



West Harsil Horn, First Ascent via West-southwest Ridge

India, Gangotri

The Harsil Horns from the north. The west peak (right) was climbed in 2020 from the col to the west of the mountain (not visible).

Harsil village (ca 2,400m) lies on the main road from Uttarkashi to Gangotri, about 30km before reaching the latter. The name Harsil may derive from the horns of a deer—in this case referring to twin rock peaks around 5km to the south across the Bhagirathi River. The Harsil Horns more or less form the end of the long northwest ridge of Srikanta (6,133m) in the far western Gangotri.

The westernmost and seemingly the higher of the two summits (4,823m, 30°59'26.18"N, 78°45'15.70"E) was attempted in November 2019 by a team from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM), Uttarkashi, with an aim of promoting trekking and tourism in this region. Heavy snowfall prevented an ascent, but a useful reconnaissance was achieved.

In June 2020, with their outdoor courses canceled due to COVID-19, the NIM and its principal, Col. Amit Bisht, organized another attempt. The team reached base camp at 3,620m on the 22nd, and on the 25th carried out a reconnaissance of the route to a high camp at 4,387m. The latter part of this involved steep, snow-covered slopes interspersed with rocky outcrops.

The team moved to high camp on the 27th, and the following day five members—Col. Bisht, Lt. Col. Yogesh Dhumal, Hav Thinlass Gyalpo, Shri Shivraj Singh Panwar, and Shri Saurav Singh—left for the summit at 4 a.m. Steep snow led to a col west of the summit, and then the climbers ascended the south flank of the rocky west-southwest ridge. Fixing ropes where deemed necessary, the five reached the top at 9:30 a.m. The team descended safely to base camp the same day.

— Information provided by **Amit Bisht**, Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, India

Images



The climb to summit camp.



Descending the snow slope below the col west of Harsil Horn. The 2020 team's summit camp is circled.



The Harsil Horns from the north. The west peak (right) was climbed in 2020 from the col to the west of the mountain (not visible).



On top of West Harsil Horn.



During the ascent of West Harsil Horn.



During the ascent of West Harsil Horn.



Summit camp at 4,387m and the broad snow couloir leading to the col west of the Harsil Horns.



West Harsil Horn from the north-northwest. The route of ascent climbed the snow slopes next to the peak to a col in the cloud, then behind the right skyline.

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