



AAC Publications

Pheker and Mirshikar, New Routes; Passu Sar Solo Ascent and Attempt to Traverse Batura Group

Pakistan, Karakoram, Rakaposhi and Batura Areas

Drone photo of James Price in the Passu Cwm en route to climbing Passu Sar, with Shispare behind. Price is carrying the long pole to protect against crevasse falls. Photo by Sebastián Carniato.

It's August and I'm back in the Hunza Valley. Pakistan has been hit by the strongest rains in 60 years, roads are blocked, there's no power, and we are waiting for the monsoon to stop. On the 30th the sun shows itself and I leave for Kachelli (Diran Base Camp) in the Minapin Valley, with good friends Hassan Aljabbal, Adnan Khan, and Sébastien Carniato.

From Kachelli, we climb north over rocky and grassy slopes to reach a steep snow gully, which we follow to the col between Mirshikar and Pheker. Leaving alone, early on September 2, from our high camp on this col, I head southeast along the ridge toward Pheker (5,465m, 36°11'57.66"N, 74°38'17.99"E). I pick a line through seracs on the north flank to gain the summit and return to our high camp by mid-morning.

A day later, all four of us summit Mirshikar (5,486m) via the southeast ridge, then bivouac on top before descending the unclimbed southwest ridge to complete the first traverse of this beautiful peak. [See story here for some history and former route names of mountains in this area.]

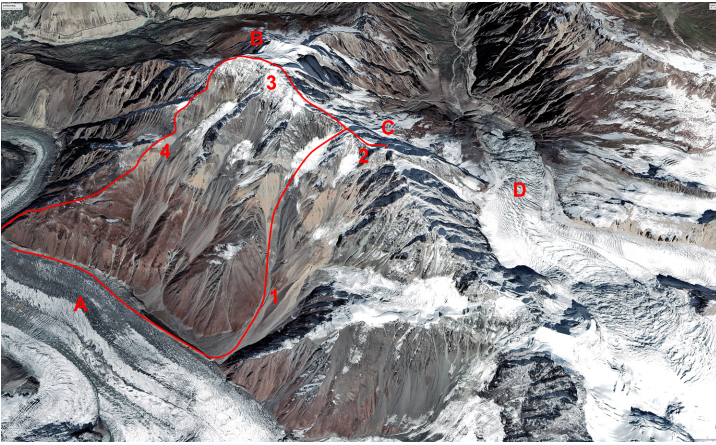
Back in the Hunza Valley, I turn my focus to the Batura Group: the chain of 7,000m peaks that separates the old kingdoms of Burushal and Wakhan. The plan is to link these peaks, solo, from southeast to northwest, climbing over Passu Sar, Muchu Chhish, and Batura VI in the process.

I leave the village of Passu on the 11th, with 30kg of kit and supplies for three weeks. I follow my 2021 route up the Batura Glacier and the north ridge of Hiriz (5,550m, 36°29'50.42"N, 74°42'5.45"E) to cross south into the "hidden valley" (Passu Cwm). From there, I climb west through a complicated icefall to reach the upper Passu Glacier. I turn the large rock summit of Passu East (Diar) on the north side, gain the crest leading to the Batura Group, and continue some 3km to the summit of Passu Sar (7,470m).

From here, the northwest ridge leads down to a pass at 6,900m and beyond this is Muchu Chhish. I start down, but with strong winds, poor visibility, and large cornices, I decide to turn back and bivouac at the summit of Passu Sar and wait for better conditions. The weather continues to deteriorate, and after 30 hours I decide to retreat. The descent is long, much snow falls, and I suffer severe frostbite to both feet.

— James Price, U.K.

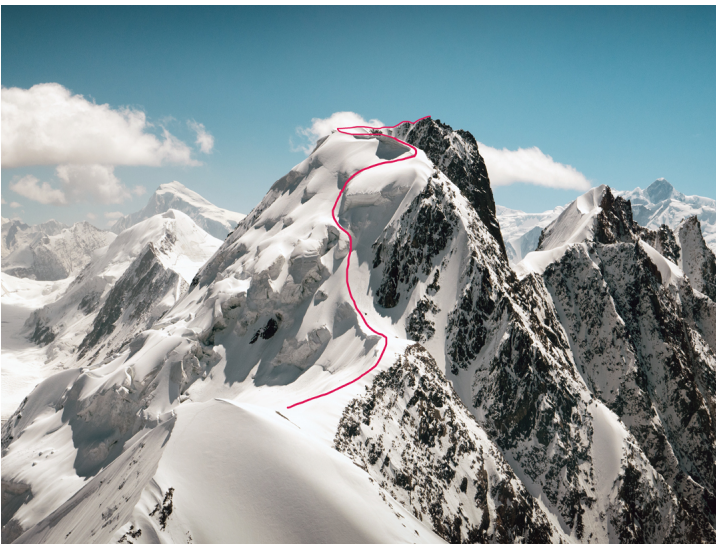
Images



(A) Minapin Glacier. (B) Mirshikar. (C) Pheker. (D) Sumayar Glacier. (1) Southwest face to col. (2) Northwest ridge of Pheker. (3) Southeast ridge of Mirshikar. (4) Southwest ridge of Mirshikar.



Looking along the northwest ridge of Pheker from the vicinity of the Pheker-Mirishikar col. Behind and to the right is Diran.



The route taken in 2022 along Pheker's northwest ridge. To the left, the top of Spantik peaks above the nearer snowy summit of Daranishi Chhish.



(A) Pheker, (B) col, and (C) Mirshikar seen from Dawson Peak to the east-southeast. The 2022 ascensionists of these two peaks reached the col (B) from the far side.



Drone photo of James Price in the Passu Cwm en route to climbing Passu Sar, with Shispare behind. Price is carrying the long pole to protect against crevasse falls.



Camp on the way to Passu Sar, with Shispare in back and the upper Passu Glacier. Price climbed the north ridge of Hiriz (5,550m) to reach and cross over the ridgeline between the Batura and Passu glaciers, giving safer and less complex access to the Passu Cwm than climbing directly up the Passu Glacier.

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