

DAWN

Czech climbers' attempt to conquer 'Hidden Peak' unsuccessful

By Jamal Shahid

ISLAMABAD: "The mountain didn't let them get to the summit," the official sponsors of Czech climbers Marek Holecek and Tomas Petrecek said, after the climbers' attempt to climb Gasherbrum I was unsuccessful. The Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) also confirmed the failed attempt.

"Their attempt to take on the 8,080 metre high mountain, also known as the Hidden Peak, was unsuccessful due to bad weather conditions," said ACP Press Secretary Karrar Haidri, adding the two climbers had gotten "really close" to the summit.

Holecek and Petrecek started from base camp on August 7 hoping to complete the route in seven days. Instead, the climbers spent roughly two weeks on the mountain. According to the ACP, a clear

weather window at the start of their expedition allowed the climbers to reach 7,300 metres by August 11, at which point the climbers were forced to wait due to strong winds.

On August 15 the climbers proceeded slightly further and sent a short message to their sponsors, stating, "The weather is not helping us, but we will still fight."

The ACP said that Holecek and Petrecek's line of ascent, a direct route up the southwest face of Gasherbrum I, had been attempted by Holecek and another climber, Zdenek Hruby, in 2009 and in 2013. The duo reached 7,600 metres and 6,800 metres respectively.

According to Haidri, other than a few success stories, this summer has been a season of despair for most climbers. By the first week of August, the Czech climbers were the only climbers left on Gasherbrum I after the other groups called off their expeditions due to con-

tinuous bad weather.

Haidri said that after Qamber Ali Jangjupe disappeared on the Broad Peak and Polish skier Olek Ostrowski was lost on Gasherbrum II, most climbers decided to pack up.

While 13 climbers were able to summit Gasherbrum II, and two reached the peak of Broad Peak this year, only three mountaineers reached the top of Gasherbrum I: Ferran Latorre from Spain, French climber Yannick Graziani and Germany's Tom Seidensticker, all of whom reached on July 24.

In contrast, climbers attempting K2 did not take the risk. Several avalanches, hurricanes and strong winds and excessive snow did not allow climbers to reach the world's second highest peak.

American climber Vanessa O'Brien told Dawn, "Most climbers on K2 were not prepared enough to take on the 'Savage Mountain'."

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