



AAC Publications

Gunj-e-Dur Valley, Tuki Sar and AK Sar

Pakistan, Karakoram, Ghujerab Mountains, Shuijerab Subgroup

(A) Peak 282 and (B) Peak 283 (Tuki Sar, 5,850m). The ascent of Tuki Sar was near the right skyline. The climbers then traversed to Peak 281 (AK Sar), hidden behind Peak 282. Photo by Jacob Dyer.

In August, after over a year of planning, Will Dixon, Job Klusener, James Rigby, and I arrived in Pakistan. While we had a lot of experience in the Alps and Scotland, this was our first time on an expedition aiming to make first ascents, so we wanted objectives that would allow flexibility, depending on conditions. After reading the 2017 British Shimshal Expedition report (AAJ 2018), we settled on the Gunj-e-Dur Valley, where the First and Second East Gunj-e-Dur Glaciers contained almost a dozen unclimbed peaks of varying style and difficulty just below 6,000m.

After three days of flights and driving, we reached Shimshal, from where a three-day trek took us to base camp. We then explored the Second East Gunj-e-Dur Glacier. We quickly saw the effects of what is now being described as the hottest year on record. Temperatures on the summits of 6,000m peaks were barely going below freezing, even at night. We could see debris from a couple of small avalanches, and most of the rock we came across was extremely loose.

Our first objective was Peak 289 (5,775m; peak numbers taken from Jerzy Wala's maps to the Ghujerab Mountains). Job and I attempted the south ridge, reaching the col between Peaks 289 and 290 via a 30°–35° snow slope. We continued up the ridge over loose, rocky terrain until reaching a four-meter blank wall. A mixed option to the left was too warm in the sun, so we headed down. [This ridge was also the goal of a 2022 expedition, which turned back from the col; see AAJ 2023.]

On the 20th, James, Job, and I climbed Peak 281 (5,907m, 36°34'26.38"N, 75°36'20.40"E) via the south-southeast ridge of Peak 283 (5,850m, 36°34'12.14"N, 75°36'30.57"E). After an initial snow slope to gain the ridge, we were able to pass most of the short rock sections on the right, using steep patches of snow. Below the rocky summit of Peak 283, we roped up and I led a couple of winding pitches until moderate terrain brought us to the summit, which we named Tuki Sar. After a short rappel and a slog across snow, bypassing Peak 282, we reached the top of Peak 281, which we named AK Sar after our two cooks, Ali and Khadim, who had been outstanding.

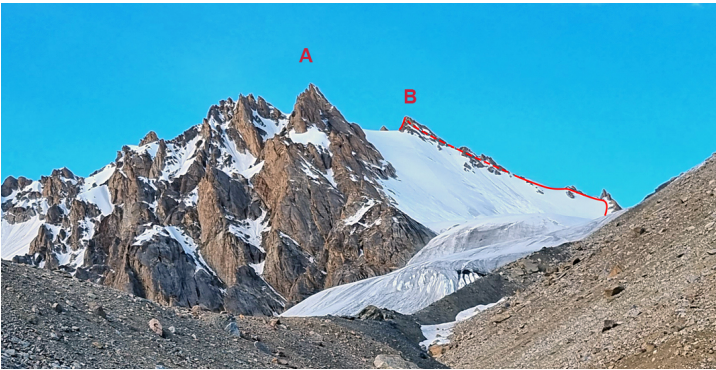
In the afternoon of August 21, as Will left to bivouac before an attempt on Peak 275 (ca 5,850m) from the Third East Gunj-e-Dur Glacier, Khadim commented that we were cutting it close to the porters arriving. This surprised us, as we didn't expect to leave base camp until day 25 of the expedition. It was only day 16. It turned out there had been some language confusion between "day" and "date"; we had planned a 24-day expedition, ending on August 29, but the porters were to arrive on August 24. As a result, we ended up losing five climbing days. We made the most of it by exploring Shimshal and Hunza as tourists.

— Jacob Dyer, U.K.

Images



Unclimbed Peak 289 and the route up the south ridge in 2023.



(A) Peak 282 and (B) Peak 283 (Tuki Sar, 5,850m). The ascent of Tuki Sar was near the right skyline. The climbers then traversed to Peak 281 (AK Sar), hidden behind Peak 282.



The south face of Gunj-e-Sar (6,250m), first climbed from the north in 2021 (see AAJ 2022). The large glacier to the left is the main Gunj-e-Dur, while to the right is the upper First East Gunj-e-Dur Glacier leading to Trident.



Looking northeast from Peak 281 to Peak 284 and the ridge running southeast (right) to Peak 287 (5,945m). All summits on this ridge are unclimbed. Behind lie unnamed peaks in the northern Shuijerab.



On Peak 283, looking southeast. The rounded snow peak on the left, on the far side of the Second East Gunje-Dur Glacier, is Peak 295 (5,928m).



Looking northwest from Peak 281 to Peak 275 and its subsummits. All of these peaks are believed to be unclimbed.



Looking southeast from Peak 281 to peaks above the Shuijerab Glacier. In the foreground is unclimbed Peak 289 (5,775m), attempted in 2023 from the col on the right.

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