



Orbis

To know your world better



Geography Department

Volume 1/ Issue 2, July 2021



Editor's Note

Amidst finally coming back to school, and getting back to the hustle and bustle of life in AVS, the team has come together once again, to create the 2nd issue of Orbis. In the second issue, we start off with an insightful article on the various ghats on the coastline of the river Ganga, with a glance upon their history and the plight it is going through now. On that note, we have an article on a brief mythological background of the river Ganga and the heavy pollution it is facing in present times. The next article is on the picturesque land of Greece and its influence in ancient times, often being called as the cradle of Western civilisation. The invigorating Travel Log is next, this time it's focus being on Thailand, and the various adventures and thrills the exotic land entails. With many tales spun around this popular trope, with novels and movies to stand witness, we have the article which tells how to equip ourselves best should we ever be stranded in a deserted tropical island. Lastly we have a detailed and informational article on one of the most important landforms of our earth, plateaus, and its various uses and importance. Aside from articles, we also have a touch of different regions and features of this dynamic world through our clicks made by the students, and a fun crossword for everyone to solve. We hope our readers enjoy this issue, and come out, slightly more learned and aware than they were before.

*Thank you
Sanjana Barooah
Class 12*

Ghats - The sacred riverscape of India

Hundreds of Ghats punctuate the bank of the River Ganga in India and these stone steps which jut out of the side of the river bank play an important part in the Hindu religion. These steps leading to the banks of the River Ganga with legends or mythologies have existed since time immemorial. Within this river landscape, the built inserts of ghats have reinforced the age-old nature-culture, people-water liaison along the journey.

Guided by geography and climate, limited local resources, and individual history, riverscapes emerged as unique design expressions for each settlement. The holy river was central to their being. River cities such as those of Varanasi and Allahabad illustrate this exemplary connection between people and water. In the instance of Varanasi, education, philosophy, culture, arts, and religion flourished, fuelling daily rituals on one hand and enriching the urban form on the other. The Kumbh Mela at Allahabad held once every 12 years on the banks of the River Ganga, has bestowed an undeniable socio-cultural value and a reaffirmation of a sense of community to the city despite its ephemerality.

Despite their iconic value in the Indian ethos, these riverscapes today send out a contradictory message. Not only is their visual identity being overtaken by nondescript architecture, but the significance of the river in our spiritual and physical well-being is also lost. A polluted river and a chaotic urbanscape are replacing the once respectful urbanscape in these cities. As cities move, expand and mutate, the connection between communities and water is getting further misplaced, leaving the historic and cultural identity of the Indian river city hanging by a slender thread.

The vital river-settlement interaction has gone missing as the focus of cities has shifted away from the river. In Varanasi, the ghats stand forsaken at the altar of overuse, misunderstood significance, lost amongst the 'modern' inserts of hotels looking over the murky water of the holy Ganges. The plight of urban iconic ghats is echoed further upstream and downstream in other cities, towns, and villages located along the banks. The river is proving difficult to access, plagued with dumping grounds, dirt paths, dense ephemeral vegetation and populated by squatters. This conscious or unconscious turning away from the river by our planners has given birth to an urban habitat that has overwritten the historic identity of these settlements with architectural anarchy. The result is a cluttered, incoherent waterfront."



Riverfront projects such as the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project of Ahmedabad city have transformed cultural landscapes into unidentifiable urban commercial spaces. While they have imbued the city with a brand new identity, which itself is not a bad option, the chosen language does not build upon the traditional identity of Ahmedabad, which is now lost forever.

The cultural and social activities associated with riverbanks are central to ghats. The traditional spatial design of ghats seeks to reinforce the relationship between the city and its inhabitants and visitors. However, equally important are the functional aspects that lead to continuous use and long-term sustainability of such spaces. The ghats have and must continue to perform a variety of complex religious, social, and environmental functions in a limited space. It is vital to create dynamic places that cater to an array of uses and users, both in a daily context and seasonally during festivals, thereby maintaining and even enhancing the cultural identity of our rivers.

