

Western Kokshaal Too. Verniy peak new route attempt and Obzorniy peak first ski descent

Logistic

We departed from Almaty in our own vehicle on the morning of July 1st. After a five-hour drive, we arrived in Bishkek and transferred to vehicles provided by Kokshaal-Too Adventures company. The drive to the Aksai Valley took the rest of the day, and we arrived around midnight, stopping at the company's base camp for the night. Our destination, the Base Camp (BC), was still about 50 km away, of which the next 20 km were covered the following day using a tracked all-terrain vehicle.

Acclimatization and Obzorniy peak first ski descent

The Base Camp was set up near a large split rock, a popular BC location in the area. Though windy, the location provided the benefit of being free from bears and other wildlife. After a day of rest, we began our acclimatization with a trek along the ridge to our west, heading toward Peak of Five Bastions.

A few days later, we moved to camp at the foot of Obzorniy peak, approaching it from the Kyzyl-Asker West Glacier. Our goal was to get a closer view of the Northwest Face of Kyzyl-Asker and to climb Obzorniy peak for further acclimatization. Unfortunately, we had to abandon plans for a team ascent as Evgenii was unwell in the morning. However, Maxim made a solo ascent via the right colouir of the west face of Mount Obzorniy and completed a first descent on skis down the west slope. Meanwhile, I advanced across the glacier, getting close enough to Kyzyl-Asker's face to examine it through binoculars and identify several potential route options.

Verniy peak new route attempt

After returning to Base Camp, we rested for three days before heading to the Kyzyl-Asker East Glacier, aiming for the west face of Verniy peak. I had planned to make a first ascent along an ice runnel on the right side of the face—an 800-meter route with about 500 meters of steep waterfall ice. July 9th, in the early morning we started climbing. Initially, conditions were suitable, but soon we encountered heavy snowfall and strong spindrifts. After eight pitches of 50 meters each, we were forced to turn back as it was physically impossible to continue. We estimated we were only about two rope lengths from completing the steep part and reaching the couloir that leads to the summit. That same day, we returned to Base Camp. Regrettably, the forecast predicted a severe weather deterioration with 30–40 cm of snowfall in the coming days. This prevented any attempt on the Northwest Face of Kyzyl-Asker before the storm. Additionally, we didn't have time to wait for the avalanche-prone slopes in the upper section of the face to stabilize after the snowstorm. Sadly, we left the area on July 12th.

On the way back, Evgenii and I visited Ala-Archa and climbed the Ruchkin Route “Narodny” on the north face of Mount Free Korea. The route spans 800 meters with M6, AI2+, A2+ and steep loose snow.

Team composition

Grigoriy Chshukin - Kazakhstan

Evgenii Murin - Russia

Maxim Popov - Kazakhstan

Denis Lukyanchuk - Kazakhstan (cameraman and drone pilot)

