

CHAPTER 13

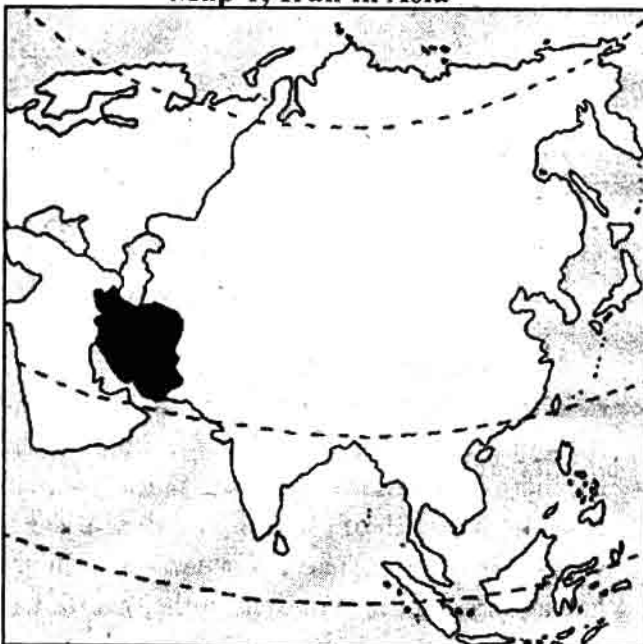
IRAN

Iran lies to the west of India. Since ancient times, there has been contact between the people of India and Iran. As a result, there are some similarities between these two cultures. For example, some pastoral people who spoke a language similar to Sanskrit settled in Iran. They, too, called themselves Arya. The name Iran is derived from Arya. That was around the time of the pastoral Aryans. Much later, people from Iran came to India and even established kingdoms here. Thus you can see that India and Iran have had a long history of interaction.

Where is Iran?

- *Locate Iran on the map of Asia. If we want to go to Iran by a land route, which are the countries we would have to cross?*
- *If we want to go to Iran from Bombay by sea, which gulfs and seas would we have to cross?*
- *Name the neighbouring countries of Iran.*
- *To the north of Iran there is the Caspian Sea. Locate it on the map of Asia.*
- *How far from the Equator does Iran lie? Find out from Map 1.*

Map 1, Iran in Asia



- *Do you think that Iran would have a warm season throughout the year like Indonesia?*

Map of Iran

If you look carefully at Map 2, you will see that Iran is shaped like a bowl. The edge of a bowl is high and the centre is low. Similarly, on the edges of Iran there are high mountains and the central part is a plateau. Look at the map and say how this plateau is different from the Bhopal-Vidisha plateau.

