

**Pumari Chhish
Expedition
2000**

MEF Reference 00/21

EXPEDITION MEMBERS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The expedition would like to record its grateful thanks to the following for their support:

Financial Assistance

British Mountaineering Council
Mount Everest Foundation
UK Sport

Equipment Sponsorship

Beal
Berghaus
Charlet Moser
Lyon Equipment
Marmot
Petzl
Rab
Scarpa
Troll

Other Support

Nazir Sabir Expeditions
Pakistan International Airlines

TIME CHART

May 2000	16	Depart Manchester.	
	17	Arrive Islamabad 0630. Briefing at Ministry. Start road journey mid-afternoon. Arrive Besham 10pm.	
	18	Besham - Karrimabad (Hunza Valley). Shopping for provisions.	
	19	Karrimabad - Hispar by jeep. Hire porters.	
	20	Hispar c.3000m - Bitanmal c.3640m	
	21	Bitanmal - Dachingan – Schacumbarese c.3925m	
	22	Schacumbarese - Jutmal - Yutmaru Glacier. Establish BC c.4250m	
	23	BC - sort out kit.	
	24	Carry load to ABC c.4425m. Return to BC.	
	25	BC - ABC.	
	26	ABC - Camp 1 (c.5100m)	
	27	Rest at Camp 1 – bad weather.	
	28	Camp 1 - attempted descent - avalanche - reascend to camp.	
	29	Camp 1 - ABC - BC	
	30	BC - North Yutmaru Glacier: Reconnaissance.	
	31	North Yutmaru Glacier - North East Yutmaru Glacier - BC	
	June 2000	01	BC: rest day
		02	BC: bad weather
		03	BC: bad weather. Pack loads.
		04	BC - Jutmal.
		05	Jutmal - BC. Dismantle tents. Pack last loads. Return to Jutmal.
		06	Jutmal - Bitanmal (JAC/RP). LO and cook wait at Jutmal for porters.
		07	Bitanmal – Bularong (JAC/RP). Porters collect kit from BC.
		08	Bularong: JAC/RP rest in bad weather. Porters descend to Bitanmal.
		09	Bularong - Kunyang Glacier. Return to Bularong and descend to nr Gurban. Porters descend to Hispar.
		10	Nr Gurban – Hispar. JACC/RP meet up with LO, cook and porters.
		11	Hispar – Karrimabad by jeep. Travel overnight to Islamabad.
		12	Arrive Islamabad mid morning.
		13	Islamabad
		14	Islamabad: debriefing at Ministry.
		15	Islamabad - Birmingham.

Introduction

Despite lying close to the Hispar-Biafo Glacier trekking route the Pumari Chhish group has seen little attention from climbers. The group has three summits, with the main North summit (7492m) being the only one to have had an ascent. This was made by the Hokkaido Alpine Association expedition of 1997 taking a route from the Yazghil Glacier and ascending the North Ridge and using some 2,300 metres of fixed rope. The South Summit (7350m) and South East Summit (6850m) are unclimbed. An attempt had been made by this team on the South Summit via the South Face in the autumn of 1999, but this was unsuccessful due to poor weather. It was intended in 2000 to try and complete the line that was started the previous year.

A large format photograph of the Pumari Chhish group appears in 'The Karakoram' (plate 45) by Shiro Shirahata and also in 'On The Edge' magazine (issue 78).

Getting to the Mountain

Having employed an agent (Nazir Sabir Expeditions), most of the preparations for the expedition had been made before our departure. This made it possible to arrive in Islamabad, have a briefing at the Ministry of Tourism, and start the journey up the Karakoram Highway with our Liaison Officer and Cook on the same day. An air-conditioned van was provided for the journey, and Karrimabad (the capital of Hunza), was reached on the evening of our second day in Pakistan. We shopped for provisions that same evening, and the next morning packed up 2 jeeps with our loads and travelled to the road head at Hispar village where porters were hired.