Logistics Costs

Vehicle (one-way): \$1,000

Tracked all-terrain vehicle (one-way): \$500

Total round-trip: \$3,000

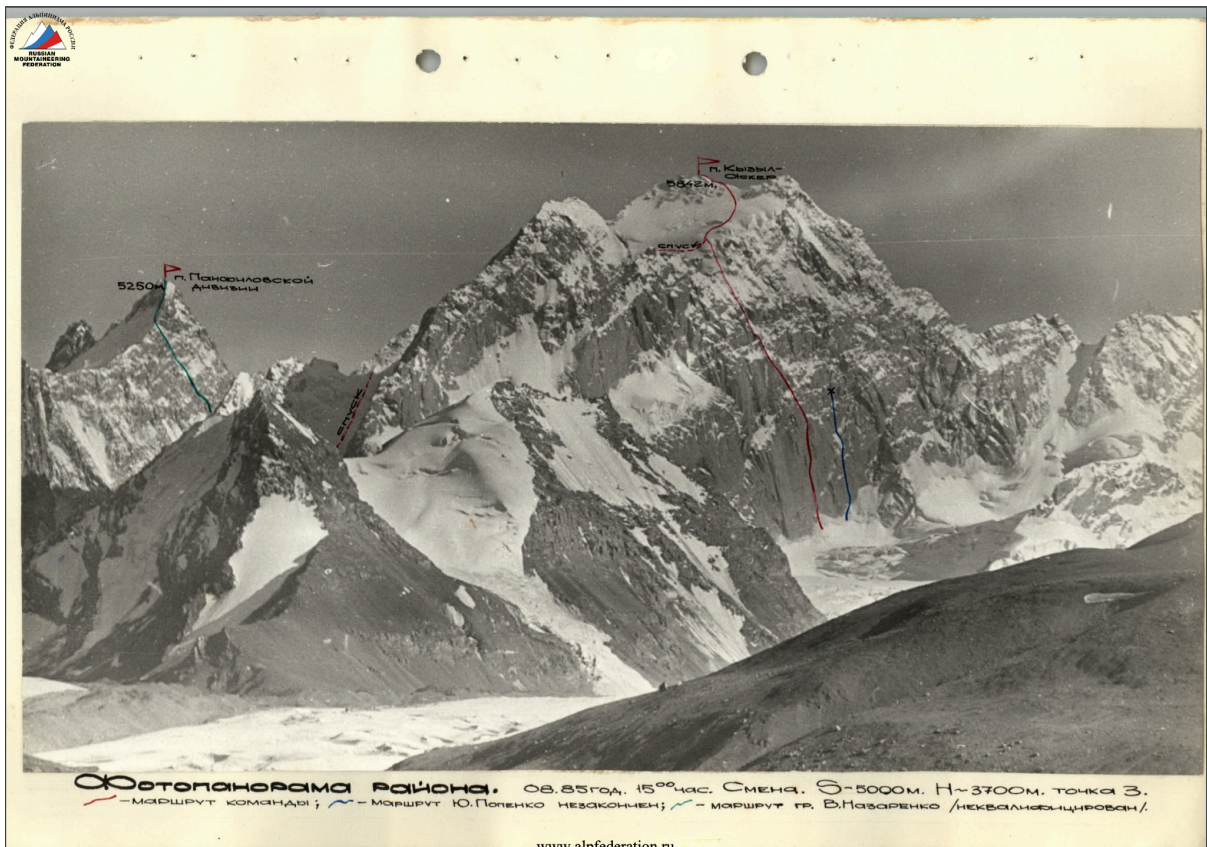
Logistics info

We used the services of the company KokshaalToo Adventure, communicating through Denis Plaksin on WhatsApp: +996 709 854 238.

The services of this company may be more expensive than others, but they have a tracked all-terrain vehicle, which ensures reliable logistics in a short time.