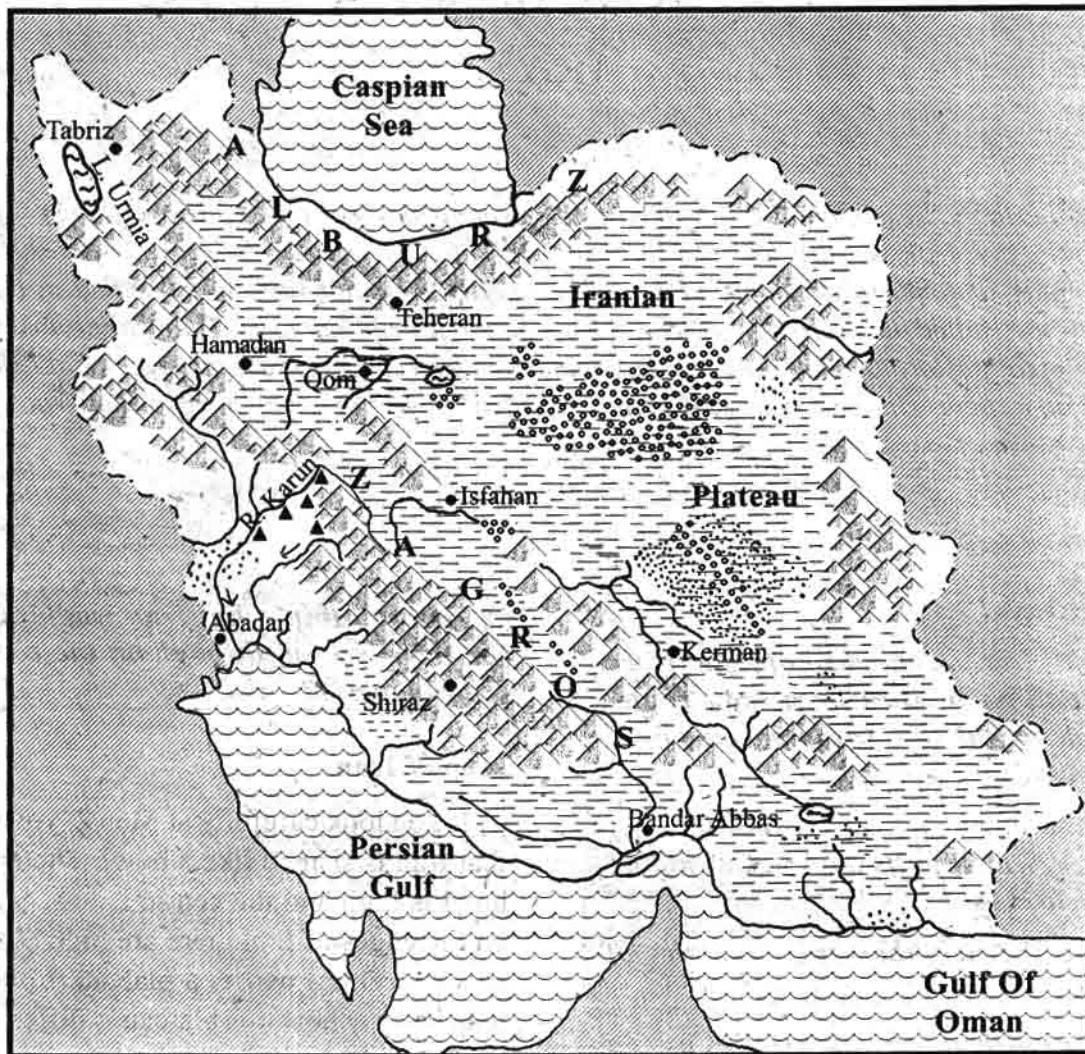
- *Which mountain ranges are located on the borders of Iran?*
- *Let us now move towards the interior of Iran. Study the map and describe this region.*
- *Can you identify the desert in the map? How many deserts are there?*
- *Which are the coastal areas of Iran? Run your finger along the river plain.*

Come, let us now read about the plateaus, mountains and coastal areas of Iran to understand the life of its people.

Plateaus - The Drylands of Iran

The major part of Iran is a plateau. The plateau of Iran is very dry and arid. There is very little rainfall here. You must have seen that there were also desert areas on the plateau. Because of the scanty rainfall, there is very

MAP 2. IRAN



INDEX

Boundaries of Iran	----	Salt Desert	
Sea		Sand Desert	
Other countries		River	
Mountains		Lake	
Plateau		City	
		Oil Wells	

little water in the rivers. The small rivers flowing down the mountainsides become dry once they reach the plateau.

You know that even in our region, during severe summers many rivers and streams dry up. If there is no rain, the situation becomes worse.

The plateau of Iran experiences this dry condition almost all through the year. The regions near the Zagros mountains on the southern and eastern side, and on the Caspian coast in the south of these mountains, also get very little rainfall. The other parts of Iran are not as dry. In the winter months, rainfall is

heavy in the western and northern regions. So, rivers and streams begin to flow. The snow from the mountains melts and flows down the rivers. There is also fertile land near these river banks, and people grow crops here.

The winter in Iran is very cold, like in Punjab and Kashmir. But during summer, it is extremely hot. The summer in Iran is more severe than the summer in India. You know how hot it is here in May and June, until it rains. On the Iranian plateau, since it hardly ever rains, imagine how hot it must be!

What sort of trees would grow in such a dry region? There cannot be a forest with such little rainfall, only some grasses and shrubs. See fig. 1.

