

Slovene Chhogo 2024 mountaineering expedition report

by Matija Jošt - Matic

Summary

"Slovenian Chhogo 2024 expedition" visited Chhogo Tokpo in Zanskar. Chhogo is one of main valleys in Haptal mountains massif and it is eastern branch of Haptal Tokpo. Main objective of our expedition was to climb virgin Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16) 6431 m, (GPS, N 33°23.150', E 76°48.783') mountain. We also want to made some more exploration of Chhogo Tokpo glacier and maybe made some ascents of other virgin 6000+ meter peaks. We realized all our plans as we managed to climb T16 and two more previously unclimbed six thousanders and made more exploration of the Chhogo glacier area. At 15th July 2024 all members reach the summit of Skarma Mindruk Ri 6431 m (aka T16). The second mountain we managed to climb was Antimatterhorn 6130m (GPS, N 33°20,987' E 76°47,273'). Ascent was made on 21st July 2024. At 25th July 2024 we made first ascent of Spao Ri (aka T9) 6107 m (GPS N 33° 20,040' E 76° 47,121'). At 20st July 2024 we made first ascent of virgin rock spire located east of BC. We named it Ibex 5321m (GPS N 33° 23,642' E 76° 47,182'). We made attempt to climb nice looking rock face of P5435 m (GPS N 33° 23,301' E 76° 47,035') above BC.

Introduction

The mountains in Zanskar have been gaining popularity in recent years. Although mountaineering activity is on the rise, there are still plenty of unconquered peaks between 5,500 and 6,500 m high. The road connections of the area are getting better and the travel time to the mountains is consequently shorter. Access to Base Camps in Zanskar is relatively short (1-3 days) and very strong well acclimatized parties can climb some mountains from road head in single push. The lack of quality maps in recent years is at least partly replaced by navigation applications. There is still some confusion about peak names and in general there is lack of systematical recording of mountaineering activity. The first to publish at least approximate usable mountaineering maps (topographical sketches) of the area is Japanese senior Kimikazu Sakamoto, who has led several research mountaineering expeditions to various mountain ranges in Zanskar. His reports from the expeditions somehow awakened interest in Zanskar in the mountaineering sense. Since most of the peaks are nameless, Sakamoto introduced the nomenclature of naming the peaks according to the area. For example, T for peaks in Temesa Nala, R for peaks in Raru Range, H for peaks in Haptal Tokpo, etc. Expeditions inspired by his explorations found that his "maps" were sometimes difficult to reconcile with the real situation on the ground, but in general they could be used. The IMF again keeps its record of open peaks, which contains the geographical coordinates and heights of the peaks and they just numbered the peaks from No 1 forward. Very few peaks on the IMF list have names. For our expedition, in addition to navigation applications that display relief with contours, we also used homemade "maps" printed on the basis of Google Earth. A factor that does not contribute to popularization of the area is certainly lack of attractive photographic material (photos of walls and mountains). I also think that IMF foreign expedition policy and whole system based on "peak permissions" is out of time and quite inappropriate for such open space like Zanskar (and other mountain ranges north from main Himalayan Ridge). I think more suitable management model for managing mountaineering activity in such areas is based "environmental park" policy. It is quite easy and practical to climb and explore in Zanskar mountains without any legal permission but in the future, it can cause safety problems, ecological problems ect. The dimensions of the walls and mountains in Zanskar are quite friendly for the Himalayas and therefore also suitable for the first Himalayan experience. Despite the alpine dimensions of the mountains, it is still serious mountaineering at a fairly high altitude. The mountains are little visited, the possibilities of rescue are very limited, and the possibility of communicating with the "outside world" from the mountains is also very limited, as the use of any satellite communication systems is prohibited and strictly controlled in this part of India. Mountaineering in Zanskar is serious, authentic, Himalayan experience.

Before this year's expedition, there was more uncertainty than I would have expected. Chhogo valley is quite unexplored and still without an established place for the base camp. Approach starts at road bridge which bridges Haptal river (tributary of Doda River). First you follow flat main Haptal valley but at N 33° 26.552' , E 76° 46.922' you take turn into Chhogo Tokpo. From that point on, there is no real path and at the beginning terrain is quite steep, later valley is more laid. It is very hard to reach BC with horses, maybe you can reach it with yaks. Our porters at first said to us that we can reach BC in one day but we realized later that they didn't have exact idea where we are going. Normal time for approach to BC with heavy loaded porters is two days. We set our base camp on the plain next to the glacial river (GPS N 33°23'58.83", E 76°46'32.94" , 4482m). Clean spring water, green grass, lots of flowers and really good boulders suitable for bouldering. The east face of H17 (5800 m) rose steeply above BC. From BC we could not see our main goal (T16, 6431 m) from the deep valley. The entire eastern horizon was obscured by a wild world of rocky ridges and deep side valleys that cut into the ridge that winds from Haftal Kangri (6178 m) through unclimbed T19 (6162 m), T18 (6184 m), T16 (6431 m), unclimbed T13 (6436 m) and up to T9 (6107 m).

