment to driving measurable environmental and social impact. This mission in the Himalayas represents not only an effort to clean and protect some of the world's iconic ecosystems, but also an opportunity to inspire a culture of environmental responsibility and community action. India, with its rich natural heritage and dynamic communities, is a key market in our ESG strategy. Through this initiative, we aim to foster meaningful engagement, empower local stakeholders, and set a precedent for how businesses can lead in building a sustainable future."*

Through the next phase of its mountain clean-up mission in India, Mashreq will undertake:

- **Kheerganga Trek:** Located in Kullu District in Himachal Pradesh, this trail is known for its lush green landscapes and natural hot springs, this trail is situated at approximately 10,000 feet. Recent estimates indicate that the influx of trekkers has led to significant waste accumulation, jeopardising the delicate ecosystem of the Parvati Valley.
- **Hampta Pass Trek:** Rising to an elevation of 14,065 feet, this trek connects the lush Kullu Valley with the stark beauty of Lahaul and Spiti. The diverse terrain, ranging from dense forests to glacial valleys, has suffered from unmanaged waste due to the increasing footfall.

To address the mounting environmental pressures, the upcoming expedition in India will serve as a critical intervention, aiming to restore natural ecosystems, raise awareness about sustainable tourism, and advocate for responsible waste management. The expedition will be led by a formidable team of renowned climbers:

- **Emirati adventurer, Saeed Al-Memari**, the first Arab to complete the daunting 'Explorer Grand Slam', which involved conquering the highest mountain on each of the seven continents and to reach the North and South Pole.
- **Indian athlete, Prakriti Varshney**, has summited Mount Everest, Mount Lhotse, and Mount Makalu. Prakriti is breaking barriers for women in adventure sports while advocating for sustainability, mental health, and plant-based living.

“Over the years, I have had the privilege of standing on the highest peaks across all seven continents and reaching both the North and South Poles. Yet no matter how far I have gone, one truth remains clear – the natural world is in urgent need of protection. Through Climb2Change, we are not only cleaning up the Himalayan trails but are clearing a path for future generations to experience these places with the same awe and respect. That, to me, is a summit worth reaching”, said **Saeed Al-Memari**.

Prakriti Varshney commented: *“As an Indian athlete, the Himalayas are not just a destination, they are home. And my journey has always been about pushing physical and mental limits to create positive change. Mashreq’s Climb2Change initiative and this expedition is a chance to protect our spectacular, yet strained landscapes, and spark a wider conversation about sustainability, especially among the next generation of climbers and explorers.”*

Supported by strategic partners such as Healing Himalayas and Real Impact, Mashreq’s mission emphasises collaboration with local organisations to create lasting environmental change.

A team of Mashreq employees will also be directly involved in clean-up efforts and community engagement, attending educational sessions about local recycling efforts, and engaging with local communities in the Barshaini and Kasol regions ensuring that the impact extends beyond the clean-up itself.

Mashreq’s mountain clean-up missions, fall under the umbrella of Climb2Change, Mashreq’s strategic and global initiative that integrates the bank’s wide-ranging ESG efforts and milestones. They are designed to catalyse environmental awareness, promote waste reduction and recycling, and foster stewardship through localised action.

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About Mashreq:

Mashreq is more than half-century old, yet proudly thinks like a challenger, startup, and innovator. Mashreq pioneered key innovations and developments in banking, starting with entry-level digital-first customers all the way to powering some of the region's most prominent corporations and wealth accounts.

The bank's mandate is to help customers find their way to Rise Every Day, partnering through the highs and lows to help them achieve their goals and unlock their vision of success.

Reassuringly present in major financial centres of the world, Mashreq's home and global HQ remains in the Middle East, offering services whenever and wherever opportunity takes its customers. Mashreq has been recognised as the fastest-growing Middle East brand, by Banking 500 rankings for 2024 by Brand Finance.

Find your way to Rise Every Day at: www.Mashreq.com/RiseEveryDay

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