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The Great Himalayan Range

In the north and north-east of India lies the great **Himalayan Range**. It spreads from Jammu & Kashmir in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east. Then this range turns towards the south and is called the north-eastern peaks.

'Himalaya' means the 'abode of snow'. Most of the peaks in the Himalayas are covered with snow and ice. Its highest peak is Mount Everest which lies at a height of 8, 848 metres in Nepal.



Mount Everest



India's second highest peak is K2 (Mt. Godwin Austen, 8,611 mts) which is in the Karakoram range. The other high peaks of the world are Kanchanjunga, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna, Nandadevi etc.

The Himalayan range is nearly 2500 kms long from west to east and its width is between 250-350 kms.

Many people have attempted to climb these peaks. Some expeditions have been successful. The first to scale Mt. Everest were **Tenzing Norgay** of India and **Edmund Hillary** of New Zealand, in 1953. Then, in 1984, **Bachchendri Pal**, became the first Indian woman to climb it.



First Everest Climbers



Do You Know

Mt. Everest is also called Sagarmatha.

On the basis of height, the Himalayan range has been divided into three ranges :

1. Upper Himalayas or Himadri;
2. Middle Himalayas or Himachal; and
3. Lower Himalayas or Shivalik.

1. Upper Himalayas or Himadri : Located in the northern Himalayas, it is its highest range. This is the **Himadri** range. It is always covered with snow and ice, which keep on



sliding down slowly. This is known as a glacier or **Himani**. This snow melts down slowly and gives rise to rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Satluj, Kosi, Brahmaputra, etc. These flow through deep valleys and make beautiful waterfalls at places.



Glacier



Interesting Fact

The Ganga rises from the Gangotri glacier and the Yamuna rises from the Yamunotri glacier, both the glaciers being located in Uttarakhand.



Darjeeling

2. Middle Himalayas or Himachal : The southern part of the Himalayas is called the **Middle Himalayas** or the **Himachal range**. These mountains are not very high. This range becomes very cold in winters due to heavy snowfall. The weather in summer is very pleasant. Here Shimla, Mussoorie, Nainital, Almora, Gulmarg,



Badrinath

Ranikhet, etc. are beautiful tourist places. Kedarnath, Badrinath and Amarnath are some religious places located here which are visited by millions of pilgrims every year.

The range is covered with pine and deodar trees. Kullu, Manali and Dehradun are the beautiful valleys found here.

3. Shivalik Range : These are the lowest Himalayas whose average height is nearly 1, 100 meters. The weather here is very pleasant even during hot summers.

In this range, there are some narrow routes called **passes**. These are used by people to go from one mountain to another. These passes are defended by the valiant soldiers of the Indian Army to stop infiltration.



Soldiers guarding the passes

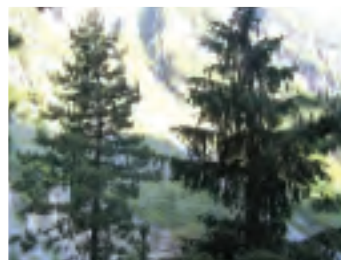
If there had been no Himalayas, the northern plains would have been a desert. Here are found the trees of pine, fir, deodar, ebony, khair, etc. This region is also called the **Terai region**. Elephants, tigers, deer and other wild animals are found here.

The hills of north-east are **Naga, Garo, Khasi, Lushai** and **Mizo** hills. These are not very high hills but have very dense forests.

Importance of Himalayan Ranges

The Himalayan ranges are very important for our country :

1. They defend our northern borders.
2. They save us from the icy winds blowing from the north.





3. They help to bring rains by stopping the monsoon winds coming from the south.
4. The rivers flowing down from the Himalayas are perennial and provide water for irrigation.
5. These rivers bring down fertile soil with them and turn the northern plains fertile.
6. Many herbs are provided by the forests of the Himalayas which are helpful in curing numerous diseases.



Vocabulary

Range : A group of mountains.

Mountaineer : An expert in climbing mountains.

Valley : Low lying area between two mountains.

Pass : A difficult, narrow route between two high mountains.

Learnt by Now



- The range of mountains situated in the north and north-east of India is called the Himalayan range.
- The highest peak of the Himalayas is Mt. Everest, located in Nepal.
- The second highest peak is K2, located in the Karakoram range.
- The Himalayas are divided into the Himadri, Himachal and Shivalik ranges, parallel to each other.
- North-eastern hills are called Garo, Khasi, Lushai and Mizo hills.
- The Himalayas are very important for our country.



Exercise



A. Tick (✓) the correct answer : (MCQs)

1. Where is Mt. Everest located ?
 (a) India (b) Nepal (c) Bhutan
2. Where does the Ganga rise from ?
 (a) Gangotri (b) Yamunotri (c) Both the places
3. The difficult and narrow route through a range is called a :
 (a) road (b) lane (c) pass
4. What does the Himalayas protect us from ?
 (a) From hot winds (b) From icy winds (c) From rains

B. Write answers to the following questions :

1. From where to where does the Himalyan range spread ?
2. Which is the highest peak in the Karakoram range ?
3. Who were the first mountaineers to climb Mt. Everest ?
4. Where are the upper Himalayas located ?
5. Write names of some tourist places located in the Upper Himalayas.



C. Fill in the blanks :

- _____ range spreads from Jammu and Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh.
- _____ was the first Indian woman to climb Everest.
- The climate in summer is pleasant in _____ Himalayas.
- The average height of Shiwalik is _____.
- The hills of northeast are not very _____.

D. Write True or False :

- The meaning of 'Himalaya' is the 'abode of snow'. _____
- From west to east, the Himalayas stretch for 3,500 kms. _____
- The western part of the Himalayan range is called the Middle Himalayas. _____
- There are many passes in the Shiwalik range. _____
- The Himalayas stop the icy winds blowing in from the south. _____

E. Write the following :

- Height of Mt. Everest : _____
- Height of K2 : _____
- Religious places located in the Middle Himalayas : _____
- Animals found in the mountainous areas : _____
- First Indian woman to climb Mt. Everest. _____

■ Creative Task 

- ◇ On an outline map of India, mark the following :
- Mt. Everest, K2, Naga and Lushai hills.
 - The Ganga, Indus, Satluj and the Kosi rivers.
 - Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.
 - Shimla, Mussoorie, Nainital and Darjeeling.

Surprising But True

Bachendri Pal is India's first and the world's fifth woman mountaineer to climb Mt. Everest. She did it in 1984. She belongs to Uttarkashi, a district in Uttarakhand. At present, she is a lecturer in a school.



Santosh Yadav is the only woman mountaineer in the world to have climbed Mt. Everest thrice : 12 May, 1992, 10 May, 1993 and 1999. At present, she is an officer in Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

