

Murmansk Port

written by iasexam.com | 17/08/2023



Context- In the first half of 2023, India will account for 35% of cargo in Russia's Arctic port of Murmansk, Russia's most important northern gateway and transshipment hub.

Key Highlights

- India's engagement with Russia's Arctic region has been strengthening with India-bound goods constituting the largest share of cargo handled this year by Murmansk, located about 2,000 km northwest of Moscow.

About Murmansk Port

- It is one of the largest ports in Russia, located on the Kola Peninsula on the coast of the Barents Sea.
- It is an important hub for Russia's icebreakers and is growing in importance for transporting oil and gas from the arctic fields of northwestern Russia.
- In addition, the port of Murmansk includes 3 road handling terminals (Lavna, Belokamenka, Mokhnatkin), as well as an open road near Kolguev Island (eastern part of the Barents Sea).
- Outside Kuola Bay, the port has several terminals for anchoring and repairing ships, such as Teriberka, Ura-Guba and Liinakhamari settlements.

Northern Sea Route (NSR)

- It is the shortest shipping route connecting the western part of Eurasia and the Asia-Pacific region.

- India is also connected to the Northern Sea Route (NSR). Navigating the 5,600 km long NSR is difficult.
- The route includes the Arctic seas [Kara, Laptev, East Siberia and Chukchi], which remain frozen most of the year.
- Therefore, icebreaking is important and is carried out by FSUE Atomflot, a unit of Rosatom and operator of nuclear icebreakers.

An alternative to the Suez Canal

- The NSR is promoted as an alternative to the Suez Canal that would bridge the gap between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.
- For example, the NSR across the Arctic Ocean from Murmansk to Yokohama, Japan is approximately 6,000 nautical miles (NM).
- Alternatively, the southern shipping lanes are approximately 13,000 nautical miles away.