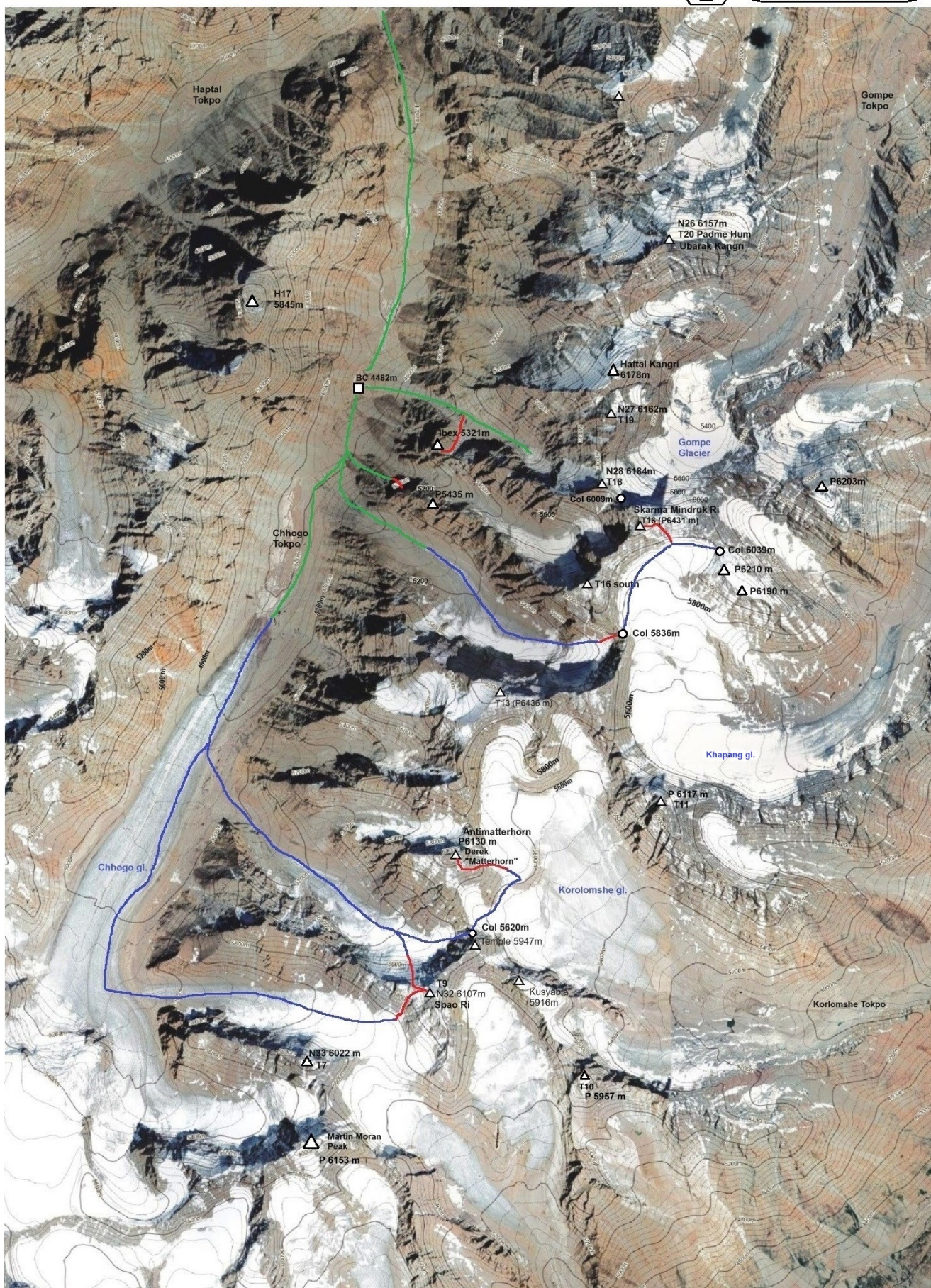
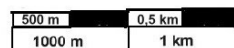
SLOVENIAN CHHOGO 2024 CLIMBING EXPEDITION

- Map by Matija Jost - Matic, July 2024



Ekvidistanca plastnic = 40m

Aproximate scale:



Members:

- Nejc Škrablin (32 years), member
- Tilen Cmok (28 years), member
- Cigljari Uroš (31 years), member
- Dečman Boštjan (32 years), member
- Tomaž Žerovnik (56 years), member
- Matija Jošt – Matic (53 years), "leader" (matijostsp@siol.net)
- Sonu Kumar (LO)

Agency in India and team:

Skitpo Travel ([Skitpo Travel – Ladakh & Zaskar Trekking / Expedition](#))

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- Lobzang Rinchen (manager)
- Tenzin Tzepel (manager)
- Lobzang Gombo (cook)
- Sonam Rabges (cook)
- Yeshe Dorjay (manager)



Group photo of the team and their hosts after successful ascent in Tungri village. First line from left Sonam Rabges, Sonu Kumar, Skalzeng, Lobzang Gombo, Cigljari Uroš, Tilen Cmok. Second line: Matija Jošt – Matic, Nejc Škrablin, Dečman Boštjan, Lobzang Rinchen, Chokla, Tenzin Tzepel, Tomaž Žerovnik.

Photo Tess Smith



Base camp site at Chhogo tokpo
(GPS 33°23'58.83"N, 76°46'32.94"E, 4482m).

Photo Nejc Škrablin



Rock faces above base camp.

Photo Matija Jost – Matic

Short mountaineering history of Chhogo tokpo and nearby valleys

2010. French team lead by Jonathan Crison climb HAFTAL KANGRI (6,178M), NORTHWEST FACE. They put up ABC camp in lower Chhogo tokpo when they approached to their objective. Their report includes some photographs of T16.

[AAC Publications - Asia, India, Zaskar, Haftal Kangri \(6,178m\), Northwest Face \(americanalpineclub.org\)](#)

2012. Japanese senior Kimikazu Sakamoto with his team visited Temasa Nala, Gompe Tokpo and Haptal Tokpo. They made exploratory treks and made some sketch maps of the area and names the peaks with T for Temasa nala, H for Haptal ect. They also published some photographs of the peaks. They never go to Chhogo tokpo. Their report includes some photographs of T16.

<http://publications.americanalpineclub.org/articles/13201212330/Temasa-Gompe-and-Haptal-valleys-exploration>

2014. The Kolkata section of the Himalayan Club organized a trip to climb a virgin peak in Gompe Tokpo. With the help of four Sherpas, the team made attempt on Peak 6,431m (T16). They reach the col at 6,009m and coordinates of 33°23'20"N, 76°48'25"E. After the Sherpas failed to find a route to Peak 6,431m (T16), they climbed virgin rocky pyramid Peak 6,184m (T18). They never go to Chhogo tokpo. Their report includes some photographs of T16.

[AAC Publications - Gompe Tokpo Glacier, T18 \(Peak 6,184m\), West Ridge \(americanalpineclub.org\)](#)

2015. Derek Buckle led a small team of Alpine Club members to the Korlomshe Tokpo. They made ascents of Peak 5,916m via its glacial southeast ridge (AD). They called the peak Kusyabla (33°20.159'N, 76°47.747'E), the Ladakhi word for Monk. They also made ascent of Peak 5,947m (AD). This peak, which is situated northwest of Kusyabla and north-northeast of T9 (6,107m), was given the name Temple on account of a pulpit-like rock formation on the summit ridge. They never go to Chhogo tokpo. Their report includes some photographs of T16.

[AAC Publications - Korlomshe Tokpo, Kusyabla And Temple \(americanalpineclub.org\)](#)

2016. Indo-Romanian team lead by Cosmin Andron made ascents of South Summit of T16 via 1,200m route Supercouloir (ED, 6b C1 WI4+ M5/6 75°) and made strong attempt at northwest ridge of T13 (6,436m). It is only reported climbing expedition to Chhogo tokpo, before our expedition.

[AAC Publications - Chhogo Valley, T16, South Summit, Southwest Face; T13, Northwest Ridge, Attempt \(americanalpineclub.org\)](#)



Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16) 6431 m. Picture showing south western aspect of T16 south summit and north face of unclimbed T13 mountain. Photo is taken from approximate 5200 m , N 33° 22.787' , E 76° 47.219' stay point.
Photo Matija Jost – Matic.