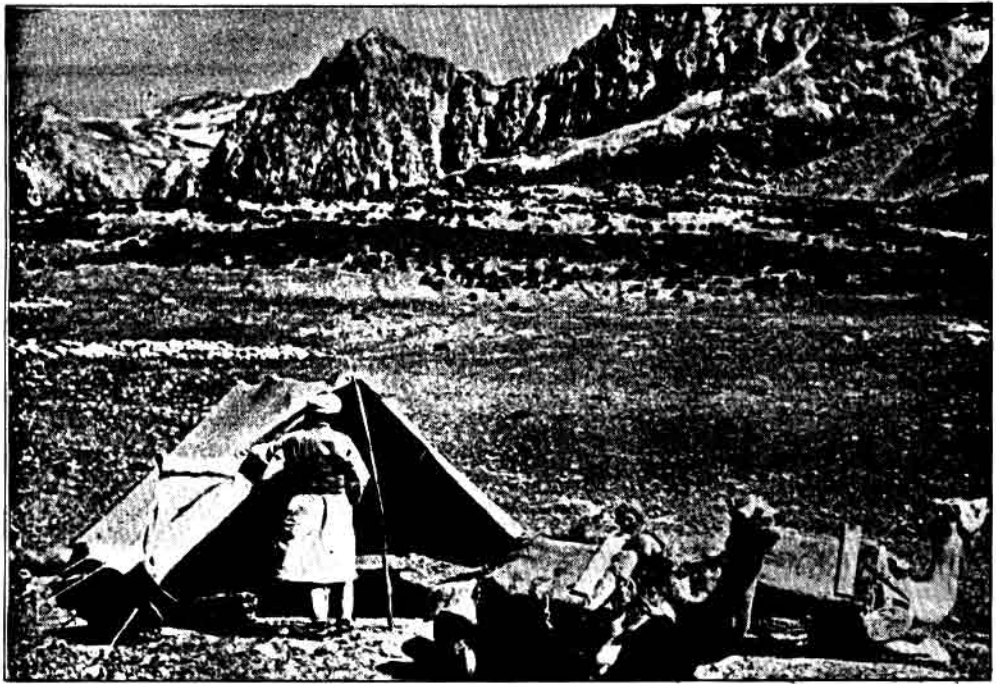


Fig. 1. Dry regions of Iran

Bakhtiyars, Baluchis, Kashkais etc. They move about in these grass and shrubby lands in order to graze their sheep and goats.

• ***Can you say why they rear sheep and goats instead of cows and buffaloes?***

These pastoralists live on the slopes of the hills. In the winter it is very cold on the mountain, so they graze their sheep and camels animals either on the plateau, or in the coastal region. During this time, the mountains are covered with snow. When summer approaches and fodder becomes scarce in the lower regions, they go up the mountains along with their herds. On the mountains, during summer, snow melts and there is some greenery, and soft and juicy new grasses grow (Fig. 2). These being hot summer months, nothing grows on the plateau.

• ***Apart from grass, what else do animals need?***

These bands of people travel through regions where water is available for them and their animals. They rear donkeys and horses to carry their loads while travelling. In very dry regions, camels are reared for this purpose.

• ***Why are camels more useful in very dry regions?***

- ***Can you see any vegetation on the mountains?***
- ***What seems to be growing at the foot of the mountains?***
- ***What can you tell about the people of Iran from the picture? Write in 5-6 sentences.***
- ***What sort of houses do they live in?***
- ***Which animals do they use for riding?***
- ***Do they live in the same place permanently?***
- ***What are the possible crops in this hot and dry climate? Can many people live in such a place? What would be their food?***

The main occupation of the people living in the arid regions of Iran is animal rearing. Thousands of people depend on animal rearing for their livelihood. There are various tribes among the pastoralists, such as the Loors,



Fig. 2. An elderly Kashkai shepherd is grazing his flock on the soft, new, summer grasses. He left the Persian Gulf about a month ago and travelled 200 miles to reach the grasslands of the mountains.