The walk-in to base camp took three quite long days (20-22 May). Being familiar with the area from the trip the previous year, it was decided to place base camp much further up the Yutmaru Glacier, close to where it branches at c. 4250m. The porters were wary of travelling any distance along the glacier and there was a great deal of discussion about us paying 'high altitude porter' rates, and negotiation about wages en route. The expedition paid 2 extra stages to the new base camp site. In total, the payment for porters was calculated at 9 stages to base camp at 330 R/s per stage, plus 200 R/s for equipment. 21 porters were hired for the upwards journey.

Reconnaissance and Acclimatisation

No sooner had the expedition arrived at base camp, than it started to snow. The weather was very poor throughout the trip, with snow most days and nights, and just the occasional few hours of clearance in the early mornings. Fortunately the team members had taken skis, and so it was possible to travel around with relative ease and still be active. An ABC site was established beneath the south face at c.4425m on 25 May and then on the 26th the team moved up to the site of the old Camp 1 at c.5100m on a snowy col. A rest day was taken here, with the intention of continuing further up the route in the following days, but with persistent snowfall it was decided instead to retreat back to base camp. On the 28th during the attempted descent, both members of the team were hit by avalanches. Fortunately both climbers were on a short section of fixed rope at the time, and no injuries were suffered, but the team was forced back up to the Col camp until safer conditions prevailed.

Having sat out another night of snowfall and with the constant threat of avalanches it was decided to pull all the equipment off this route and reconsider the options for other lines of ascent.

After a night at base camp on the 29th the team set off on ski to recce the North Yutmaru Glacier. Despite a Col being marked on the map which indicated that access to the northern side of Pumari Chhish might be possible, this proved not to be the case. The head of this branch of the glacier was ringed by a huge snow and ice wall with numerous seracs. After spending the night there, the team then moved on to recce the North East Yutmaru Glacier. With the poor weather it was

difficult to get a clear view of the terrain, but late in the evening of the 31 May it was possible to see route options on the very impressive Kanjut Sar (7760m). The team then returned to base camp where everyone remained for the next 3 days in the worst weather of the trip.

By the 3rd June it had been decided to pull out of the Yutmaru Glacier and the expedition members started to pack up loads. On the 4th the team accompanied by the LO and cook, descended back down to Jutmal. On the 5th the team members returned to base camp to finish packing loads, while the cook's assistant started the journey back to Hispar to summon the porters. With time still in hand the expedition members had decided to make one last attempt on Pumari Chhish by travelling around to the Kunyang Glacier to see if the mountain could be approached from the north west. Carrying 6 days food the first leg of the journey was made from Jutmal back to Bitanmal. On the 7th the team travelled from Bitanmal to Bularong along very difficult glacial moraine, but a good camp was found late in the evening on a grassy terrace above the glacier. The following day was taken as a rest day due to further deteriorating weather. On the 9th the journey was continued from Bularong to the upper Kunyang Glacier, but this effort was terminated late in the afternoon with the onset of further hail and snow. The team members then descended back to Hispar where the LO and cook were met with the loads on 10th June.

End of the Expedition

Jeeps arrived at Hispar the following morning and it was possible to return to Karrimabad that afternoon and then continue to Islamabad overnight to arrive there on the 12th.

The reconnaissance of the upper branches of the Yutmaru and Kunyang Glaciers revealed a number of very fine mountaineering objectives. However, the high plateau which holds the peaks of Pumari Chhish (7492m), Kunyang Chhish (7852m), Yazghil Dome (7324m), Yutmaru Sar (7330m) etc, seems to draw the bad weather, and future teams attempting these objectives would need to have some latitude with time to allow for this.

Accounts

Expenditure	Airfares, freight, insurance	1587	Income	MEF	1400
	Equipment	732		BMC	2600
	Permit fees	1696		Personal	3634
	LO costs	71			
	Agent & pollution fee	367			
	Rations & fuel	403			
	Transport	564			
	Accommodation	315			
	Porters & cook	1883			
	First aid	86			
	TOTAL	7634		TOTAL	7634

Map of Hispar Glacier and Peaks

(From 'Karakoram Orographical Sketch Map – Sheet 1'. Published by the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research)