Chronology of the expedition

1st July, Monday	Flight Ljubljana – Istanbul - Delhi
2nd July, Tuesday	Delhi arrival 4:45 local time. IMF briefing and starting transport to Manali, night at Manali
3rd July, Wednesday	Manali – Tungri (Padum), road transport, night at Tungri
4th July, Thursday	Tungri, preparation for BC Trek, night at Tungri
5th July, Friday	Tungri, preparation for BC Trek, night at Tungri
6th July, Saturday	First day BC trek. Night en route, camping.
7th July, Sunday	Second day of trek. Reaching BC. Base camp is at GPS location 33° 23.984' N, 76° 46.558'E , 4482m in Chhogo Tokpo
8th July, Monday	All members go up to 5200 m to the beginning of Chhogo side glacier, carry some equipment up and return to BC in the afternoon
9th July, Tuesday	All members go to 5200 m to the beginning of Chhogo side glacier, pick up tents and sleep there
10th July, Wednesday	All members made ascent of snow couloir (300 m, D+, up to 60° ice, M3) to reach Col 5836 m (GPS, N 33°22.421', E 76°48.594') and put up C1. Col 5836 m connecting Chhogo valley with upper Khapang Glacier. All members spent night at C1.
11th July, Thursday	All members descend to BC. We rappel and downclimbed route of ascent
12th July, Friday	Resting in BC.
13th July, Saturday	Resting in BC.
14th July, Sunday	All members ascent to C1, at col 5836 m. Tomaz, Nejc and Matija made recon to Col 6039 m (GPS, N 33°23.024', E 76°49.309'), to get better view to upper part of T16 south face, and they return to C1. All members spent night at C1.
15th July, Monday	All members ascent South face to East ridge (600 m, D+, ice up to 60°) to the summit of T16 (6431 m, GPS, N 33°23.150', E 76°48.783'). We reach summit at 11:15 a.m. hour. We spent aprox. 45 min on board summit enjoying nice views in all directions in beautiful weather. We descend by downclimbing our route of ascent to C1. All members spent night at C1. We named our route "Sentjurska route".
16th July, Tuesday	We clear C1. All members descend to BC. We rappel and downclimbed route of ascent.
17th July, Wednesday	Resting in BC
18th July, Thursday	Resting in BC. Matija explore glacier under the west face of T18 (6184 m) up to 5208 m (GPS 33° 23,690' E 76° 47,756'). Tilen and Uroš carry some rock climbing gear to the foot of P5435 m (GPS N 33° 23,301' E 76° 47,035')
19th July, Friday	Resting in BC.

20th July, Saturday:	<p>Tomas and Matija start from BC up to Chhogo glacier. They went up on the east side glacier, climbed up the couloir (200 m, up to 600) to the 5620 m col and cross to the upper Korolomshe glacier where they bivvy at 5615 m at nice rocky spot (GPS N 33° 20,826' E 76° 47,845'), under the Antimatterhorn peak.</p> <p>Bostjan made first ascent of virgin rock spire. He names it Ibex 5321m (GPS N 33° 23,642' E 76° 47,182').</p> <p>Uros and Tilen went for rock climbing to P5435 m (GPS N 33° 23,301' E 76° 47,035') above BC. It is nice looking west face approx. 400 m high located at the beginning of long west ridge originating from T16 South summit. They enter the wall at 5026 m and climb some 250 m. At that point accident happened. When arranging belay station rock flake broke and hurt badly right arm of Uroš. He experienced short fall. They escape to the foot of the face by 6 rappels and they reach BC same evening, where he gets additional first aid.</p>
21th July, Sunday	<p>Nejc, Uros, Bostjan, Sonu leaves BC. They reach Tungri village by afternoon. In Padum Uros get x-ray of his hand and more medical treatment, but it looks that nothing is broken.</p> <p>Tomaz and Matija at 6:30 start climbing up the east face of Antimatterhorn (6130m GPS: N 33° 20,987' E 76° 47,273') and then switch to south slopes. They get to the summit at 9:30. They named their line Charlatan De Balkan (500m, D+, ice up to 60°) and descent the same line back to the bivvy site and spend the night there.</p>
22nd July, Monday	Tomaz and Matija descent back to BC via their route of ascent. At the beginning of Chhogo glacier they met Tilen. Tungri part of the team sightseeing in Zaskar valley and Ladakh.
23rd July, Tuesday	BC part of the team resting in BC and did some rock climbing. Tungri part of the team sightseeing in Zaskar valley and Ladakh.
24th July: Wednesday	Tomaz leave BC and reach Tungri village by afternoon. Tilen and Matija resting in BC and did some rock climbing. Tungri part of the team sightseeing in Zaskar valley and Ladakh. Late evening some porters arrive to BC.
25th July, Thursday	Early in the morning 1:00 am Matija start from BC up to Chhogo glacier. He went up on the east side glacier and reach the foot of the North face of virgin Spao Ri (aka T9, 6107 m) mountain. He starts climbing up the central part of icy north face at 6:30 and at 9:35 he reaches summit (GPS: N 33° 20,040' E 76° 47,121'). He names his route of ascent Old and abounded (700m, TD, ice up to 75°, rock on the summit ridge II-III UIAA). He then descends down the South-west slopes of Spao Ri via Left couloir (600 m, AD, ice and snow 45°). He continues his descent to another upper east side glacier and finally got to the upper Chhogo glacier and back to the BC by 15:00 hour. Matija, Tilen and cook Lobzang then clean BC. All members and porters reach Tungri village by evening.
26th July, Friday to 29th July, Monday	All members sightseeing in Zaskar valley and Ladakh.
30th July, Tuesday	Tomaz and Tilen went for rock climbing to the entrance of Haptal Tokpo but they climb only 35 m before they retreat. Other members sightseeing in Zaskar valley and Ladakh.
31st July, Wednesday	All members sightseeing in Zaskar valley and Ladakh.
1st August, Thursday	All members drive to Manali. Night spent in Manali.
2nd August, Friday	All members sightseeing in Manali.
3rd August, Saturday	All members sightseeing in Manali.
4th August, Sunday	All members sightseeing in Manali, drive to Delhi.
5th August Monday	Delhi – IMF.
6th August, Tuesday	Delhi departure 6:25 local time. – Istanbul – Ljubljana arrival 19:20 local time.

Ascent of Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16) 6431 m (GPS, N 33°23.150', E 76°48.783')

Šentjurska route (900 m, D+, ice up to 60°, M3), first ascent of the peak.