The challenge for us lies in finding a design vocabulary emerging from the traditional and addressing inclusivity for our citizens. The ghats have endured overtime to bridge the past with the present and facilitate a unique identity for the future. If designed contextually, ghats can act as unspoken communicators exhibiting the aesthetic sensibilities and traditional ethos of Indian cities; as they enable India to look to the future while preserving the memory of our rich past.

*Kamalica Bhowmick
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GANGA

Ganga starts from Gangotri and joins the sea of Ganga Sager, a place in Bengal. Its root moves from Rishikesh, Haridwar, Allahabad, Kanpur, Varanasi, Garh Ganga to further eastwards till it reaches the Bay of Bengal.

In Hindu mythology, the Ganges River was created when Vishnu, in his incarnation as the dwarf Brahmin, took two steps to cross the universe. On the second step, Vishnu's big toe accidentally created a hole in the wall of the universe and through it spilled some of the waters of the River Mandakini which flowed to form the now River Ganga. Ganga is a river and a goddess indivisible from each other. Her water has the power to cleanse — as most Hindus believe — every kind of sin. Bathing in Ganga liberates the soul as does dying in it reaffirming the Hindu notion of Moksha - salvation.

The Ganga is the symbol of India's memorable past which has been flowing into the present and continues to flow towards the ocean of the future. It is a symbol of faith, hope, culture, and sanity. To most Indians, it is the center of social and religious traditions. It is particularly sacred in Hinduism. Hindu belief holds that the river has a purifying nature and that any rituals performed at the banks of the Ganges or in its water will bring fortune and wash away impurity. Since our childhood, we have been taught about this sacred river and its significance but without realizing we have been polluting it to an extent that today, the Ganges is considered to be the fifth-most polluted river in the world. Sooner or later, people will realize how important this river is for our survival.

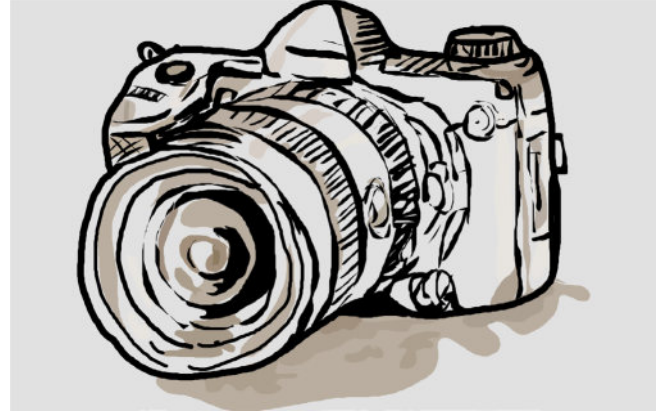
Pollution of the Ganga, the largest river in India, poses significant threats to human health and the larger environment. The main causes of water pollution in the Ganga River are the disposal of human sewage and animal waste, increasing population density, and disposal of industrial waste into the river. This pollution is due to the dumping of city garbage, industrial effluents, human and animal excreta, agricultural wastes, pesticides, burning of human bodies, community bathing, and faulty social and religious practices.

River Ganga has been nourishing millions of people for thousands of years. Respect for Ganga flows through their veins and reaches their souls. "Aarti" is an ideal homage to show gratitude and to seek the blessings of Goddess Ganga. We should not only pay attention to pollution in the Ganges but also the damage that we are causing to our mother Earth. This will not only help us but also all the living creatures to live a healthy life.

-Kashvi Kegriwal
Class 10



Imaginibus



**Dodital, Luqmaan Ahmed, Class 12
(Photography Captain)**



Leh Ladakh, Luqmaan Ahmed, Class 12 (Photography Captain)

Being Trapped

- Chesta Mundra
Class 12

Being stranded on a deserted tropical island is not a situation anyone would like to find themselves in, especially if they are by themselves. Although many people who end up in these situations get rescued, it is still vital to know how to survive on these islands. Even if the chances are low, one's priorities at that time should be to gather materials, find water and food, and make shelter and fire.

