

## Lesson 2

### Scaling a Mountain Peak

#### A. Warm up activity:

Look at the photographs of a Bangladeshi girl on top of Mount Everest. They depict the moment when an adventurer saw her dream come true.



#### B. Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

Nishat Mazumder, a Bangladeshi woman in her early forties, is a sports icon. She comes of a modest background; her father is a businessman and her mother is a housewife. She is the second of four siblings. Nishat has three things that she can be proud of. These are: she has extraordinarily supportive parents who accepted her dreams as real; her father was a freedom fighter in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, and she scaled the highest peak in the world as the first Bangladeshi girl in 2012. Nishat's life presents an inspirational story that the youth in Bangladesh needs to know.



Nishat was born on 5 January 1981 in a village called Teori, which is situated in Ramganj upazila in Lakshmipur District. She completed her schooling from Bottomley Home Girls' High School in 1997, and passed HSC from Shahid Anwar Girls' College in 1999. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Accounting from Dhaka City College, and currently works for Dhaka WASA as an accountant. She is also

interested in different languages and cultures of the world, and has enrolled for her MA in Japan Studies at Dhaka University. For us, Nishat's life comes across as especially significant because it tells us how the influence of one person can motivate someone to dream big. As the daughter of a freedom fighter, Nishat had to face many obstacles in her life, but her mother, her role model, gave her courage and determination to overcome them and pursue her dreams. Ashura

Mazumder, Nishat's mother, is a hardworking and understanding woman, who has been a pillar of support for her family in the direst of situations. Nishat learned from her mother how to keep mental strength in calamitous moments of life. Learning from her, Nishat began her dream of conquering mountains.

Most probably you have heard of Superman, and the Hollywood film showing his adventures. Christopher Reeve, the actor who played the role of Superman in the film said in a speech he gave at the Democratic National Convention in 1996 – “So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.” This has happened in Nishat's life too. Though she had a long cherished dream to be a mountaineer, it was not until 2003 that she could climb the 967 feet high Keokradong. The climbing event was organized on 29 May, 2003 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's conquest of Mount Everest. Nishat had walked the streets of Dhaka with a 15 kg backpack for three consecutive days to make her body ready for the climb before the real expedition. Factors like chance, dedication and creating opportunities are important for anyone's success, but a sportsperson should also have discipline and perseverance to succeed. Institutional and professional trainings are also necessary. Nishat joined Bangladesh Mountaineering and Trekking Club (BMTC) in 2006, and completed a basic training course at Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling, India in 2007. After that she scaled peaks in the Himalayan range one after another, joining several teams from Bangladesh. Today we have a mountain peak in the Himalayas, the Nepal-Bangladesh Friendship Peak, so named because mountaineers from the two friendly countries jointly climbed it for the first time. Nishat's team was led by M.A. Mohit, who has been on top of Everest and quite a few other peaks higher than 8000 meters.

In Bangladesh, mountaineering is a new sport activity, and we are yet to develop a culture that will encourage a woman's mountaineering activities. Nishat took the challenge, and she was supported by her parents. This is an expensive sport, and Nishat and other mountaineers could not have succeeded if several organizations did not help them. Nishat was an ambassador of “Because I am a Girl” campaign of Plan International's Bangladesh chapter in her expedition to Mount Everest in 2012. She wanted to leave a message for all people of Bangladesh that a girl can do anything a boy can do, and hence every girl should have support from her parents and society in every challenging activity.

**C. Find the meaning of the following words and make sentences with them.**

icon, trekking, perseverance, campaign, chapter

**D. Answer the following questions.**

1. What makes Nishat different from most other young women of Bangladesh?  
How could she climb Mount Everest coming from a country with no mountains?
2. How can parents be of great influence in a young person's life?
3. Do you think that a girl should be given all the opportunities that a boy gets?  
Why or why not?
4. Explain "So many of our dreams at first seem impossible" in your own words.
5. Suppose you have a sister and she wants to play football in a local team. How can you support her?

**E. Read the text below quoted from an article on Nishat Mazumder written by Afsan Chowdhury in bdnews24.com on 26 May 2012, and fill in the gaps using the right form of the words given below.**

member          promote          climb          accompany          conquer

Nishat ... the Everest's 8,850-meter-high (29,035-foot-high) summit from the northern side of the mountain in Nepal. She was ... on her journey by M A Mohit, the second Bangladeshi to have ... the Everest. Nishat and Mohit are both ... of the Bangla Mountaineering and Trekking Club which has been a key force in ... mountain climbing in Bangladesh.

**F. Wasfia Nazreen is another accomplished mountaineer who was the first Bangladeshi woman and first Bengali to climb the seven summits of the world. Here is a jumbled text that briefly describes her accomplishments. Read the text and rearrange it into a cohesive paragraph.**

Wasfia had already climbed two of the seven top mountains of the world by then, and for the third she targeted Mount Everest. Her life like Nishat's is also an example for others to follow. She was climbing the peak as part of the Seven Summits campaign, which was held to celebrate 40 years of independence of Bangladesh. Wasfia had the courage to prove the national spirit of Bangladeshi people who have a record of sacrificing their lives for the mother tongue and upholding the country's dignity when needed. Another mountaineer Wasfia Nazreen reached the Everest on May 26, 2012 while millions of Bangladeshis all over the world waited for her news. She also suggested that women are part of this nation making project. However, her project is rather daring and exceptional.

**G. Do you have a dream of doing something great? Discuss with a partner and then write a paragraph on how you can realize it.**