- *Can these people who are always on the move with their herds of animals, settle down permanently in any one place?*

You have read about the herdsmen of the polar region. They make their homes with reindeer skins. Look at Fig. 3 showing a camp of Iranian herdsmen. What could their tents be made of? Actually, the Iranian herders get plenty of wool from their sheep. They make their tents out of woollen blankets stretched on a wooden frame. People stay for some time in these tents. When they have to go elsewhere, they load their tents onto their animals and move off.

Animals are also a source of food, such as meat and milk products. They buy goods like grain and other necessities by exchanging meat, leather and wool.



Fig. 3. Camp of Pastoralists

Oases

Many dry parts of the plateau are deserts, where there is only sand. It is like the Thar desert of Rajasthan. During the day it is extremely hot and dust storms blow. No plants or trees or water or roads can be seen far into the distance.

The people of the desert areas of Iran live only where they can get water from a well or spring, or where there is underground water. Such places are known as oases. Water which flows from cracks in rocks is called a spring.

Fig. 4 shows an oasis. Due to the availability of water, date palms and other plants grow here.

If there is sufficient water near the oasis, people irrigate the land for cultivating some grain. In many places, they make underground channels to transport water for cultivation. These channels are very long. Look at fig. 5 and see what arrangements are made for water.

Mountains of the North and West

Now let us move from the desert and the mountains in the middle of Iran and go to the mountains in the north and the west. You have seen that there is a lot of rainfall there. They



Fig. 4. An Oasis

have forests also. See fig. 7. It certainly appears as if they do have some rainfall. Even coniferous trees with pointed leaves are found atop the high mountains which also receive snowfall.

Wherever people find suitable places for cultivation, they settle down. You have already seen that in Japan and Indonesia, very few people live on the mountains. Here too only a few, small settlements can be seen. The people on the northern and western mountains of Iran cultivate wheat, cotton, tobacco, barley, beetroot and various kinds of fruits. Generally,

they eat various kinds of *naans*, meat, fruits and vegetables.

These agriculturists are apprehensive of attacks by the nomad tribes. So they construct their houses with high walls. To prevent attacks, they also build sturdy and high walls with strong gates around their cities.

Plains on the Caspian Sea Shore

Let us now move to the extreme north of Iran which lies on the shore of the Caspian Sea.

• See Map 1. Alongside which mountain range is this region?

There is very good rainfall here, and the land is well suited to agriculture. Different kinds of crops, including rice, are grown.

The people of this region eat more rice than *naans*. Fruits and dry fruits are also available in plenty. See fig. 7, showing the trees at the foot of the mountains and the luxuriant fields.

You can see the traditional dress of the people. Women wear loose *pyjamas* and *kameez* and tie scarves around their heads. Men wear loose *pyjamas* and *kameez*. They wear a long coat during winter.

Cities of Iran

A lot of planning is needed to arrange for water supply in a dry region like Iran. Where there is water, people settle down. The water available in the middle of the mountains is carried to these cities through underground channels called '*qanats*'. Small canals can also be seen in the ancient cities.

