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The Northern Plains

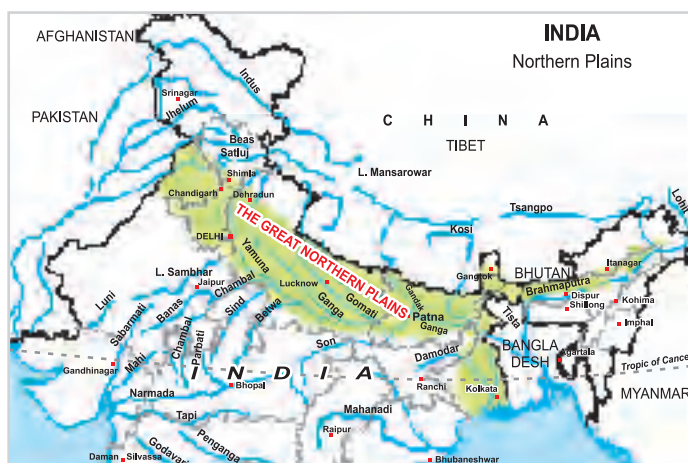
Location

To the south of the Himalayas are located the great North Indian Plains. It is a vast plain area, stretching from Punjab in the west to Assam in the east. Its total length is about 2400 kms but its width is not equal.



Do You Know

'Punjab' means the land of five rivers. These rivers are Satluj, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum.



Rivers

Many rivers flow through the northern plains. Rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Ghaghra, Gandak, Kosi, Brahmaputra, etc. flow down from the Himalayas while the Chambal, Betwa, Sone, etc. flow down from the southern plateau. The Himalayan rivers are perennial and have water throughout the year while the rivers of the plateau, being seasonal, have very little water in the summer.

Soil

For millions of years, these rivers have been bringing down fertile alluvial soil with them. The alluvial soil is very soft and fertile. Thus, the northern plains are very fertile. The rivers flowing down the plains divide it into three parts :

1. Satluj Basin;
2. Ganga Basin
3. Brahmaputra Basin.

1. Satluj Basin : The western part of the northern plains is known as the **Satluj Basin**. Punjab and Haryana lie in this very basin. The Satluj and its tributaries flow towards the south-western direction. Later, the Satluj merges into the Indus in Pakistan.

This region does not get enough rain and much of irrigation is done by tube wells and canals. The main crop of the region is wheat. Besides, cotton, sugar cane, rice, grams, etc. are other important crops.



Wheat



Sugar cane



Tube well irrigation



Do You Know

- › India is so named after the river Indus.
- › The Indus flows through a large area of Pakistan and merges into the Arabian Sea in the end.



Kumbh Fair, Haridwar



Interesting Fact

'Kumbh Mela' is held after 12 years in Haridwar and Prayag. People from all over the world take part in this fair.

2. Ganga Basin : The Ganga is the main river of the northern plains. It rises from the Gangotri glacier in the Himalayas. In mountains, it flows very fast and enters the plains at Haridwar, where it slows down. Before reaching Haridwar, the rivers Bhagirathi, the Alaknanda and the Mandakini fall into it.

The main tributary of the Ganga is the Yamuna which meets it at Prayag (Allahabad). The place is known as **Sangam**. It is a famous place of pilgrimage.

Later, the Ghaghra, Sone, Gandak and Kosi also merge into the Ganga. Moving still further, it turns to the south. Here, it splits into two branches, one going to Bangladesh where its called **Padma**. The other is famous as **Hooghly**. Kolkata is situated on the banks of the Hooghly. This ultimately falls into the Bay of Bengal.



Hooghly, Kolkata



Sunderbans Delta

The Ganga slows down considerably in West Bengal, with soil and sediments increasing in it. These give rise to small islands in the middle of the river which are known as a **delta**. The Ganga and the Brahmaputra form a huge delta in the Bay of Bengal which is famous as **Sunderbans**. Sundari trees grow here. Most of it is in

Bangladesh. The main crops of the Ganga Basin are wheat, sugar cane, rice and jute.