Climbers: Nejc Škrablin, Tilen Cmok, Cigljar Uroš, Dečman Boštjan, Tomaž Žerovnik, Matija Jošt – Matic

T16 is a very complex mountain. The easiest approach to the main summit of the mountain was promised via the south or the southeastern slopes above the Khapang Glacier. We had some information from previous expeditions to the area. I "knew" the mountain more from Google Earth and relied somewhat on my own photos and photos of fellow climbers from past expeditions taken from the peak of Ri Pok Te (6210 m), where Anastasija Davidova - Nastja and I were in 2015 ([RARU MOUNTAINS 2015 \(raru2015.blogspot.com\)](https://www.raru2015.blogspot.com)), and from the peak of Remalaya (6278 m), where we were together in 2017 with Matjaž Dušič and Tomaž Žerovnik ([AAC Publications - Rangtik Tokpo: Chakdor Ri, Jamyang Ri, and Other Ascents \(americanalpineclub.org\)](#)), and the year before we also hung out there with Nastja ([AAC Publications - Exploration of Rangtik, Shimling, and Denyai Valleys; Remalaye West, South Face \(americanalpineclub.org\)](#)). The big riddle was finding suitable passage from the Chhogo Valley to the Khapang Glacier and we decided to devote part of our acclimatization process to find this out. The weather was nice and at 8th July 2024 we loaded a lot of equipment and went along the steep moraines towards the side glacier east of the Chhogo valley under the north face of T13 (6436 m), where Cosmin and his team also camped in 2016. We made an equipment depot on the glacier at 5200 m and returned to BC. Next attempt day latter, we went up to an altitude of 5,200 m, slept there and the next day continued with the ascent to the saddle of 5836 m. To reach it, we climbed a gully that started with a rock step and ended with a smaller wedged boulder, which we climbed on the left side (300 m, D+, ice up to 60°, M3). We set up tents on the saddle (C1, col 5836 m, N 33° 22.421', E 76° 48.594') and slept there. Although the summit looked close, we were still 600 meters height difference away from it. The altitude took its toll, so the next morning the feeling wasn't exactly the best and the desire to climb to the top was a little waned. We descended back to the base camp. We set two abseil anchoring points: one at the top of the couloir and the second at the bottom of the couloir. Thus, our first altitude camp C1 was created. Two days later at 14th July 2024 we are back on the hill. We climb from the BC to C1 in six hours. Backpacks was lighter and our bodies are already better adopted to thinner air. Morale was top, but we're a little late for an immediate jump to the summit of the mountain. Tomaž, Nejc and Matic made some recon to the upper Khapang Glacier and reached col 6039 m (GPS, N 33° 23.024', E 76° 49.309') located on the ridge connecting T16 6431 m mountain and P6210 m mountain. Next day (15th July 2024) was summit day. We climb the southern slopes above the Khapang glacier, and along the east ridge (600 m, D+, ice up to 60°). We reached summit at 11:15 am in perfect weather. It is hard to believe that we are the first people on it. We hug each other satisfied, taking photos, enjoying the view, build the cairn but we still have a long way down ahead of us. We down climbed our route of ascent and in the afternoon, we are all back in C1. We spent the night there and the next day we put away our tents and descend to base camp and at 16th July 2024 afternoon we were all safe back in BC. Expedition was organized by climbing club Rifnik Šentjur from Slovenian town Šentjur and Climbing club Rifnik Šentjur is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, so the name of the route suggested itself: Šentjurska route (900 m, D+, ice up to 60°, M3). Route is somehow composed from two parts (up to C1 and from upper Khapang Glacier to the top) and is much longer than 900 m (900 m is height difference between upper side Chhogo glacier and summit). It was a bit more complicated with the name of the mountain. T16 sounds really funny (with all respect to Mr. Sakamoto) and we encouraged the locals to give us the name of the mountain. They insisted that the mountain had no name (hard to believe that), but we told them to come up with something. They suggested the name Skarma Mindruk Ri. The interpretation of the name goes something like this: Skarma is star, Mindruk is specific star constellation of 6 stars (Pleiades), Ri is mountain. Nice name and maybe it will catch on.

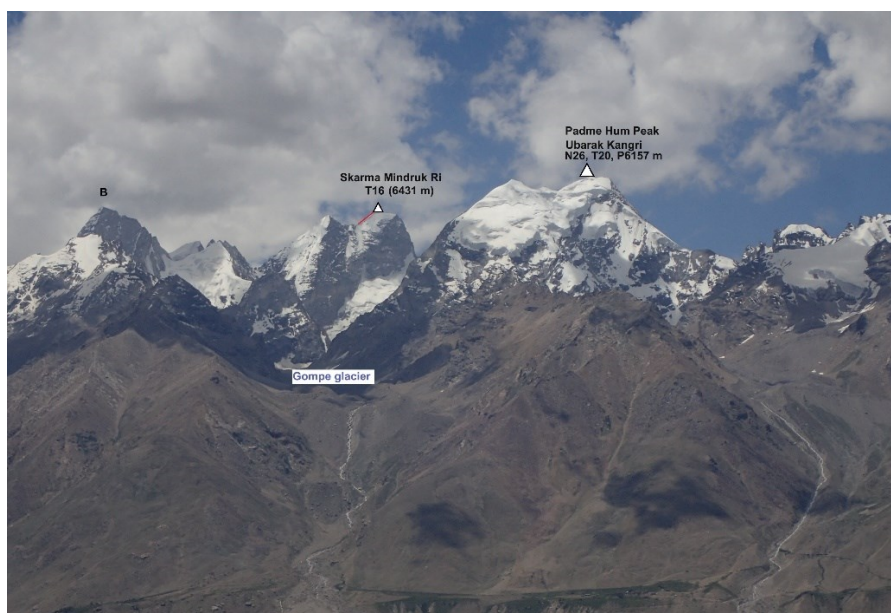
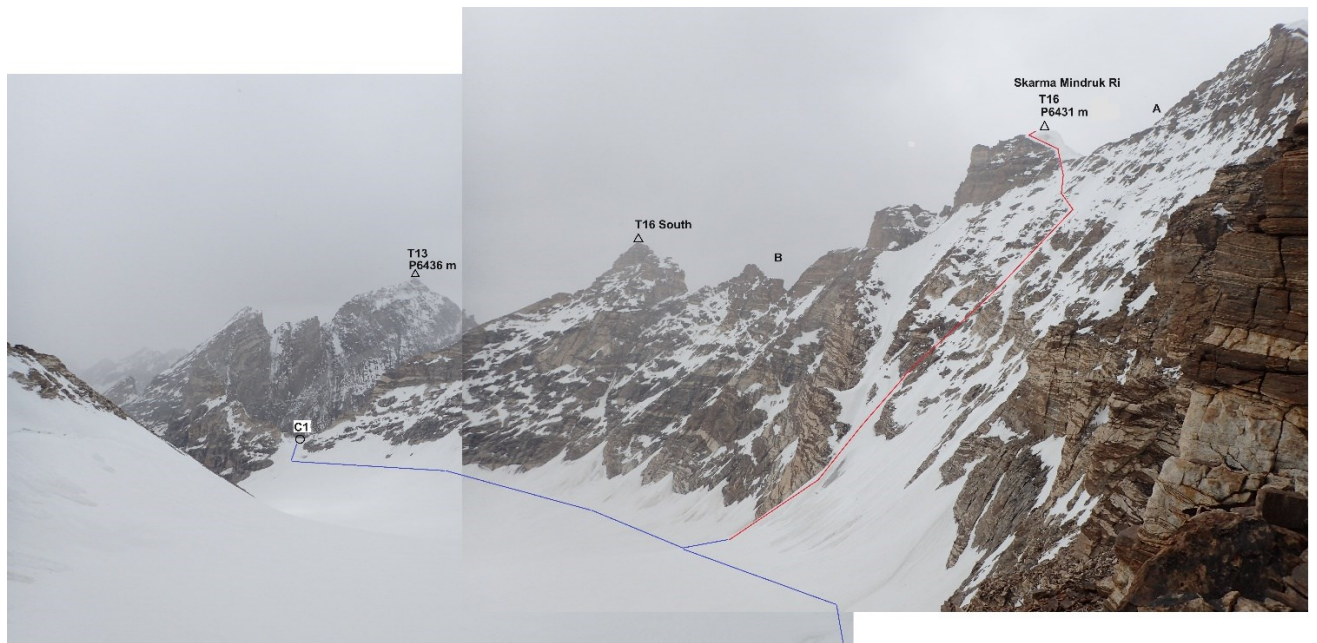


