Global Importance of Greenland

Why in News?

US President-elect Donald Trump has expressed interest in acquiring Greenland.

- **Greenland** – It is *world's largest island*.
- It is a *semiautonomous territory of Denmark*, a longtime U.S. ally and a founding member of NATO.



- **Environmental importance** – It holds enough ice that if it all melts, the world's *seas would rise by 7.4 meters*.
- Melting of ice would reshape coastlines across the globe and potentially shift weather patterns.
- It plays a role in the dramatic freeze that two-thirds of the United States is currently experiencing.

  *In 2012, weather patterns over Greenland helped steer **Superstorm Sandy** into New York and New Jersey in the United States.*

- It also *changes patterns in the jet stream*, which brings storms across the globe and dictates daily weather.
- **Role in AMOC Ocean current** – It serves as the engine & on/off switch for Atlantic

Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOc) that influences Earth's climate like hurricane and winter storms.

- **Economic importance** – It has valuable *rare earth minerals* needed for telecommunications, as well as uranium, billions of untapped barrels of *oil and a vast supply of natural gas*.
- **Concerns** – It is *warming 4 times faster* than the rest of the globe.
- Since 1992, Greenland has *lost about 182 billion tons of ice each year*, with losses hitting 489 billion tons a year in 2019.
- *AMOC is slowing down* because more fresh water is being dumped into the ocean by melting ice in Greenland.
- It is *also changing color* as it melts from the white of ice, which reflects sunlight, heat and energy away from the planet, *to the blue and green* of the ocean and land, which absorb much more energy.

Greenland is also home to a large U.S. military base.

Reference

The Hindu| Importance of Greenland

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