

Class- B.A. Part- I
Paper – II (Hons.)

Date:- 20/04/2020 – 22/04/2020
Monday to Wednesday

Topic-ASIA- South West Asia (Unit-Ist)

INTRODUCTION

Asia is the largest of all the continents and includes an area of 44,444,100 sq km which is about 33 per cent of the world's total land surface and the greater part of the Eurasian landmass. The total population of Asia in 2001 was 3,720 million, which is likely to be 4,714 million in 2025 and 5,262 million in 2050. About 37 percent of the total population of Asia is urban. The Asian countries are usually grouped into five main geographical and politico-cultural subdivisions:

(1) **Southwest Asia**, which includes Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Yemen plus Turkey (on both sides of the Sea of Marmara in Asia and Europe), and Egypt, east of Suez Canal (Sinai peninsula).

(2) **South Asia**, which includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon).

(3) **Southeast Asia**, which includes Brunei, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

(4) **East Asia**, which includes China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan.

(5) **Central Asia**, which includes all of Siberia and the Russian republics in Asia (Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

Physiography

Some of the highest, lowest and coldest places on Earth are found in Asia. Mount Everest in the Himalayas is the highest, the Dead Sea in the west is the lowest and the frozen wastes of northern Siberia are among the coldest. The Northern Asia is made up of old mountains and ancient stable plateaus. The Jagged Himalayan mountains dominate the central part of the continent along with the plateau of Tibet, which stretches north into China. In south-east Asia, there are many islands. Volcanoes and earthquakes are common and some of

the islands are volcanically formed. The Arabian peninsula and mountainous Iranian plateau are divided by the Gulf, fed by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Further east, the land begins to rise, the mountains spreading to north of the plateau of Tibet and South of the Himalayas. The plain of the south of the Himalayas are drained by the Indus and Ganges and to the east of the plateau of Tibet the Yellow River.

In the far north of Asia, the land is permanently frozen which is known as "Permafrost". Asia is watered by many great rivers. India's Ganges has its source high in the Himalayas. Tropical forests blanket the landscape across much of Southeast Asia especially in Burma, Thailand and islands of Borneo, Celebes, Java and Sumatra. The "Takla Makan" is one of the several deserts in Central Asia.

Political Feature

In Asia there is the existence of various traditions, people and culture. The breakup of Soviet Union, which once stretched south from Russia to Iran produced the new Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The countries in southwest Asia are mainly Muslim, but are divided by religious difference and conflict. India is the world's largest democracy while China is a communist power. China and North Korea have been governed by strict communist government since the late 1940s. In 1991, people in the Soviet Union rejected communism and elected the first non-communist government after almost 70 years. During the Soviet Era, the Islamic faith and culture in Central Asia were actively suppressed.

Population

The deserts and high mountains of Asia are almost uninhabited and much of the Russian Federation is very sparsely populated. Singapore is one of the world's most densely populated places. Japan and India also have very high densities. Over 20 per cent of the World's people live in China but India is fast catching up.

Industry

Agricultural occupation is still dominating around the continent. Heavy industry dominated eastern China and Russia, but Japan is the most industrially productive country. In recent years booming 'tiger' economies have developed in countries such as Taiwan which borders the Pacific Ocean. Norilsk is one of

several Soviet Era industrial complexes built in Russia. It is the processing centre for rich minerals reserve found nearby. Japan is a world-leading producer of electronic and high-tech goods like computer, cameras and hi-fi equipment. Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore also produce electronic goods.

Mineral Resources

Over half of the world's oil gas reserves are in Asia, most importantly found in Gulf and in Western Siberia. Coal in Siberia has provided power for steel industries. Metallic minerals are also abundant. Tin is found in southeast Asia and Platinum and Nickel in Siberia. The discovery of oil in the Gulf has generated enormous wealth and produced rapid industrial and social change in the countries such as Saudi Arabia, U.A.E. and Kuwait which control the oil supplies.

Climate

The continental type of climate is prevalent most part of the Asia, apart from the coastal areas. Without the moderating effect of the Ocean temperature can soar during the day and plummet at night, while rainfall is generally low producing several large deserts. Temperature as low as -68°C have been recorded in the frozen wastes of Siberia while the islands in Southeast Asia have tropical climates. Southern and Eastern Asia are also affected by a seasonal wind called the Monsoon. This originates in the Indian Ocean and brings heavy rainfall and high winds.

Land-Use and Agriculture

The large expanses of Asia are uncultivated because the soil is too poor or the climate is too cold or dry for crops to grow. The plateau of Tibet, much of Siberia and Arabian Peninsula have limited agriculture. Some of the most fertile land is found in eastern China and India, where rice is a staple. Elsewhere cash-crops are grown for profit, such as dates in southwest Asia, tea in India, China and Sri Lanka and coconuts throughout the island archipelago of Southeast Asia. China is the world's largest producer of rice, where it is grown in muddy fields called paddy fields. Uzbekistan is the world's fourth largest producer of cotton.

SOUTH WEST ASIA- Physiographic Landscape

It chiefly consists of the countries like Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Much of the Southwest Asia is covered with sandy and rocky deserts. On the vast Arabian Peninsula which covers an area almost the size of India, sandy plains along the Red Sea and the south-coast rise to dry mountains. In the centre is a vast high plateau that slopes gently down to the flat shores of the Gulf. The mountainous area of Iran experience frequent earthquakes. The 'Wadis', a type of valley and riverbeds are found in Saudi Arabian desert. Usually they are dry, but after heavy rains, they are briefly filled by fast flowing rivers. The Syrian desert extends from the Jordan Valley in the west to the fertile plains of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in the East. It is mainly a rocky desert, as the sand has been swept away by winds and occasional heavy rainstorms. Oases are areas within a desert where water is available for plants and human use. They are usually formed when a fault, or split in the rock allows water to come to surface. The Dead Sea is the large lake on the border between Israel and Jordan. It is the lowest point on the earth's surface. Its shores lie 392 m below sea level. It is also the world's saltiest body of water and can support no life forms. The Rub-al-khali desert, also known as 'Empty Quarter' is the largest uninterrupted stretch of sand on Earth. It covers some 650,000 sq.km. and is one of the world's driest and most-hostile deserts. The Iranian plateau in Central Iran is a vast semi-arid plateau, which rises steeply from the coastal lowlands bordering the gulf. It is ringed by high Zagros and Elburz mountains.

Climate

Most of the regions receive very little rainfall, apart from a few isolated pockets. During July, temperature soars, but in January temperature is much cooler, especially in the north.

Population

The desert has kept much of the population clustered along the coastal area. Most people live in the cities, some of them are the fastest growing in the world. Oman and Yemen have mainly rural populations, and in Saudi Arabia, small groups of Bedouin tribe people roam the desert with their animals.

Industry

The Oil and Natural Gas continue to be the main source of income for many of the countries here, although other industries are being developed to support their

economies when these resources run out. Iran is famous for its carpet, which are woven from wool or silk.

Farming and Land Uses

The best farmland is found along the Mediterranean coast, and in the fertile valley of the Tigris, Euphrates and Jordan river. Wheat is the main cereal crops, and cotton, dates, citrus and orchard fruits are grown for export. Elsewhere, modern irrigation techniques have created patches of fertile land in desert. Dates, wheat and coffee are cultivated in the oases and along the gulf coast.

Source:- Chronicles Geography, Regional Geography of Asia.

Types of questions may be asked in your exams

- 1. Divide ASIA into political or Geographical regions?**
- 2. Give a brief description of South West Asia?**

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