



AAC Publications

Peaks 5,561m and 5,500m, First Ascents and Ski Descents

Pakistan, Karakoram, Lupghar Group

The southeast face of Peak 5,561m, showing the line of ascent and ski descent in April 2022. Photo by Boris Langenstein.

After visiting the Sumayar Valley, near Rakaposhi (see report here), Boris Langenstein and Kevin Sur traveled to the valley that rises west-northwest from Khaibar on the Karakoram Highway. This valley splits, with the Khaibar Nala rising to the north and the Shaujerab Nala continuing west until it bends north and becomes the Shaujerab Glacier. The glacier leads to the Shaujerab peaks, which geographically lie in the Lupghar Group.

The pair began from the Khaibar hydroelectric station and followed a path and then animal tracks to a gorge partially exposed to rockfall and avalanches. (The water was low in April, so it was possible to stay in the gorge, criss-crossing the river. Later in the season, it would be necessary to take to the steep, rocky slopes above the river.) Once clear of the gorge, the going became easier to the base of the glacier.

From the headwaters of the Shaujerab, Langenstein and Sur climbed and skied two small but steep peaks on the watershed ridges, becoming probably the first people to climb any summits from this valley. On April 24, from a camp at around 4,450m on the lower moraines, the two climbed Peak 5,561m (36°37'7.25"N, 74°42'49.01"E) via the southeast face (700m). The route followed steepening slopes above the glacier to finish via a delicate, rightward-slanting ramp of 50°. This route was then skied continuously to the glacier.

Next day they climbed an unnamed peak of around 5,500m at 36°37'19.36"N, 74°43'33.27"E, following the southwest couloir and upper south glacier and headwall, then skiing the same route. After ascending the couloir to a plateau on the south glacier, the pair climbed 40–45° slopes, finishing up a very steep 150m couloir, to give a route (and ski descent) of 700m.

Between these two summits, and at the very head of the glacier, lies Peak 5,576m, which was climbed in 1990 from the Shelin Maidan Glacier to the west by Scottish couple Gill and Hamish Irvine.

— **Lindsay Griffin, AAJ, with information from Boris Langenstein, France**

Images



The southeast face of Peak 5,561m, showing the line of ascent and ski descent in April 2022.



Looking southwest from Peak 5,561m, along the watershed ridge between the Shaujarab and Shelin Maidan glaciers, to unclimbed Peak 5,807m. The far distant high peaks belong to the Passu-Batura group.



The southwest couloir and upper south glacier of Peak ca 5,500m seen from Peak 5,561m.



The northeast face of unclimbed Peak 5,807m, above the Shaujerab Glacier.



Kevin Sur makes the upper south glacier ski descent on Peak ca 5,500m.



Kevin Sur during the first ascent of Peak 5,561m.



Unclimbed peaks on the southern side of the Khaibar Valley. Through the gap, the large snow peak is Ultar (7,388m).



Unclimbed peaks of the Khaibar, seen from the entrance to the valley in summer.

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