



## Shah Dej Group, New Routes

Iran

**North of Tehran, a spectacular road leads to the Caspian Sea, passing numerous walls and high mountains, including Alam Kooh (4,851m, a.k.a. Alamkouh or Alamkoh), with one of the biggest granite walls in the country. Many rock towers in the area are still unclimbed.** Close to the Amir Kabir reservoir, about 1.5 hours' drive from Tehran, is a huge, rocky summit called Shah Dej ("Kingdom Castle," also spelled Shahdzh), which has big granite cliffs that nobody had ever attempted. I tried to climb a ca 300m wall on this peak, north of the village of Khor and near the Pahnesar ski resort, three times. This wall tops out at 2,300m.

During my first attempt, with Ali Karimi and Mehdi Farahani, I opened three pitches. The fourth pitch, a wide crack, was too dangerous because of loose footholds and lack of protection. Next time I went in the winter. The cracks were full of ice and the slabs were slippery. I finished the fourth pitch, but it was too late to continue to the summit. Finally, in October, Zohre Ofoghi and I returned to the tower in nice weather. We reclimbed the first four pitches and then added another four pitches to the summit: Golden Eagle (310m, 6c).

The second wall we climbed, Loodar, is in the same area, near Khozenkola village. Because of security concerns around the dam, access to this area is tightly controlled, and permission must be arranged with the dam security forces. Zohreh Ofoghi and I met with a local climber in November, Majid Azimi, and we all started the trek to the wall very early in the morning. After an hour-long approach we reached the base of the wall around sunrise. We ate breakfast and started quickly, hoping to complete the wall in a day. I thought the route would be 400m long, but I made a big mistake—it was more than 800m.

Most of the pitches were easy, but sometimes they had a few tricky moves. Other pitches were more difficult (up to 6c/5.11a). At the eighth pitch we took a rest and ate lunch. On the ninth pitch a falling stone broke Majid's finger, and he was obliged to climb the rest of the wall with his broken hand. The trickiest lead of the wall was the 12th (5.11a), with loose rock and limited protection. We continued to the summit and began the trek down a rocky route that took a lot of time. (Next time I would rappel the route.) We made it back at 11 p.m., after a hard day of around 17 hours, and named the route Marathon because it needed stamina and patience!

Hamid Reza Shafaghi, Iran

## Images



Topo for Golden Eagle, Shah Dej.



First pitch (5.11a) of Golden Eagle.



Climbing on Marathon.



Climbing on Marathon.





Zohreh Ofoghi, Majid Azimi, and Hamid Reza Shafaghi on top of the 800m route Marathon.



Majid Azimi's broken finger.



Photo topo of Marathon on Loodar.



View of Loodar from the Chalos road.



Zohreh Ofoghi on Marathon.

Article Details

Author	Hamid Reza Shafaghi
Publication	AAJ
Volume	58
Issue	90
Page	0
Copyright Date	2016
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions