Geography · GS - I

Mention the significance of straits and isthmus in international trade.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2022	GS - I	Geography

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Straits and isthmuses are strategic geographical features that influence maritime connectivity, shipping costs and global trade routes. Straits provide natural passages between water bodies, whereas isthmuses connect larger landmasses and often become sites for canals and transport corridors. Their strategic importance also creates geopolitical vulnerabilities.

Model Answer

Introduction

Straits are narrow water passages connecting larger water bodies, while isthmuses are narrow strips of land connecting larger land areas and separating water bodies. Both influence international trade and strategic connectivity.

Body

Significance of Straits

1. Maritime Connectivity: Straits facilitate movement between oceans and seas. The Strait of Malacca links the Indian and Pacific Ocean trading systems through Southeast Asian waters.

2. Energy Transportation: The Strait of Hormuz is vital for global petroleum shipments, while the Turkish Straits connect the Black Sea with the Mediterranean.

3. Reduced Shipping Time: Navigable straits provide shorter routes, lowering transport costs and supporting international supply chains.

4. Strategic Vulnerability: Congestion, conflict or blockades in important straits can disrupt energy supplies and raise freight and insurance costs.

Significance of Isthmuses

1. Canal Development: The Isthmus of Panama hosts the Panama Canal, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and avoiding the longer route around South America.

2. Trade and Logistics: Isthmuses provide locations for ports, railways, pipelines and intermodal transport networks.

3. Geopolitical Importance: Control over strategic land corridors can influence trade flows and regional power relations.

Conclusion

Straits and isthmuses are critical to the geography of international trade. Their protection, efficient management and alternative-route planning are essential for resilient global commerce.

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