3. Brahmaputra Basin : It is a very small basin. It is surrounded by the north eastern hills. Here, the Brahmaputra flows down from the Assam valley and moves into Bangladesh.

The Brahmaputra flows through the area with very high rainfall. That's why, it is flooded in the monsoons, costing hugely in terms of life and property.



Flood



Water Pollution

Main crops of this basin are rice and jute. On the hilly slopes, tea is grown on a large scale.

The Ganga and its tributaries flow through the very fertile part of India. Many cities have come up on their banks. The



waste from the industries in these cities is dumped in the rivers and that pollutes them. We have to prevent this pollution, otherwise, a day will come when we won't have pure water to drink.

The government has initiated many schemes and programmes to stop pollution of the rivers. We should all unite to stop this pollution.



Vocabulary

- Alluvial Soil** : The fertile soil brought down by the rivers.
Basin : A large area irrigated by a river and its tributaries.
Delta : A triangular area formed at the mouth of the river by sediments and soil.
Waste Materials : The sewage and chemical waste from factories.

Learnt by Now



- The northern plains extend from Punjab to Assam.
- Many rivers flow through the northern plains.
- The northern plains are made up of alluvial soil, hence, it is very fertile.
- The western part of the northern plains is called the Satluj Basin.
- The Ganga is the main river of the northern plains and it rises from the Gangotri glacier.
- The Ganga and the Brahmaputra rivers form a huge delta in the Bay of Bengal.
- The Brahmaputra Basin is very small and surrounded by the north-eastern hills.
- Many cities have come up on the banks of the Ganga and its tributaries.



Exercise

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

1. What is the soil brought down by rivers called ?
(a) Sandy soil ☐ (b) Red soil ☐ (c) Alluvial soil ☐
2. How is the alluvial soil ?
(a) Fertile ☐ (b) Useless ☐ (c) Sandy ☐
3. Where do the Ganga and the Yamuna meet ?
(a) At Haridwar ☐ (b) At Kanpur ☐ (c) At Allahabad ☐
4. Which river flows in Assam ?
(a) The Yamuna ☐ (b) The Brahmaputra ☐ (c) The Ganga ☐

B. Write answers to the following questions :

1. Write about the location of the northern plains.
2. Which are the rivers of the northern plains ?
3. Why are the northern plains so fertile ?
4. Where does the Ganga Basin spread up to ?



5. Where and in which area does the Brahmaputra Basin lie ?
6. What is a delta ?
7. What are the reasons for the pollution of rivers ?

C. Fill in the blanks :

1. The length of the northern plains from the west to the east is about _____.
2. The rivers divide the northern plains into _____ parts.
3. The Satluj and its tributaries flow in the _____ direction.
4. The Ganga becomes very slow in _____.
5. Rice and jute crops are grown in _____.

D. Write the following :

1. Three perennial rivers rising from the Himalayas : _____
2. Three seasonal rivers rising in the plateau of south : _____
3. Three important crops of the Satluj basin : _____
4. Three tributaries of the Ganga : _____
5. Three crops of the Ganga basin : _____

E. Match the following :

- | A | B |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. The Satluj | is on the banks of Hooghly. |
| 2. Prayag | form a delta in the Bay of Bengal. |
| 3. Kolkata | is trying to control pollution. |
| 4. The Ganga and the Brahmaputra | has the Sangam of the Ganga and the Yamuna. |
| 5. The government | flows into the Indus. |

F. Tick (✓) the correct statement :

1. The rivers of the plateau have water throughout the year. ☐
2. In the Satluj Basin, irrigation is done by canals and tube wells. ☐
3. On turning south, the Ganga splits into two branches. ☐
4. Most of the Sunderbans delta is in U.P. ☐
5. The Brahmaputra flows through the Assam valley and enters Bangladesh. ☐

■ Creative Task



❖ On an outline map of India, mark the following :

1. The Satluj, the Ganga and the Kosi rivers
2. Haridwar, Kolkata and Prayag cities
3. Northern plains