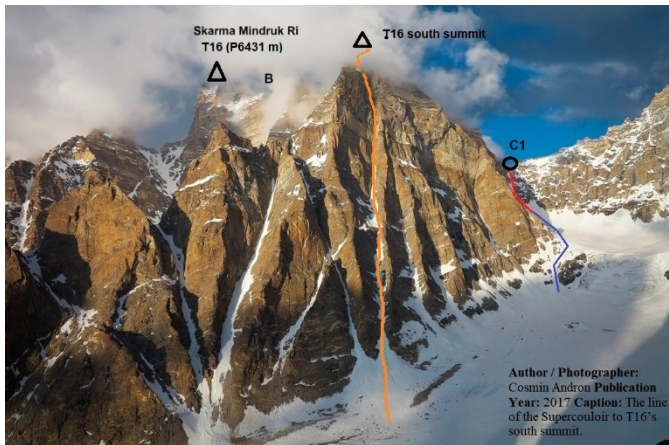
Photo is taken from Karsha Monastery showing North aspect of Skarma Mindruk Ri aka T16 (6431 m) mountain above Gompe glacier. Red line is upper part of Šentjurska route via East ridge. Slovenians reach East ridge from Khapang glacier and via south face from far side of the Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16) mountain not visible on this picture. B is unclimbed P 6203 m. Photo Matija Jošt – Matic.



Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16) 6431 m, South face rising above upper Khapang Glacier. Red line indicates upper part of Šentjurska route. A is East ridge, B indicate South-West ridge connecting Main summit of Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16) with South summit. C1 is the camp site used by first ascensionists on the Col 5836 m (GPS, N 33°22.421', E 76°48.594'). Blue line is approach from C1 (5836 m) to the foot of the South face. Photo is taken from Col 6039 m (GPS, N 33°23.024', E 76°49.309'), located on East ridge of T16. Photo Matija Jost – Matic.



Skarma Mindruk Ri aka T16 (6431 m), South face rising above upper Khapang Glacier. Red line indicates upper part of Šentjurska route. A is East ridge, B indicate South-West ridge connecting Main summit of Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16) with its South summit (out of picture). Blue line is approach from C1 (5836 m) to the foot of the South face. Photo is taken from Col 5836 m (GPS, N 33°22.421', E 76°48.594'). Photographer: Matija Jost – Matic.



Skarma Mindruk Ri aka T16 (6431 m). Orange line marks Supercouloir to T16's south summit, climbed in 2016 by Cosmin Andron and Cristina Pogacean. C1 is Col 5836 m (GPS, N 33°22.421', E 76°48.594') located on the ridge connecting T16 South summit with T13 (6436 m) right out of picture. Blue line is approach from Chhogo side glacier. Red line is Šentjurska route to Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16). C1 is the camp site used by first ascensionists. B is the South-West ridge connecting Main summit of Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16) with Its South summit. Photo Cosmin Andron.



Skarma Mindruk Ri aka T16 (6431 m), rappel down from the top of the couloir from Col 5836 m (GPS, N33°22.421', E 76°48.594'). Photo Matija Jost – Matic



Skarma Mindruk Ri aka T16 (6431 m), South face. rising above upper Khapang Glacier. Nejc, Tomaz and Uros climbing upper part of Šentjurska route above C1. Photo Matija Jost – Matic.



Slovenian team celebrating with national flag at highest point of Skarma Mindruk Ri aka T16 (6431 m). Photo Nejc Skrablin.

Ascent of Antimatterhorn 6130m (GPS, N 33°20,987' E 76°47,273')

East face, route Charlatan De Balkan (500m, D+, ice up to 60°), first ascent of the peak.