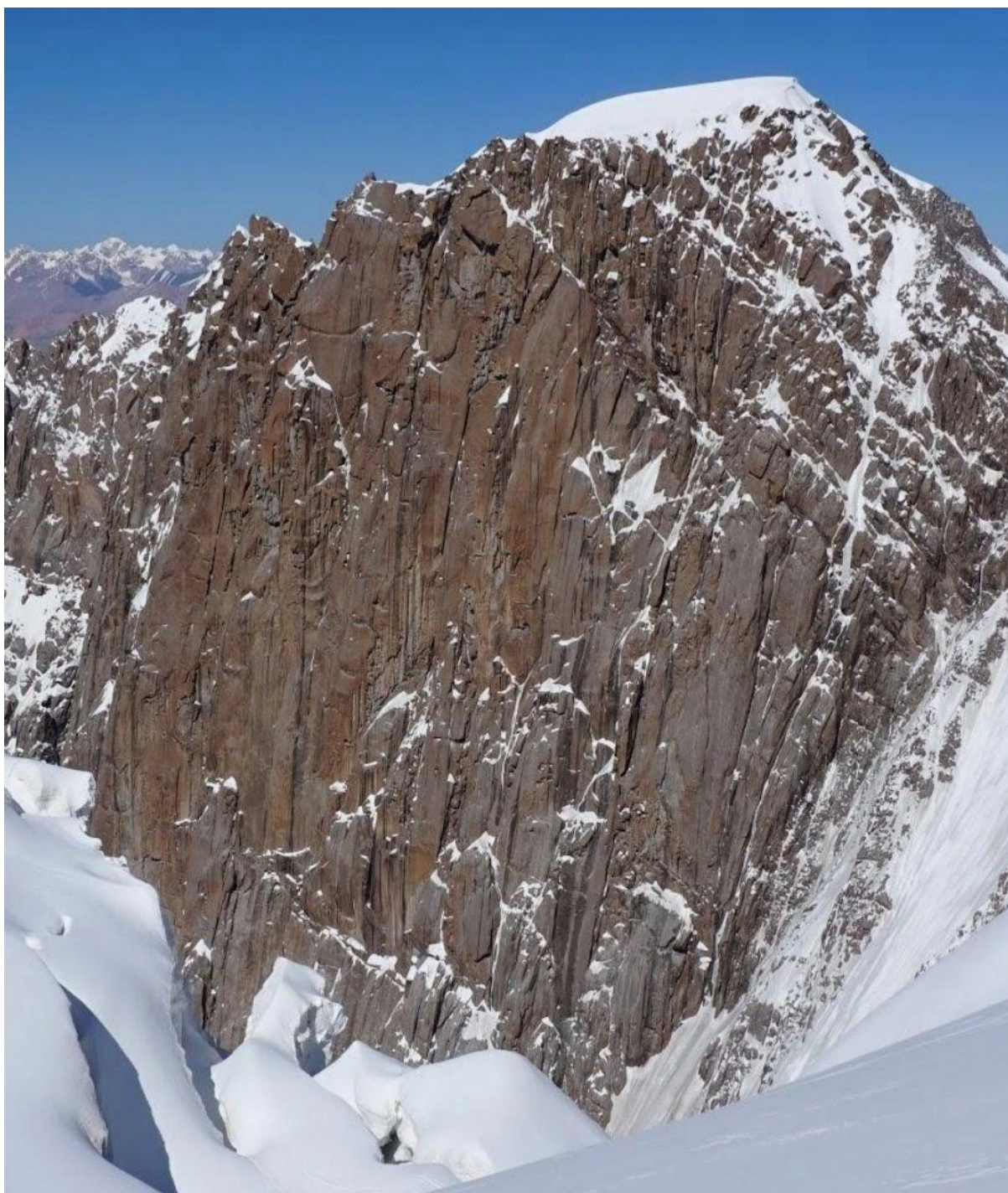
Enormous 1,5km high and 6 km wide wall of Kyzyl Asker Northern and Kyzyl Asker peaks. The only established route here is Kazbek Valiev's team back in 1985. We planned to climb in the right part, where is the most mixed terrain. But the weather didn't even allowed us to try.
Shot on drone.



K. Valiev's route on NW face of Kyzyl Asker



West face of Obzorniy peak. Blue line is Maxim's ascent line, AD+(D)
Red is the ski descent line, D, 5.1, E2, 50°/660m



Verniy peak's West face. We tried the ice runnel in the right side. This photo was made by a group of Ukrainian tourists from the summit slopes of Kyzyl Asker back in 2021. They did a long loop in Western Kokashaal Too, climbed many technical passes and cols. And also they have climbed Kyzyl Asker from the North side.



Our high point on Verniy's west face



Maxim on the lower ice slopes. Our ice runnel is clearly visible



Grigoriy on the first steep pitch



Maxim climbing the second steep pitch. Evgenii on the anchor at the little snow ridge in the background.