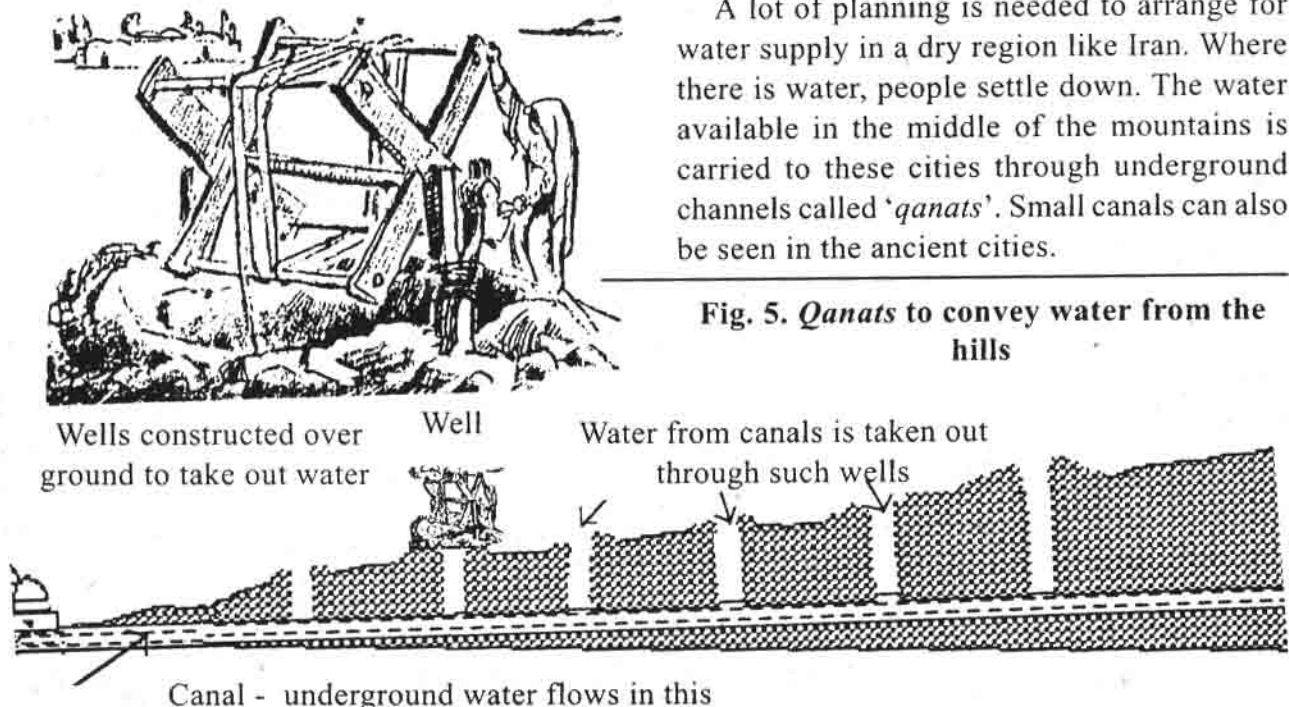


Fig. 5. *Qanats* to convey water from the hills

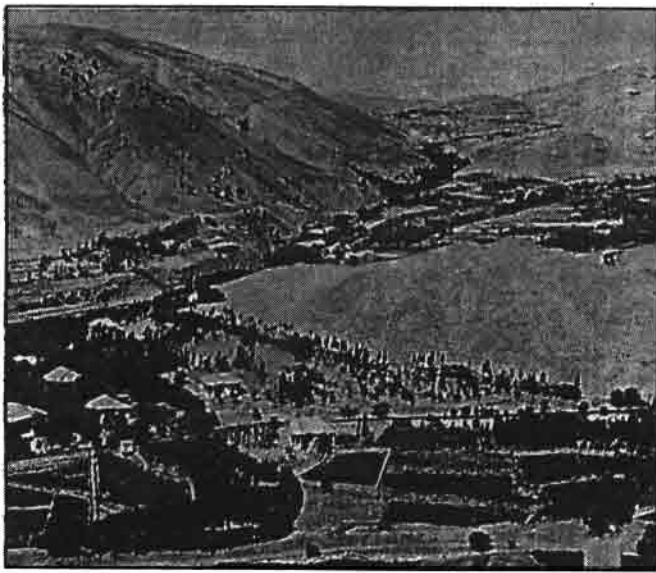


Fig. 6. Villages and lush fields at the foot of dry hills

The surrounding land is also irrigated in the same way. In many places, people collect water in underground tanks.

Teheran is the capital of Iran, situated at the foot of the mountains.

- *From Map 2, identify the mountains near Teheran.*

Isfahan, Shiraz, Abadan, Kirmanshah, etc. are the other important cities of Iran. Locate these cities on the map.

The population of Iran is very small compared to that of India. Settlements have

emerged in accordance with the availability of water and land. Where there is agricultural land, more people have settled down.

There is something valuable in Iran which brings in a lot of money. This is mineral oil or petroleum.