Climbers: Tomaž Žerovnik, Matija Jošt - Matic

From the report of the expedition of the English Himalayan club, written by Derek Buckle, it can be understood that the mountains above the Korlomshe glacier reminded them of the Swiss Alps. The mountains in Zanskar are really somehow frozen in time, as if one had come to the Alps 200 years ago. One of the peaks that they tried at that time was called "Matterhorn like peak". Especially Tomaž was impressed by the comparison with the famous mountain, and so after two days of rest, after breakfast at 20th July 2024, we set off for new adventures. The day was hot and windless, the backpacks were heavy, and the mountain was quite far away. We were comforted by the fact that with each subsequent step we saw something new. A good hour above the BC, we stepped onto the main Chhogo glacier and later turned onto a side glacier to the east. The passage from one glacier to another was made of a rather unstable glacial moraine, which sapped quite a bit of our strength. Of course, we had no idea how to get from the Chhogo valley to the Korlomshe glacier. We relied on our feeling, data from digital relief models and satellite photos. The eastern tributary of the Chhogo Glacier (GPS, 5456 m, N 33° 20,457' E 76° 47,034') ended with the northern ridge of Mount Temple (5947 m) and T9 (6107 m). There were several gullies descending from the saddle between our goal and the Temple, we chose the one on the right, as it was covered with snow almost all the way to its top. We climbed it and stopped at the col 5620 m (GPS, N 33° 20.520' , E 76° 47.372') a little disappointed. On the other side, below us, a steep gully fell 200 m deep with a strange moat at the foot. However, we tried our luck, climbed down and in the late afternoon we pitched our tent on a beautiful rocky plateau on the upper Korolomshe glacier (5615m, GPS N 33° 20,826' E 76° 47,845'). We left the base camp nine hours ago. Overnight 1 cm of snow unexpectedly falls, but we still try to be ready for final climb early in the morning. At 6:30 a.m. 21st July 2024 we start climbing the East face and continue along the south slopes. We reach the top (6130m GPS: N 33° 20,987' E 76° 47,273') at 9:30 local time. We called our route of ascent Charlatan De Balkan (500m, D+, ice up to 60°). We descend our route of ascent by downclimbing and reached our tent at 11:30. We more or less sleep the rest of the day. Today was actually a rest day compared to yesterday. The peak reminded us nothing of the giant in Switzerland. We named it Antimatterhorn. "Charlatan De Balkan" is the title of music album by Magnifico (very popular Slovenian musician) and we please him don't blame us for naming our route. The next day (22nd July 2024) we return to the BC by the same route we came. On the plains below the Chhogo glacier Tilen awaits us and tell us about an unfortunate set of circumstances that occurred when he and Uroš try to climb new route.



Antimatterhorn 6130m, East face. Red line marks route Charlatan De Balkan (500m, D+, ice up to 60°). Photo is taken from 5615m, GPS N 33° 20,826' E 76° 47,845' stay point. Photo Tomaž Žerovnik



Antimatterhorn 6130m. Red line marks upper part of route Charlatan De Balkan (500m, D+, ice up to 60°). Photo is taken from col 5620 m, N 33° 20.520' , E 76° 47.372' stay point. Photo Tomaž Žerovnik



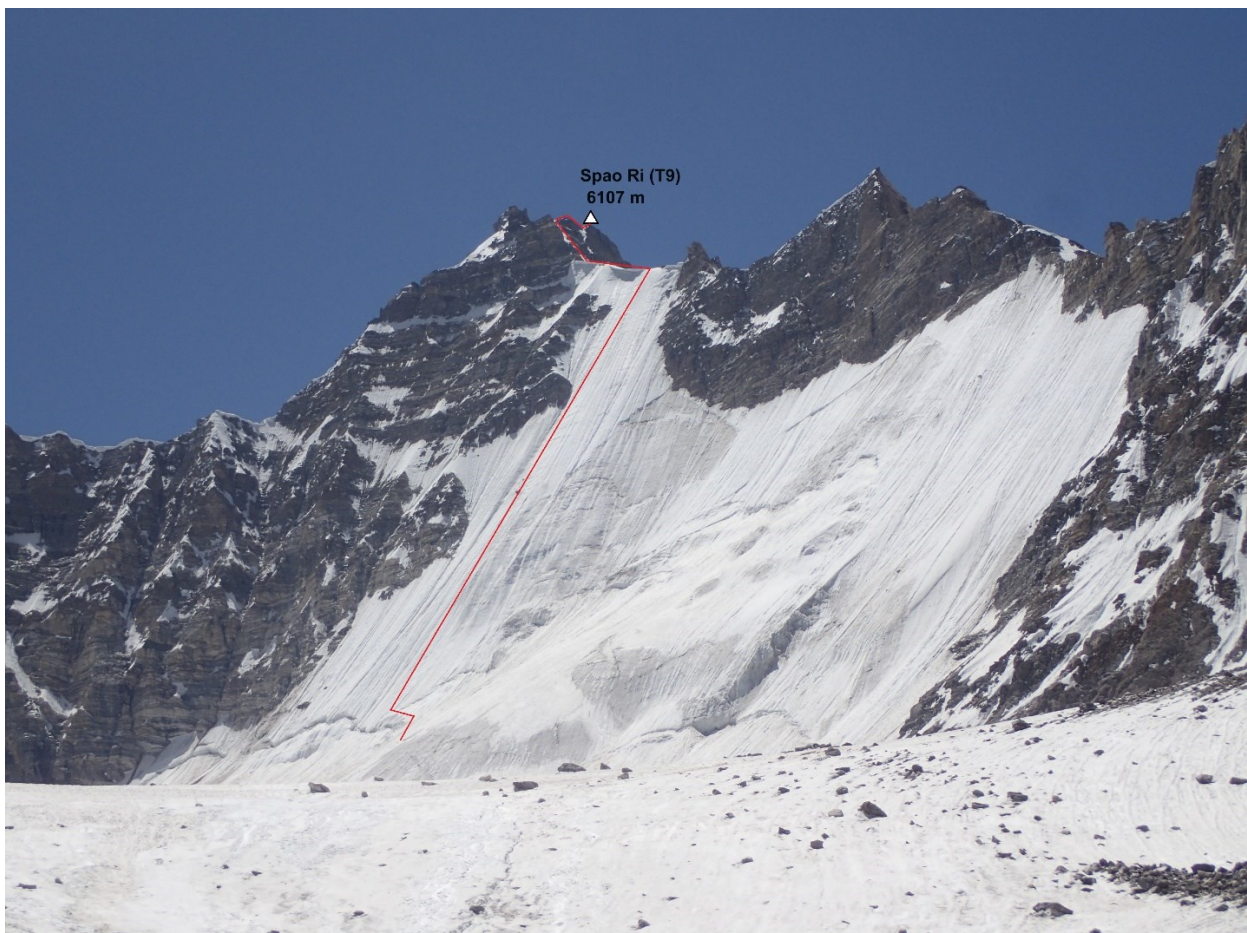
Tomaž Žerovnik on the summit of Antimatterhorn (6130 m) Peak behind him is unclimbed T13 (6436 m). Photo Matija Jošt - Matic



Tomaž Žerovnik climbing up the east face of Antimatterhorn 6130m . Below him is Korlomshe Galcier. In the distance we can see Raru mountains: A is unclimbed Skanglaya (aka R1) 6071 m, B is Moel Kangri 5930 m, C is unclimbed R2 6040 m, D is unclimbed R3 6036 m, E is Ri Pok Te (aka R4) 6210 m, F is Lama Jimsa Kangri 6276 m. Photo Matija Jošt – Matic.

