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Q5

Why is India taking keen interest in the Arctic region?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · GS I · 10 marks · World's Physical Geography

Salient features of world's physical geography.

Core demand of the question

- Why is India taking keen interest in the Arctic region?
- Cover climate, resources, shipping, science, and diplomacy
- Keep the explanation within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Arctic warming can disturb the Indian monsoon and raise seas on Indian coasts.

Hydrocarbons and minerals draw global interest as ice retreats.

The **Northern Sea Route** may shorten Asia-Europe trade relative to Suez.

Himadri in Svalbard and **Arctic Council observer** status give India a scientific and diplomatic seat.

India has no Arctic shore, so **UNCLOS** and climate science must guide the interest.

Flow diagram

Arctic melt -> Monsoon sea level

Arctic melt -> Oil minerals NSR

India -> Himadri Arctic Council

Monsoon sea level -> India

Oil minerals NSR -> India

Conclusion

- Tie Arctic research to monsoon models and coastal planning at home.
- Use observer diplomacy for shipping safety and for a low-carbon Arctic, not only for hydrocarbon access.

India's Arctic interest is climate first, then science, energy, and shorter sea lanes. A tropical monsoon state still needs a polar window because the Arctic now writes part of India's weather and trade map.

Facts & figures**Himadri, 2008**

India's Arctic research station at Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard.

Arctic Council observer

India holds observer status among states that discuss Arctic environment and cooperation.

Northern Sea Route

Shipping lane along Russia's Arctic coast that can shorten Europe-Asia voyages when ice allows.

Arctic amplification

The polar region warming faster than the global average, with effects on jet streams and ice.

UNCLOS

Law of the Sea framework that still governs Arctic waters and claims; India is not an Arctic coastal state.

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