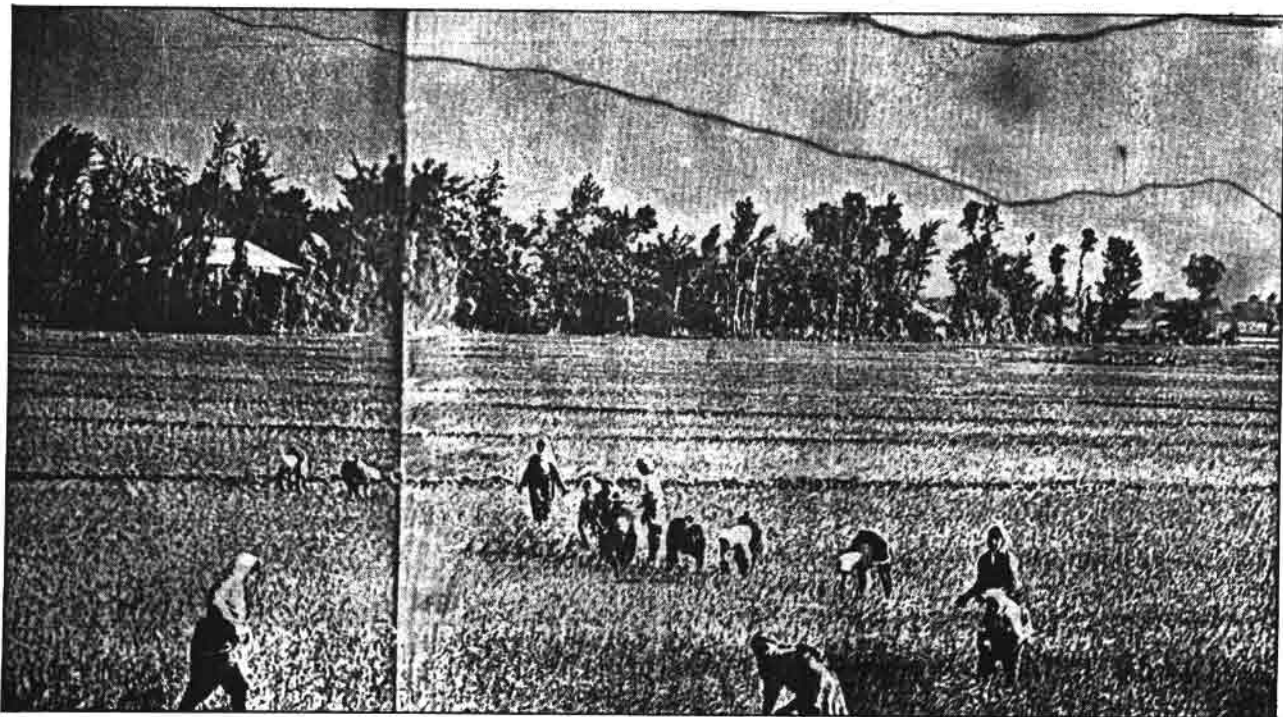
PETROLEUM

You have read about the extraction and use of petroleum in Indonesia. People have been using it for the purpose of fuel since ancient times. People knew how to collect and use the oil which came out of the earth.

Nowadays, petroleum is used for many other purposes, too. Petrol is used as a fuel in scooters, cars and other vehicles, Diesel and kerosene are also extracted from it. Cooking gas is also obtained. Machine grease, plastic, coal tar and even some varieties of terylene cloth and fertilizers, are manufactured out of petroleum. Over the past 100-150 years, petroleum has become indispensable for running machines, vehicles, aeroplanes, ships and to produce many other products. The demand for oil is ever increasing.

Explorations have revealed many zones of mineral oil in the western region of Iran. Many

Fig. 7. Plains near the Caspian Sea



of these zones have huge reserves of mineral oil.

With the growing demand for oil, it is extracted on a large scale through oil wells. The extracted oil is transported to the Persian Gulf through pipelines. Generally, crude oil is exported to other countries. Some oil is refined in Abadan. You can see a picture of an oil refinery in Abadan here (Fig. 8).