One's first and foremost concern is to find clean drinking water. Eventually, one will need to explore the entire island, but for the moment, while gathering and stacking any usable items, one needs to be aware of their surroundings and any possible dangers so that they are not caught off-guard. Larger islands offer hope for inland sources of water but if it's still and not a running stream or waterfall, chances are it won't be drinkable. The best-case scenario would be having coconut trees in the area. Immature nuts are good sources of water as well as nutrition. This entails having to find ways to get them in a safe way, but once that part is figured out, freshwater is available for the picking.

The next disquiet should be food. It is not advisable to venture too far into the forest and one will have no idea what is in there. One could look for fruits but make sure these fruits are edible ones. One's best bet for food will likely be fish that live in the shallow pools at the beach. The water should be shallow enough to walk through and look for fish.

The best method of catching these is spearfishing. Create a spear from a long thin branch that is sharpened at one end. Stand on rocks while spearfishing to avoid disturbing the water and alarming the fish. Spear the fish quickly, aiming for the head. Try to spearfish that are still, as one is more likely to hit them.

The next chief element for surviving on a tropical island should be to find shelter. One needs to find shelter for protection from predators and other elements of nature. It doesn't have to be fancy, just safe. Look for natural shelter such as rock outcroppings for temporary shelter until a better structure can be built.

The next major step is to set up a fire. One needs to keep warm, even if it's warm during the day. It could get cold at night, so it is best to have a source of warmth. One will especially need fire if they get wet from the rain. It is important to stay as dry as possible. Also, the smoke might have a chance at attracting passing ships. Find tinder such as small dry twigs, grasses, and flammable debris. Arrange smaller twigs in a tripod with a tinder underneath.

All the other things can wait if one got injured in the process. One should keep their head cool and focus on attending to their traumas. One should make sure that their well-being is compatible enough with the dooming task they face: to survive on a deserted island as a castaway. It will increase the odds for the best scenario and chances of survival. Avoid panicking. Panicking will stop one from thinking well and they will end up hurting themselves. The most important things to always have are one's courage, strength, and resilience. Most of all, never to lose hope.

Legend has it that God distributed soil through a sieve and used the stones that remained to build Greece. The validity of the legend is certainly questionable, but it starts sounding logical when one looks at the breathtaking geography of Greece.

Situated on the southernmost tip of the Balkans, Greece lies at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa, sharing its borders with Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. The country is divided into the peninsular mainland and 2,000 small and beautiful islands, 170 of which are yet to be trodden upon by human feet. These islands, which are the dream destinations of travelers high on wanderlust, dot the blue Aegean Sea to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the south, and the Ionian Sea to the west, calling out to people from around the world and entrapping them with their lush history, mythology and culture. The Greek mainland, on the other hand, is composed of all kinds of relief – rugged mountains, forests, and lakes. It has the longest coastline amongst all other countries of Europe, which is more or less obvious, considering the fact that it is surrounded by water on three sides. The seas played a pivotal part in its development as the mountains in the mainland greatly restricted internal movement and communication; it was only through the seas that Greece's horizons were broadened.

The landscape of the Greek mainland is conspicuous not only for its rugged beauty but also for its complexity and variety. The Pindus mountain range contains one of the world's deepest gorges, Vikos Gorge, which plunges 1,100 meters deep; while Mount Olympus is Greece's highest mountain at 2,917 meters above sea level. Ancient Greeks believed that it was home to the Olympian gods. Mount Olympus has an even richer history, being the birthplace of democracy, the Olympic Games, and a keeper of famous archaeological sites and ancient temples. Its history expands all the way from the Bronze Age to Modern Greece as it experiences the rule of the famous Roman Empire as well. Fragments from these times still linger to this day in places like The Acropolis of Athens, The Sanctuary of Dion, and The Ancient Olympia.

Most of the country was shrouded in forests at one time. Over the centuries, however, the forests were cut down for firewood, lumber, and to make room for farms. Today, forests can be found mainly in the Pindus and Rhodope ranges. The Greek landscape is covered by maquis, a tangle of thorny shrubs that don't need a lot of water. The special features of the geography of Greece have formed an equally special natural environment. Greece has a rich diversity in flora and fauna with there being many species original to this country. These rare species are found in forests, lakes, rivers, underground caves, and canyons. The country is very rich in natural resources providing petroleum, magnetite, lignite, bauxite, hydropower, and marble. The geography of Greece has marked the development of not only the flora and fauna but also of many civilizations throughout the ages.

