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LESSON
PART 1





In this lesson, we shall learn about :

- ◆ The face of our country
- ◆ Physical divisions of India
- ◆ The Northern Mountains and their three ranges
 - (a) The Himadri range
 - (b) The Himachal range
 - (c) The Shivalik range
- ◆ Importance of Himalayas for India

New Words

peninsula, peak, glacier, valley, pass, terai, sanctuaries

Look at the map of the world. Where is India? India is in the continent of Asia. It is a very beautiful and vast country. It is surrounded by many big and small countries. Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are its neighbouring countries. It is located in the Southern Asia.



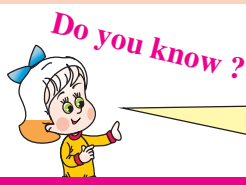
Map of India and its Neighbouring Countries

India and its Neighbouring Countries

India is a big country. It is the seventh largest country in the world. It measures about 3,000 kilometres from west to east and about 3,200 kilometres from north to south. India is a land of mountains, hills, plains, rivers, lakes, forests, deserts and islands. It is surrounded by Bay of Bengal and Myanmar on the east, Indian Ocean on the south, Arabian sea and Pakistan on the west and Himalayas and China on the north.

Some Facts :

India is the second largest country in the world in population.
India is the only country after which an ocean is named Indian Ocean.



Do you know ?

The Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are parts of the Indian Ocean.

India has about 7,500 kilometres long coastline. The southern part of India is a peninsula. It is surrounded by the Arabian Sea on its west, by the Bay of Bengal on its east and by the Indian Ocean on its south. The great Indian Peninsula ends up in the Indian Ocean with Kanyakumari as its southernmost tip.



Arabian Sea



Kanyakumari

Think and Discuss

You know that India is the seventh largest country in the world. Find out the six countries which are larger in size than India.

Physical divisions of India : Our country can be divided into these different physical divisions :

1. The Northern Mountains or the Himalayas
2. The Northern Plains
3. The Great Indian Desert
4. The Southern Plateau
5. The Coastal Plains and the Islands

In this lesson, we study about only The Northern Mountains.



The Northern Mountains : The north and the north-east part of India have a long range of mountains. The major part of this range is called the Great Himalayas. The word 'Himalayas' means 'the store house of ice'. The Himalayas stretch from the Karakoram range in Jammu and Kashmir in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east. It looks like an arch. Beyond Arunachal Pradesh, it takes a turn to the south. It forms a high natural wall. From west to east, this mountain wall covers a distance of about 2400 kilometres. In Arunachal Pradesh, the Himalayan ranges are not very high. These ranges are called the North-Eastern Hills.



Snow Mountain

The Himalayas are the highest mountains in the world. They have many majestic snow covered peaks. The highest snow covered peak is Mount Everest in Nepal. It is 8,848 metres above the sea level. Kanchenjunga, Nandadevi, Nun Kun, Kamet and Nanga Parbat are the other high peaks of the Himalayas. The Himalayan peaks are covered with snow throughout the year.

Some Facts :

K2 (Godwin Austen) (8611m) and Kanchenjunga (8,586m) are the highest mountain peaks in India.

Some Facts :

Tenzing Norgay of Nepal and Edmund Hillary of New Zealand were the first persons to climb Mt. Everest in 1953. Bachhendri Pal was the first Indian woman to climb it in 1984. Santosh Yadav was another Indian lady who climbed it twice.



Tenzing Norgay



Edmund Hillary



Bachhendri Pal

The Himalayas have three parallel ranges. They are

- (a) The Greater Himalayas, or the **Himadri**
- (b) The Lesser Himalayas, or the **Himachal**
- (c) The Lower Himalayas, or the **Shivalik**

(a) The Greater Himalayas (Himadri): The Greater Himalayas is also called the Himadri. It is the highest of the three ranges. It is always covered with ice throughout the year. It stands like a giant wall along the northern border of India. It has many famous high peaks such as the Mount Everest, Godwin Austen, Kanchenjunga, Nandadevi, Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Nanga Parbat and Makalu. The rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Brahmaputra rise in this range. There are many glaciers in these peaks. Gangotri and Yamunotri are the two famous glaciers. A glacier is a slow moving river of ice. The river Ganga rises from the Gangotri glacier, while the river Yamuna rises from the Yamunotri glacier. Some other Himalayan rivers like the Indus, the Satluj and the Brahmaputra also rise from the glaciers of this range.



Mount Everest

Activity

The Himalayas stand like a giant wall along the northern border of India. Which are the countries does Himalayas protect India from ?

(b) The Lesser Himalayas (Himachal) : The lesser Himalayas is also known as Himachal. It lies to the south of the Greater Himalayas. It is not as high as the Himadri range. The range is full of thick temperate forests. Deodar, fir, pine and oak are the prominent trees found here. There are many beautiful valleys, hills and passes in this region. Srinagar, Shimla, Nainital, Mussoorie and Darjeeling are famous hill stations located in this range. During the spring season, the valley is full of beautiful wild flowers. They cover the valley like a carpet. The climate is pleasant in summer but very cold in winter. The beauty of these hills attract a large number of tourists every year. The climate here is ideal for the growth of the fruits such as apples, pears, chestnuts, litchis, plums and pears. There are many holy places like Badrinath, Kedarnath etc. in this region. The region also receives a heavy rainfall.