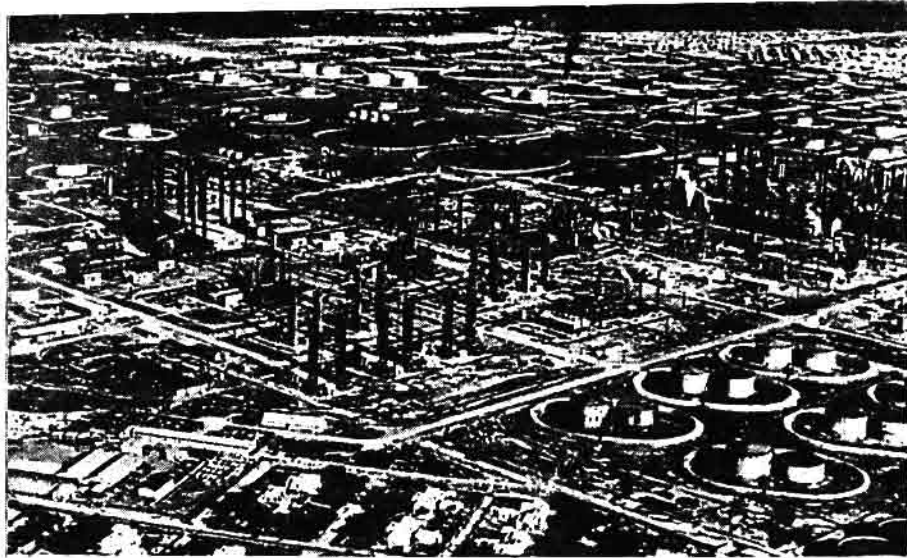


Fig. 8. Oil Refinery at Abadan

Iran earns plenty of revenue through the sale of petroleum. With this money, schools, hospitals and roads, etc. have been constructed. Iran owes its prosperity today to its oil wells.

• *Do you know whether India sells petroleum or whether we buy oil from Iran and other countries?*

Industries of Iran

Factories producing a variety of goods have now been set up in Iran. Motor vehicles, electric appliances, textiles, leather and woollen goods are now being manufactured. Weaving woollen carpets is a traditional occupation of Iran, which is world famous for its carpets. These soft carpets, woven with attractive designs, are spread on the floor of houses and tents.

EXERCISES

1. Why is it said that Iran resembles a bowl?
2. What type of region is called a desert? Which part of Iran is a desert?
3. Why are there no big rivers in Iran? Why do the small streams dry up once they reach the plateau?
4. What is an oasis? What advantages do settlers find in an oasis?
5. Where do the forests of Iran lie? Why?
6. Why do the people of northern Iran carry out cultivation? What crops do they grow?
7. What is the importance of petroleum? Write in three sentences.
8. Make a list of the occupations of the Iranian people.

CHAPTER 14

ASIA - PHYSICAL FEATURES

You have read about the Plains of the Narmada, the Satpura Hills, and the Plateau of Bhopal - Vidisha in your region. You probably know that India has high mountains like the Himalayas, great river plains like those of the Ganga and Yamuna, and huge plateaus like the Deccan plateau. You have also read about several countries and regions of Asia. Have you wondered about the rest of Asia? Hang up the physical map of Asia in your classroom and study it with the help of the map in this book. You will see that there are several mountain ranges to the north of the Himalayas.

Look at the map and write down the names of the main mountain ranges of Asia.

PLATEAUS OF ASIA

Look at the map and try to make out the differences between the Deccan Plateau and the Plateau of Iran. Locate the Plateau of Arabia and the Yunan Plateau. There are several plateaus in Central Asia. Locate them and write down their names. Also, say which of them is surrounded by mountains and which ones have escarpments like those of the Bhopal-Vidisha Plateau.

The Pamir Plateau is so high that it is called the Roof of the World! Look at the map and see which mountain ranges radiate from there in different directions.

PLAINS AND RIVERS OF ASIA

There are many huge and wide river plains like those of the Ganga and Indus, in which big rivers flow.

A map of the rivers of Asia is given on page 159. First identify the plains and then say which rivers flow through these plains.

Look carefully at the map of the rivers and you will notice that the rivers of Asia flow from the interior and empty themselves into the oceans on all sides.

Can you guess why this is so? Are the interior regions of Asia higher than the regions close to the coast?

Fill in the table -

Ocean /	Rivers draining into it
Pacific Ocean	
Indian Ocean	
Arabian Sea	
Arctic Ocean	
Persian Gulf	