-Moom Lego , Class 12

Greece

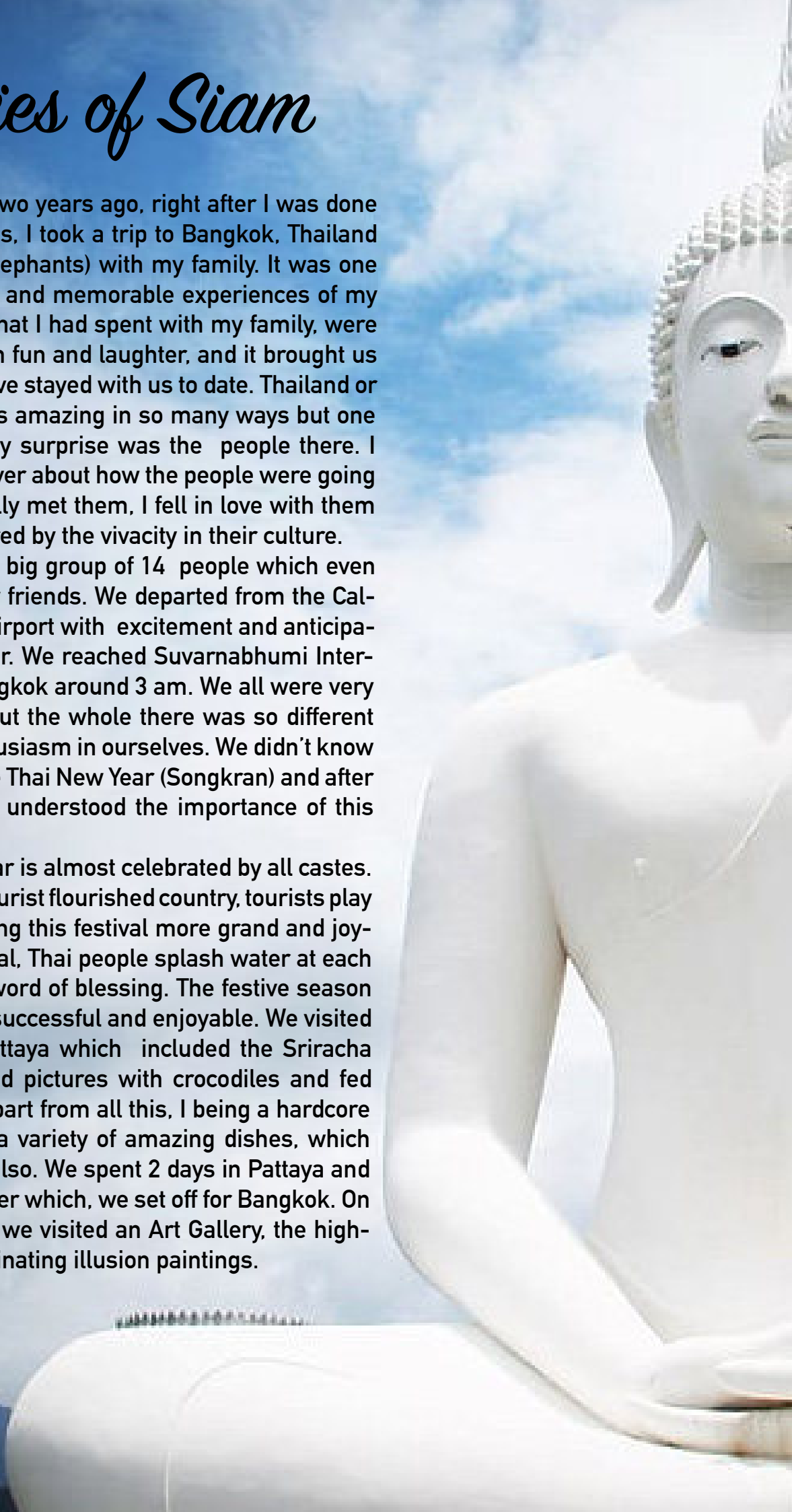


Memories of Siam

Two years ago, right after I was done giving my final exams, I took a trip to Bangkok, Thailand (The land of White Elephants) with my family. It was one of the most amazing and memorable experiences of my life. The two weeks that I had spent with my family, were filled to the brim with fun and laughter, and it brought us close in ways that have stayed with us to date. Thailand or earst while Siam was amazing in so many ways but one thing that took me by surprise was the people there. I had no clue whatsoever about how the people were going to be but when I finally met them, I fell in love with them instantly. I was inspired by the vivacity in their culture.

