

The new height of Mount Everest

December 9, 2020

In news

Recently, the Foreign Ministers of Nepal and China jointly certified the elevation of Mount Everest at 8,848.86 meters above sea level – 86 cm higher than what was recognized since 1954

Earlier measurement

- In 1954 the Survey of India determined its height using instruments like theodolites and chains, with GPS still decades away. The elevation of 8,848 m came to be accepted in all references worldwide – except by China
- In 1999, a US team put the elevation at 29,035 feet (nearly 8,850 m). This survey was sponsored by the National Geographic Society, US

The recent measurement of the mountain

- After the devastating earthquake of April 2015, the government of Nepal (with technical assistance from New Zealand) declared that it would measure the mountain on its own, instead of continuing to follow the Survey of India findings of 1954.
- Sir Edmund Hillary, the first climber on the peak along with Nepal's Tenzing Norgay in May 1953, worked as the mountain's undeclared brand ambassador to the world
- In May 2019, the New Zealand government provided Nepal's Survey Department (Napi Bibhag) with a Global Navigation Satellite, and trained technicians.

China's measurement

- It conducted the measurement separately

- The team of 120 (field workers and data analysts) was processing the data and computing results
- Both China & Nepal had signed a memorandum of understanding to jointly make public their results.
- The Chinese side conducted its measurements early this year.

The methodology used for the measurement

- Both countries, China and Nepal announced the new height, and appreciated the mutual cooperation
- Nepal Joint secretary of Department of Survey said that they have used the previous methods applied in ascertaining the height as well as the latest data as well Global Navigational Satellite System (GNSS).

A brief note on Mount Everest

- Also called Sagarmatha, it is Earth's highest mountain above sea level, located in the Mahalangur Himal sub-range of the Himalayas.
- The China–Nepal border runs across its summit point.
- Its elevation (snow height) of 8,848.86 m (29,032 ft) was most recently established in 2020 by the Nepalese and Chinese authorities
- In 1865, Everest was given its official English name by the Royal Geographical Society, as recommended by Andrew Waugh, the British Surveyor General of India