Gangotri Glacier



Badrinath



Kedarnath

Some Facts : The Himalayas are about 25 million years old. They grow a few centimetres each year.

Activity The holy places like Badrinath, Kedarnath are not always open for pilgrims. What could be the reason ? Try to find out when the pilgrims can visit these holy places to worship.

(c) The Lower Himalayas (Shivalik) : The Lower Himalayas are also known as the Shivalik hills. The range has many low hills which touch the great plains of India. The hills are full of green forests. Therefore, the Shivalik range is called a store house of wood. This range lies to the south of the Himachal range. The marshy land in the feet of these hills is called Terai. The region is full of wild animals like tiger, elephant, deer, panther, cheetah, sambar and rhinoceros. Large area is used for farming and animal rearing. People grow wheat and maize here. The famous sanctuaries like the Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand and Kaziranga National Park in Asom are located in the Shivalik range. This region also receives heavy rainfall.



Shivalik hills

Some Facts : Most of the hill stations were established by the British to escape the summer heat.

Branches of the Himalayas : Apart from these three ranges of the Himalayas, the Hindukush and the Sulaiman ranges are the main branches of the Himalayas in the west. The north-eastern hills of the Himalayas are called the Purvanchal or the Eastern Himalayas. They are not very high but have a thick forest. The prominent hills of this range are the Naga Hills, the Mizo Hills, the Lushai Hills, the Garo Hills, the Khasi Hills and the Jaintia Hills.



Naga Hills



Mizo Hills



Lushai Hills



Khasi Hills

Passes in the Himalayas : At some places, there are narrow gaps in these ranges. These gaps provide a natural path to the passengers through which they can walk from one mountain to another or into a valley. These gaps are called passes. The important passes in the Himalayas are the Khyber, the Bolan, Shipki La, Nathu La and Bomdi La. 'La' means 'a pass'.

Importance of the Himalayas : The Himalayas are a gift of nature to us. They are very useful to us. They guard our northern borders. They stand as a wall in the north of India. They protect us from the cold and dry winds from Tibet and China. They check water-laden monsoon winds coming from the Indian Ocean and force them to cause rainfall in India. So, the northern plains receive a heavy rainfall during the monsoon. Several rivers rise from the Himalayas. These rivers get constant supply of water from the snow. The water is used for irrigating fields. These rivers also bring useful soil with them. This soil makes the fields fertile.

The forests of the Himalayas are a good source of wood. We get many medicinal plants and herbs there. The rich mineral wealth of the Himalayas is very useful for our economic growth. The pastures of the Himalayas are used for cattle rearing. We get milk, meat, wool and skin from them. The Himalayan wild life is a good natural resource.

■ THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. India is the seventh largest country in the world.
2. It has many physical features.
3. The northern mountains or the Himalayas are the highest mountains in the world.
4. Mount Everest is the highest mountain peak in the world.
5. The Himalayas have three mountain ranges - the Himadri, the Himachal and the Shivalik.
6. The Himadri is the highest peak range while the Shivalik are the lowest hills.
7. The Himalayan ranges are very beneficial to us.



EXERCISE

A. Fill in the blanks :

1. The highest mountain peak in India is _____
2. The Himalayas form _____ parallel ranges.
3. The narrow way to cross the mountains is called a _____
4. The Corbett National Park is in _____
5. A _____ is a slow moving river of ice.

B. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False :

1. The Himadri is the highest of the three ranges. ()
2. The Himachal is called the store house of wood. ()
3. The Hindukush is a famous pass in the Himalayas. ()
4. The Southernmost range of the Himalayas is called the Shivalik. ()
5. The Himalayas are about 2000 metres in length. ()

C. Name the following:

1. The source of river Ganga _____
2. The source of river Yamuna _____
3. The ocean named after India _____
4. The high natural wall of India _____
5. The highest snow covered peak _____
6. The first Indian lady to climb Mount Everest _____
7. The marshy land in the feet of the Lower Himalayas _____

D. Answer the following questions :

1. What does the word 'Himalayas' mean ?
2. What are the three main ranges of the Himalayas ?
3. Why do the Himalayan rivers flow throughout the year ?
4. What are the uses of the Himalayas for our country ?
5. What is a glacier ? Name any two glaciers.
6. Which are the famous hill stations in the Himachal range ?

Project / Activity

E. The Shivalik range of the Himalayas is called the 'Store house of Wood'. In your notebook, write the names of the trees we can get from these hills and also write the names of the wild animals we can find there.

F. On an outline map of India, mark the following :

- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Mount Everest | 2. Gangotri Glacier | 3. Shivalik range | 4. Shimla |
| 5. Srinagar | 6. Kanchenjunga | 7. River Ganga | 8. River Yamuna |

G. HOTS:

1. **Why do you think people climbing high mountain ranges like Himalayas carry oxygen cylinders with them?**