Geography · GS - I

Why is India taking keen interest in the Arctic region?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - I	Geography

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Climate change; Himalayan climate linkages; scientific research; energy resources; maritime routes; geopolitics; international cooperation; environmental protection

Model Answer

Introduction

India’s interest in the Arctic arises from its scientific, environmental, economic and strategic significance. Changes in the region can influence global climate systems and have implications for India.

Reasons for India’s Interest

1. **Climate research:** Arctic warming affects global atmospheric and oceanic circulation, potentially influencing the Indian monsoon.
2. **Himalayan connection:** Research into polar processes helps scientists better understand climate change affecting glaciers and water security.
3. **Scientific cooperation:** India conducts polar research through its scientific programmes and research station Himadri in Svalbard.
4. **Economic opportunities:** Retreating sea ice may increase the navigability of Arctic shipping routes and create opportunities for international trade.
5. **Energy and mineral resources:** The region has significant potential resources, although extraction presents environmental and economic risks.

6. **Geopolitical significance:** Growing international competition makes Arctic governance, maritime security and cooperation increasingly important.
7. **Environmental responsibility:** India has an interest in understanding and mitigating the global consequences of rapid polar warming.

Conclusion

India’s Arctic engagement should prioritise scientific research, climate security and peaceful international cooperation. Economic and strategic interests must be balanced with environmental protection and respect for international law.

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