We were a big group of 14 people which even included many of my friends. We departed from the Calcutta International Airport with excitement and anticipation buzzing in the air. We reached Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok around 3 am. We all were very sleepy at that time but the whole there was so different that we still had enthusiasm in ourselves. We didn't know there was going to be Thai New Year (Songkran) and after reaching Pattaya we understood the importance of this festival.

Thai New Year is almost celebrated by all castes. Since Thailand is a tourist flourished country, tourists play a major role in making this festival more grand and joyful. During this festival, Thai people splash water at each other followed by a word of blessing. The festive season made our trip more successful and enjoyable. We visited a lot of places in Pattaya which included the Sriracha Tiger Zoo. We clicked pictures with crocodiles and fed milk to tiger cubs. Apart from all this, I being a hardcore non-vegetarian had a variety of amazing dishes, which included crocodiles also. We spent 2 days in Pattaya and the Coral Islands after which, we set off for Bangkok. On the way to Bangkok, we visited an Art Gallery, the highlight being the fascinating illusion paintings.



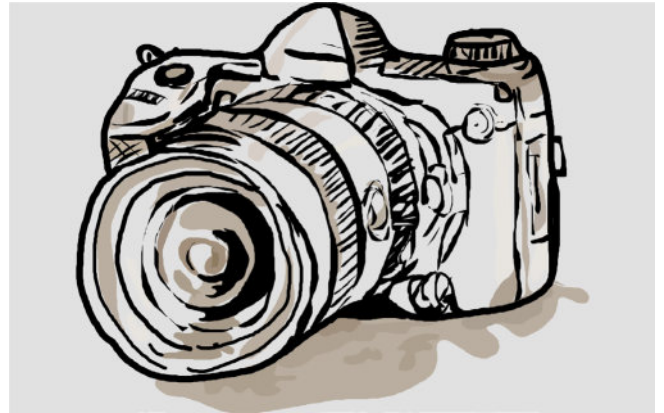
We reached Bangkok in a couple of hours and we checked in the tallest hotel in Bangkok "The Baiyoke Sky Hotel". The service of the hotel was very lavish and I felt like a "VIP". The most remarkable thing about the hotel was its buffet breakfast. There were 10 different types of eggs and also a huge selection of bread to choose from. Delicious pancakes, waffles, and also rows and rows of mouthwatering donuts and muffins. For dinner, we tried a different gourmet restaurant every night and the food was mouthwatering at every single one of them. My personal favorite was the seafood restaurant near the hotel. Thai food is no doubt amazing but apart from that, we enjoyed it the most in "he Safari World". We watched several shows which included the Crocodile show, Tiger show, Dolphin show, Sea Lion Show, and many more. We fed many animals like tigers, crocodiles, and giraffes. In the evening, we went for a walk nearby to witness the night market which gets set up every night. We bought a lot of things which included many aromatic items like candles because Thailand is known for its fine bee wax candles. As the days were passing by we felt nostalgic because we were so attached to the place. The day came when we had to depart from that beautiful place but rather than regrets, I have the best memories from that beautiful place.

In the end, I would like to say that Thailand is the best place to go if you're looking for a fun and relaxing time. There were tons of other things that I did like jet skiing, paragliding, going to animal shows where they performed tricks and stunts, or just sightseeing at all of Bangkok's famous spots. Whether you go there with your family or your friends; you are bound to have the best time of your life. It'll be a trip to remember.

