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New Routes on Pik Alpinist and Pik Koroleva, and Other Ascents

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Western Kokshaal-too

On August 4–5, Kirill Belotserkovskiy (Kazakhstan), Ivan Temerev, and Alexey Tyulyupo (both Russia) climbed Pik Alpinist (5,482m, 41°03'04"N, 77°43'59"E) by a new route up the northwest face to the north ridge. This limestone peak rises in the center of the Chon-turasu valley, splitting the Chon-turasu and Essledovatley glaciers.

Apart from the first two pitches, which had rotten ice, the northwest face involved moderate ice up to the ridge, which they followed to the summit. Returning the same way, they bivied at the point where their face route met the ridge, in order to improve their acclimatization for their next route. In the morning, a dozen rappels took them back to the Chon-turasu Glacier.

Pik Alpinist was first climbed by a team led by M. Lebedev from August 15–19, 1993; they ascended the steep east face to the north ridge. In 1996, a German and French trio climbed the left edge of the rock face at the foot of the north ridge and continued up the ridge to the summit. Both parties descended the east ridge.

Three days after descending from Pik Alpinist, the trio headed to their main objective, a new route on the north side of Pik Koroleva (5,816m, 41°04'48"N, 77°46'08"E). After a bivouac by Leta- veta Pass, the next morning Tyulyupo led two pitches up poor ice and rock above the pass. After conferring about the dangerously warm conditions raining debris on them, they decided to retreat.

They then made for the obvious couloir at the western end of the north face, leading to the long northwest ridge, which was reached from the western side for the 1969 first ascent of the mountain. They climbed 15 pitches of moderate ice to where the couloir narrows, followed by a couple of pitches of steeper and mixed climbing to crest the ridge, where they chopped a ledge for their small tent.

Moving up the ridge, they topped a gendarme, rappelled off, and continued up difficult rock for several pitches (M4–5) in worsening weather, before continuing up the lower-angle summit ridge. Battling deep snow and high winds, the trio agreed to turn around at 6 p.m.; happily, they reached the summit at 5:47 p.m. They were back at their tent site by 11 p.m. and continued rappelling to the base of the route, reaching it at 4 a.m. with snow still falling.

On August 16, Temerev and Tyulyupo set off for the south face of Pik Marona East (4,610m, 41°07'22"N, 77°42'03"E), on which they climbed 15 pitches of rock up to 6b/c. During this time, Belotserkovskiy scrambled up the northwest ridge of Pik Kaliningrad (4,560m GPS/4,485m map) and the south ridge of Pik Skalitsiy (4,850m, 41°06'01.6"N, 77°45'20.9"E), the latter of which may have been the first ascent of the mountain.

This was Belotserkovskiy's second productive visit to these peaks at the eastern end of the Western Kokshaal-too, having made the first ascent of the north face of Pik Chon-turasu (5,728m) in 2019 with partner Max Ten.

– Damien Gildea, AAJ, with information from Kirill Belotserkovskiy

Images



Pik Koroleva and the 2021 route up the north face and northwest ridge. The 1969 first ascent of the peak was by the northwest ridge, reached from the west face on the opposite side.



Pik Alpinist with (1) 1993 route up east face (first ascent of peak), (2) 1996 north ridge route, and (3) 2021 northwest face to north ridge.

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