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India to Expand Polar Research to Arctic

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The Government of India has renamed the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), Goa to National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa.

Why the need to rename?

- India is refocusing priorities to the other pole — the Arctic — because of opportunities and challenges posed by climate change.
- Climate change was a decisive factor in India rethinking its priorities. Sea ice at the Arctic has been melting rapidly — the fastest in this century impacting even the monsoons in India.
- The rapid ice-melt in the Arctic is leading to large quantities of fresh water into the seas around the poles and this impedes the release of heat from the water and directs warm water into the seas around India, eventually weakening the movement of the monsoon breeze into India.
- On the other hand, the melting of Arctic means several spots, rich in hydrocarbon reserves, will be more accessible throughout the year via alternative shipping routes.
- India also views the **Himalayas as a “third pole”** because of the large quantities of snow and ice it holds, and proposes to increase research spends towards understanding the impact of climate change in the Himalayas.
- Established a high-altitude research station in the Himalayas, called HIMANSH, at Spiti, Himachal Pradesh.

Other Measures

- India has one Arctic observation station, set up in 2015, halfway between Norway and the North Pole called IndARC and India is in talks with Canada and Russia, key countries with a presence in the Arctic Circle, to establish new observation systems.
- India is already an observer at the Arctic Council — a forum of countries that decides on managing the region’s resources and popular livelihood.

NOTE: India’s Antarctic Missions

- India officially acceded to the Antarctic Treaty System on 1st August 1983. On 12 September 1983, she became the fifteenth Consultative Member of the Antarctic Treaty.
- India is expanding its infrastructure development in Antarctica.
- The newest base commissioned in 2015 is Bharati.
- India is rebuilding its station, Maitri, to make it bigger and last for at least 30 more years.
- Dakshin Gangotri, the first Indian base established in 1984, has weakened and become just a supply base.