Shourya Kedia ,Class 12



Imaginibus



Shillong, Mahita Jindal, Class 11



Dodital, Luqmaan Ahmed, Class 12 (Photography Captain)

PLATEAUS

A

plateau is a flat, elevated landform that rises sharply above the surrounding area on at least one side.

Plateaus occur on every continent and take up a third of the Earth's land. They are one of the four major landforms, along with mountains, plains, and hills.

There are two kinds of plateaus: dissected plateaus and volcanic plateaus. A dissected plateau forms as a result of upward movement in the Earth's crust. The uplift is caused by the slow collision of tectonic plates. The Colorado Plateau, in the western United States, has been rising about .03 centimeters a year for more than 10 million years.

Our very own Deccan Plateau is a dissected plateau. These older uplifts have been eroded by creeks and rivers to develop steep relief not immediately distinguishable from mountains. Many areas of the Allegheny Plateau and the Cumberland Plateau, which are at the western edge of the Appalachian Mountains of eastern North America, are called "mountains" but are dissected plateaus. One can stand on the top of one of these high "mountains" and note that all the other tops are nearly the same height, which represents the original elevation profile of the plain before uplift, and thereafter the subsequent weather erosion.

A volcanic plateau is formed by numerous small volcanic eruptions that slowly build up over time, forming a plateau from the resulting lava flows. Multiple successive and extensive lava flows cover the original landscape to eventually form a plateau, which may contain lava fields, cinder cones, shield volcanoes, and other volcanic landforms. In some cases, a lava plateau may be part of a single volcano.

An example is the massive Level Mountain shield volcano in northern British Columbia, Canada. Perhaps the most extensive of all the subaerial basaltic plateaus existed during the Paleogene and possibly extended over 1,800,000 sq. km of the northern Atlantic Ocean region. This region, known as the Thulean Plateau, is generally believed to have been broken up by the foundering of the Earth's crust to form the present ocean basin.

There are lots of benefits of the world's plateaus both to man and to the subjective well-being of the earth's surface. Some of the significant benefits of plateaus are:

In most areas occupied by plateaus, there are waterfalls as well as river falls. As water is a basic human need, such places will act as sources of drinking water as well as water for other valuable activities.

Most plateaus are characterized by plenty of grass. The places are therefore crucial for the nomadic lifestyle since the grass is essential animal food. The green pastures on the plateaus are a perfect match for the growth and rearing of domestic animals.

The volcanic plateaus which are formed as a result of the flow of lava are known to be very productive. Volcanoes consist of fertile soils which are suitable for farming and other agricultural activities.

Most plateaus have scenic spot-like features which act as tourist attraction sites. The grand canyons, as well as the numerous waterfalls which are found in most high plateaus, are the perfect examples of tourist attraction features on plateaus. With the attractions, the residents of such areas can earn foreign revenues from the sites.

-Ojas Krish Venkatesh Ayapilla
Class- XI

Cross Word



Down:

1. The river joins Chenab in Pakistan.
2. The longest river in India.
3. A river that flows through Ladakh, Gilgit, and Pakistan.
5. The river originating from Beas Kund.
8. The river's source lies near Rohtang Pass.
9. Nagarjuna Sagar Dam is on this river.
10. The river that originates in the Yamunotri glacier

Across:

4. A tributary of Indus originating from Himachal Pradesh.
6. The river flowing through a fault and draining into the Arabian Sea.
7. The longest river of Peninsular India.
11. A river of south India, which receives rainwater both in summer and winter.
12. The river originating in the Betul district of MP and flows westwards.
13. The river on which the reservoir for the Indira Gandhi canal has been built.
14. An important river of the Indian desert.
15. The river was once known as the "Sorrow" of West Bengal.

- Answers
1. Krishna
 2. Ganga
 3. Beas
 4. Tapi
 5. Damodar
 6. Satluj
 7. Ravi
 8. Yamuna
 9. Chenab
 10. Narmada
 11. Kaveri
 12. Indus
 13. Luni
 14. Jhelum
 15. Yamuna
 8. Godavari



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**Publisher : The Assam Valley School
Balipara, Asom-784101**

A Geography Department Publication

July 2021

Disclaimer : The opinions and views expressed by the writers are their own and not endorsed by The Assam Valley School