Ascent of Spao Ri (aka T9) 6107 m (GPS N 33° 20,040' E 76° 47,121'), first ascent of the peak.
North face, route Old and Abandoned (700m, TD, ice up to 75°, rock on ridge II-III UIAA), descent along the southwestern slopes of the mountain, route Left Couloir (600m, AD, ice up to 45°)
Climber: Matija Jošt - Matic

Although my father Silvester took me and my mother and his wife Pavlina in the Tschad route in Turska gora, Slovenia (UIAA II) when I was 7 years old, I really don't have much experience with soloing. Anyway, I decided to try the north face of T9 (6107 m). We saw the mountain and the face a few days ago on the way to the Antimatterhorn. It looked nice snow ice slope, objectively fairly safe, only the rocky ridge below the summit was too far to be able to judge from the valley how it would go. At 25th July 2024 I waked up 1 a.m. I have a quick cup of tea, because the porters who came to BC in the evening are sleeping in the dining tent. I follow a familiar route to the glacier below the face and at half past six in the morning I started up the icy north face. I carry 2 ice axes, but no rope. The higher I climb, the steeper it gets, the last hundred meters the ice was hard and brittle. At 8:30 a.m. I reached the west ridge, and an hour later I'm at the top. Last part of the ridge turns in to north-south direction and was more rocky, summit itself is kind of ridge gendarme, but the highest point is obvious. I built cairn on top and leave a nylon strap under it. On the way up, I found the upper part of icy north slope a bit uncomfortable to down climb. I chose that I will descent to the neighboring glacier, which offered a good but longer option for the descent. From the top I could see the glacier and the southwest side of the mountain and it looks passable, although I couldn't see a nice descent all the way to the glacier. Everything went well. At half past eleven I was down on the glacier (GPS: 5575 m, N 33° 19,898' E 76° 46,873'), and at a quarter to twelve I had a well-deserved snack as I descended to the upper Chhogo glacier (GPS: 5080 m, N 33° 20,054' E 76° 44,790'). I was back in BC at three p.m. The place was practically empty only Tilen and our cook Lobzang waited for me. We left too and, in the evening, we share Chang with all expedition members and our local hosts in Tungri village. It was long day for me. Locals suggested the name Spao Ri for the peak. Spao Ri means brave mountain. Name of the route? Well, I am not young anymore...



Spao Ri (aka T9) 6107 m, North face, red line marks route Old and Abandoned (700m, TD, ice up to 75°, rock on ridge II-III UIAA). Photo is taken from N 33° 20.914' , E 76° 46.111' , 5300 m stay point.
Photo Matija Jost – Matic.



Spao Ri (aka T9) 6107 m, southwestern slopes of the mountain, red line marks descent route Left Couloir (600m, AD, ice up to 45°) Photo is taken from N 33° 20.099', E 76° 45.564', 5300 m stay point. Photo Matija Jost – Matic.



Spao Ri (aka T9) 6107 m, summit itself is kind of ridge gendarme, but the highest point is obvious. You can spot the cairn on the top.
Photo Matija Jost – Matic.



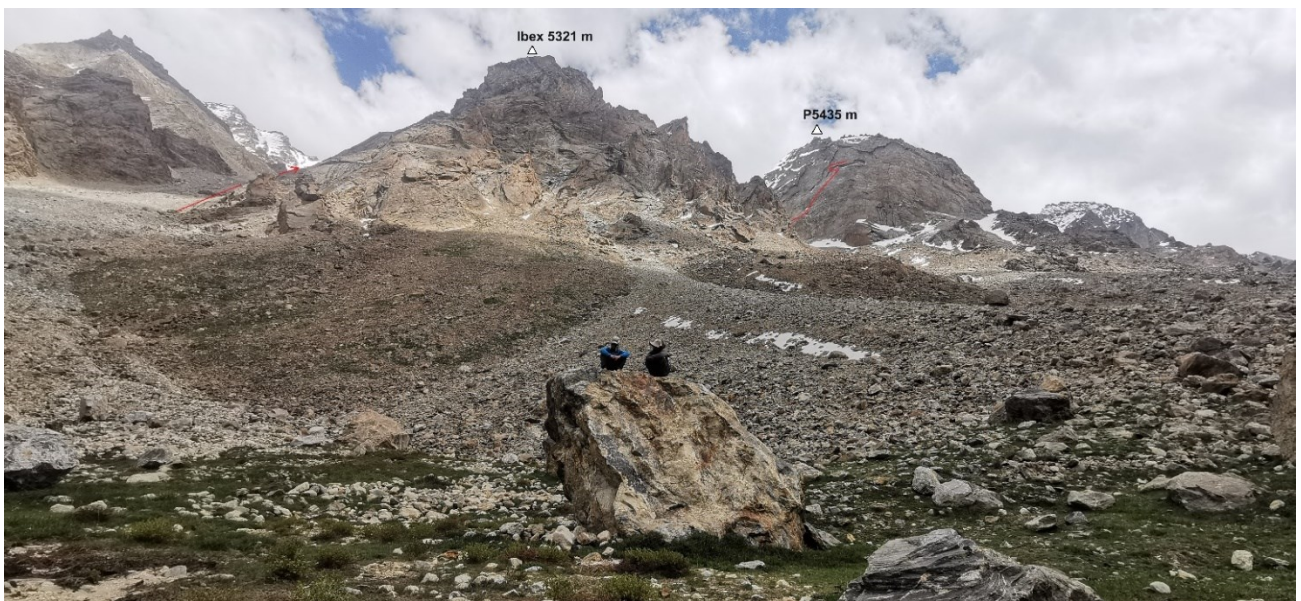
Spao Ri (aka T9) 6107 m. View from north flank towards west. Photo was taken just before exit to west ridge.
Photo Matija Jost – Matic.

First ascent of Ibex 5321m (GPS N 33° 23,642' E 76° 47,182')
Climber: Boštjan Dečman

At 20st July 2024 Boštjan Dečman made first ascent of probably virgin rock formation located east of BC. It is actually beginning of west ridge of T18 6184 m mountain. He set off BC in the morning and ascended towards east to the direction to north face of T18 6184 m mountain. When he reached step, broken and unstable glacier moraine he turned south and climbed up prominent snow gully. It was not too steep (30°) and snow was easy to walk, so he do not use crampons. When he reached rocky ridge, easy scrambling leads him to the summit. He descended same way and was back in BC at afternoon. During his descent he found horns of Ibex and bring them to BC so he named prominent point at the ridge Ibex.



Gully that leads to the summit of Ibex (5321 m) over its Northern slopes. Red line is route of first ascent.
Photo Boštjan Dečman.

