



Fifth Koksil Glacier, Chapchingol Sar and Other Peaks

Pakistan, Karakoram, Ghujerab Mountains

Tomaž Goslar, Mojca Švajger, and I arrived in Pakistan on July 10 with the aim of climbing a high peak in the Hindu Kush. However, due to security issues on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, our permit was denied and we had to focus quickly on another area, below 6,500m, where a climbing permit is not required. We decided to go to the Koksil Valley, south of and close to the Karakoram Highway. This valley lies within Khunjerab National Park and therefore we had to wait three days for an entry permit.

On the 25th we reached base camp at around 4,190m (36°46'47.3"N, 75°20'43"E), close to shepherds' huts in the main Koksil Valley, below the Fourth Koksil Glacier. The weather was bad for the next eight days, but we used the few dry hours to explore.

On August 1 we set up an advanced base on the Fifth Koksil Glacier at 5,100m, southwest of the main valley. Over the next few days we climbed the three highest peaks in the cirque. On August 2 we climbed Peak 5,802m (GPS measurement; ca 5,800m on Jerzy Wala's Koksil Valley sketch map; 36°46'35.5"N, 75°17'50.4"E) via the south-southwest face. The next day we climbed Peak 5,809m (5,760m on the Wala map; 36°45'40"N, 75°17'20.9"E) via an east to west traverse, and on the 4th we climbed Chapchingol Sar (6,103m; 6,082m on the Wala map; 36°46'07.8"N, 75°16'29.3"E) via the southeast face and northeast ridge. [The name Chapchingol Sar has been attributed to this peak for some time and appears on the Japanese Miyamori maps published in 2001. However, Google Earth and Gunter Seyfferth (himalaya-info.org) mark Chapchingal Sar I more than 10km to the southwest, on the south side of the upper Chapchingol Valley. This other summit is more frequently referred to as Sonia Peak and is the highest in the immediate area (6,265m according to Seyfferth, but as high as 6,400m from other sources). It has been climbed a number of times since its first ascent in the early 1990s.]

On the 5th we descended to base camp. Two days later we explored the Fourth Koksil Glacier, where we made the first ascent of a peak of around 5,500m (36°44'56.32"N, 75°19'39.48"E) on the western rim. The only previous ascent from this glacier basin appears to be Peak 5,830m GPS (5,720m on the Wala map), on the eastern rim at 36°44'35.91"N, 75°20'53.99"E (see AAJ 2014). By August 9 the weather was bad again and we left the area.

The glacier basins we visited have potential for further exploration and the first ascents of more peaks. While these may be not particularly high, they are beautiful and demanding in their own way, because of the remote situation.

– Irena Mrak, Slovenia

Images



Looking west from the western rim of the Fourth Koksil Glacier at the Fifth Koksil Glacier and (A) Peak 5,809m, (B) Chapchingol Sar (6,103m), and (C) Peak 5,802m, all climbed for the first time in 2018. The Chapchingol Pass (5,241m) lies hidden in the obvious dip in the ridge running away from the camera.



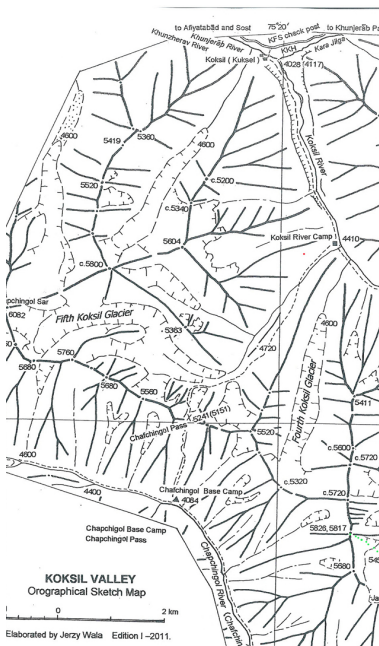
A panorama south from the Fifth Koksil Glacier. Center stage is the somber north face of Distaghil Sar, while the broad snowy pyramid to its right is Malungatti Sar.



The southeast face and northeast ridge of Chapchingol Sar.



Looking southeast at Peak 5,809m and the east-west traverse completed in 2018, followed by a descent of the upper Fifth Koskil Glacier.



Jerzy Wala's sketch map of the Fourth and Fifth Koksil glaciers. The Karakoram Highway is at the top and the Chapchingol River valley near the bottom.



Looking east down the Fifth Koksil Glacier and the route of ascent up Peak 5,802m via the south-southwest face.

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