

were cut by a big stone avalanche that occurred August 18, when four members were at CIII or above. With no more food and equipment supplies from below, they opted for a rapid summit attempt on August 21. From the upper part of the ridge, they crossed a steep slope on the left, below the summit buttress, and climbed a couloir that lies 400 meters below the summit. From there, they climbed the final snow slope, but found it steeper and harder than they had expected. The temperatures were extremely cold, with a recorded temperature of  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  inside the CIV tent the morning of the final assault. Progress slowed as they belayed almost every pitch. Two members were starting to develop frostbite on their feet when they reached 7170 meters. Though the summit was right before them, it would have taken two more hours to reach it. At 4 p.m. they decided not to venture higher because of the imminent frostbite and started to descend. At 7 p.m., they divided themselves between CIV and CIII. The day after, having no more valuable food, with painful feet, and with time running out, they abandoned the climbing. The team was composed of Simon Perritaz (leader), Jean-Claude Lanz, André Geiser, André Müller, Albertino Santos, and the four summit attempt members, Antoine Brenzikofer, Christian Willard, Jean-Michel Zweiacker, and Yann Smith.

SIMON PERRITAZ, *Swiss Alpine Club*

## HINDU RAJ

*Uddin Zom, First Ascent.* In July and August, a team of four visited the little-explored Hindu Raj in northwest Pakistan. Adam Thomas, Phil Amos and Simon Woods from the U.K. and Jock Jeffery from New Zealand departed on July 3 from Chitral to the roadhead at Zhupo. From there it was just a day's walk to the Matkesh/Ochiri Valley.

Base camp was set up at 3530 meters at the convergence of the two valleys, and a short period of acclimatization and reconnaissance followed. It soon transpired that the most feasible option was up the Ochiri Glacier, the Matkesh being deemed unsuitable due to objective dangers on the final approaches to the mountains. All four climbers reached an advanced base at 4300 meters at the head of the Ochiri Glacier on July 10. From here the route seemed quite straightforward to a peak shown on maps as 5995 meters.

The following day a route was found up the upper glacier to Camp I at 4800 meters, but the weather began to deteriorate. The continuation of the route was up the same glacier, and Camp II was sited at 5300 meters in a large bergschrund. The weather worsened, and all four were forced to descend to base camp to sit out the poor weather.

Another attempt was stopped at Camp II by the return of storms, and the subsequent wait in base camp lasted over a week, during which time there was widespread flooding in the valleys.

On July 27, the team climbed to advanced base once more with the promise of good weather. They progressed smoothly up to Camp II in two days and were ready for a summit attempt. On July 30, they set out at 1 a.m. up the final steep headwall. Relatively straightforward snow and ice led to a small rock band, with Woods and Jeffery electing to traverse left around it and Thomas and Amos climbing straight through. Amos dislodged a large boulder, which struck Thomas on the shoulder, luckily not inflicting too much damage. This climbing brought them out onto the summit ridge, up which they progressed quite easily to the summit, which they reached at 8 a.m. Descent was by the same route, and they reached base camp the following day.

This was almost certainly the first ascent of Peak 5995 meters (our GPS approximately confirmed this elevation with a reading of 6010m). The team named it "Uddin Zom" after the

goatherder with whom they shared base camp.

Woods and Jeffery then departed to join another expedition (see below), while Thomas and Amos returned to the Ochiri Glacier for further reconnaissance. They identified a good objective, but with the injury to Thomas's shoulder and the prospect of a tricky descent, they decided to attempt an alternative route near Uddin Zom. Unfortunately, this attempt was thwarted by poor weather, and with the deadline for their return looming, they cut the trip short by two days.

It was felt there would be some scope for further exploration of the valley and the surrounding area. All mountains are in the 5900- to 6000-meter range and so are perfect for small, self-funded groups. There is still plenty to explore, and many unclimbed mountains are left in the Hindu Raj.

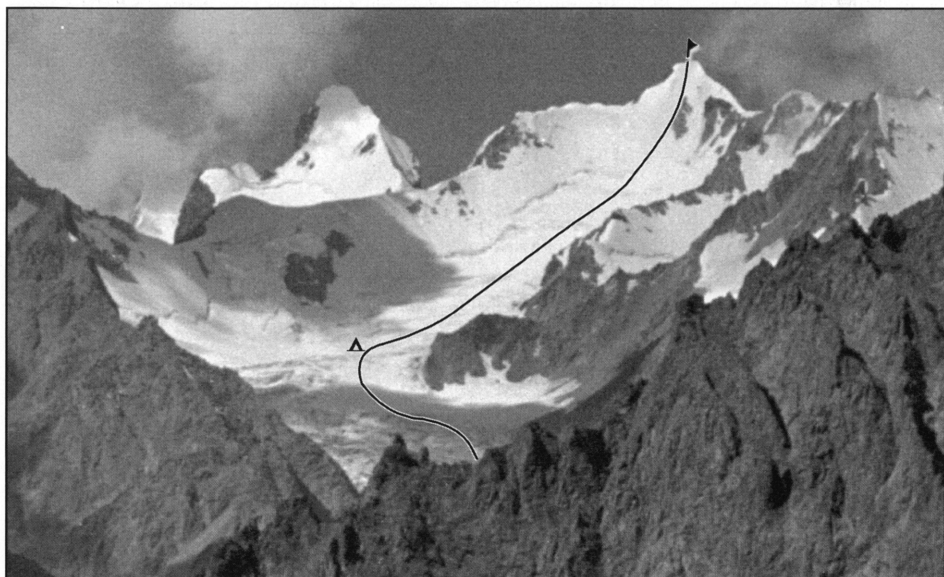
SIMON WOODS, *United Kingdom*

### Batura Muztagh

*Khan Sar and Sahan Sar, First Ascents.* In August, a six-man international team visited an unnamed glacial system above the village of Bhort in the Ishkoman Valley region of northern Pakistan. The team consisted of Graham Rowbotham and Tom Gleeson (both Canadian), Bryan Godfrey and Jock Jeffery (both New Zealanders), and Britons Peter Ford and Simon Woods.

The Ishkoman Valley constitutes a geographical divide, with the mountains on its eastern side in the Karakoram and those explored by this expedition on the western side, in the less-known Hindu Raj Range. Although not visible from the main valley floor, a cluster of peaks had been spotted from base camp during the 1999 Karambar Expedition (see *AAJ* 2000, pp. 323-326) and seemed to offer good opportunities for first ascents.

As is usual during the climbing season, access via the Ishkoman Valley was made diffi-



*Sahan Sar, showing the line of first ascent (Ford-Godfrey-Jeffery-Woods, 2000).* SIMON WOODS