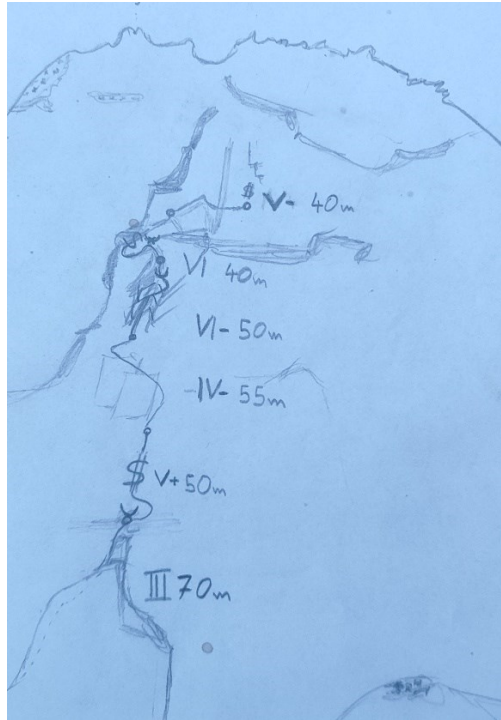


Ibex (5321 m) and P5435 m as seen from BC. Red indicates route of ascent and attempt.
Photo Boštjan Dečman.

P5435 m (GPS N 33° 23,301' E 76° 47,035') , west face attempt.

Climbers: Tilen Cmok, Uroš Cigljär

Tilen Cmok and Uroš Cigljär made attempt to climb approx. 400 m high nice looking west face located at the beginning of long west ridge originating from T16 South summit. 20th July they start from BC early in the morning. When they reached foot of the west face in 2 hours, they pick up some previously dropped gear and start climbing. They enter the wall at 5026 m and climb some 250 m. At that point accident happened. When arranging belay station rock flake broke off and Uroš's right palm was badly damaged. He also experienced short fall. They escape to the foot of the face by 6 rappels and they reach BC same evening, where he gets additional first aid. Boštjan and Nejc treated the wound almost surgically, and next day boys already descended to Padum for further medical care.



West face of P 5435 m as seen from BC. Red line indicates line of attempt.
Photo Boštjan Dečman.



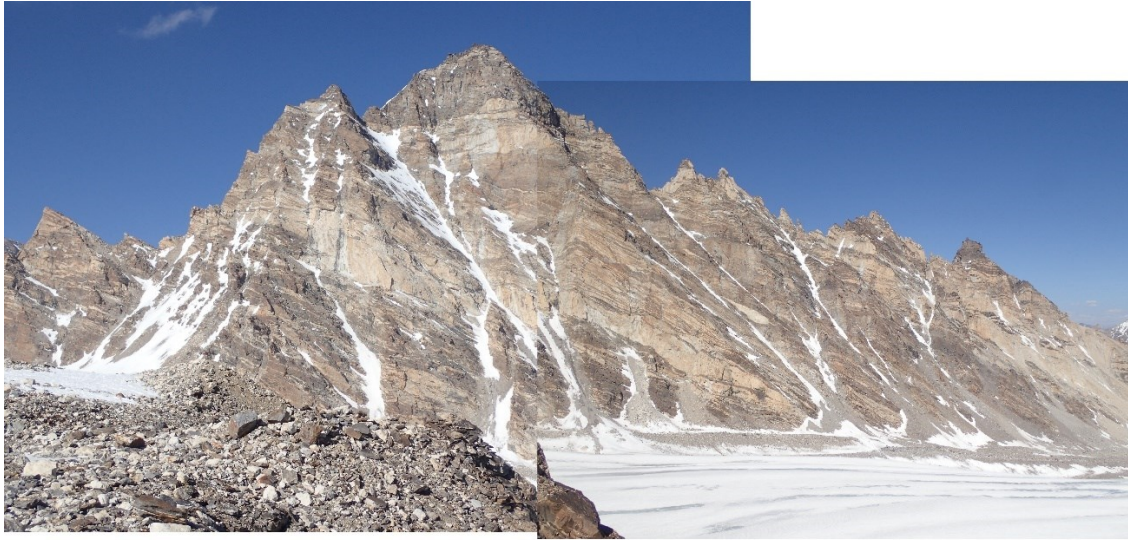
West face of P 5435 m as seen from BC. Red line indicates line of attempt. Arrows marks rappel anchors.
Photo Boštjan Dečman.



Mountains above Chhogo Tokpo. A is Ibex (5321 m), B is unclimbed H17 (5845 m). Photo is taken from N 33° 23.690' , E 76° 47.756' , 5208 m stay point. Photo Matija Jost – Matic.



Mountains above Chhogo Tokpo. T18 (6184 m), northwest face. Photo is taken from N 33° 23.690' , E 76° 47.756' , 5208 m stay point. Photo Matija Jost – Matic.



P 6117 m
(aka T11)
southwest
face. Photo is
taken from
5615m, GPS
N 33° 20,826'
E 76° 47,845'
stay point.
Photo Matija
Jost – Matic.



Boštjan and Nejc preparing themselves for ascent at upper Kahapang glacier below Skarma Mindruk Ri (aka T16) south face. Photo is taken from approximate 5800m, GPS N 33° 22.935' E 76° 48.924' stay point. A is unclimbed P 6117 m (aka T11), B is ridge towards T13 (6436 m) , C1 is Col 5836 m (GPS, N 33°22.421', E 76°48.594'). Photo Matija Jost – Matic.



Photo showing southern aspects of mountains above Padum in Zaskar. A is P 6157 m (aka Padme Hum Peak, aka Ubarak Kangri, aka T20), B is unclimbed P 6203 m. Photo is taken from Col 6039 m (GPS, N 33°23.024', E 76°49.309'), located on East ridge of T16. Photo Matija Jošt – Matic.



Mountains above Chhogo glacier. A is T13 (6436 m), B is Antimatterhorn (6130 m), C is Temple (5947 m) and D is Spao Ri (6107 m, aka T9). Photo is taken from 4950m, GPS N 33° 21.557' , E 76° 45.194' , stay point. Photo Matija Jošt – Matic.



Mountains above Chhogo glacier. A is unclimbed P 6022 m (aka T7, GPS N 33° 19.700' , E 76° 46.133'). B is P 6153 m (GPS N 33° 19.145' , E 76° 46.241'). P 6153 m was climbed by late Martin Moran and his team from Tidu glacier. Photo is taken from 5020 m, GPS N 33° 20.348' , E 76° 44.528' , stay point. Photo Matija Jošt – Matic.



View from Spao Ri summit towards west. A is unclimbed P 6022 m (aka T7, GPS N 33° 19.700' , E 76° 46.133'). B is P 6153 m (GPS N 33° 19.145' , E 76° 46.241'). P 6153 m was climbed by late Martin Moran and his team from Tidu glacier. C is Chhogo glacier. Photo Matija Jošt – Matic.