

Greenland Holds Important Position in a Warming World

氷と雪に覆われた巨大な島、グリーンランドが、いま世界の未来を左右する存在になりつつあります。気温の上昇により自然環境が変わるなかで、その影響は海や空気の流れを通じて、遠く離れた地域にも広がっています。こうした変化は、政治や経済の分野でも新たな動きを生んでいます。地球規模で起きている変化に対して、私たち一人ひとりにできることには、どんな選択肢があるのでしょうか。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Greenland is the world's largest island and a self-governed **territory** of Denmark. About 57,000 people live there, mainly along its coasts. Most of Greenland lies north of the Arctic Circle, under thick sheets of ice.

The island plays a large part in the weather experienced by billions of people every day and in climate changes around the planet, experts say.

American President-elect Donald Trump is expressing interest in buying Greenland from Denmark. He said something similar during his first term in office as well. The United States has a large military base on the island.

Greenland's valuable resources

Geologists say Greenland has huge amounts of oil and natural gas below the ice and valuable elements known as rare earth minerals. Rare earth minerals are needed in communication technologies, including phones.

Most of these resources are trapped under Greenland's ice. However, warming temperatures in recent years have increased melting on the island. As more ice melts, some of these resources may become easier to reach.

Geoff Dabelko is a security and environment professor at Ohio University. He thinks other countries are becoming interested in Greenland because China is currently the supplier of more than half of the world's rare Earth minerals.

Melting ice

From 1992 to 2020, Greenland lost an average of 169 billion metric tons of ice each year, with losses reaching 444 billion metric tons in 2019.

Mark Serreze is director of the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colorado. He told The Associated Press that melting from Greenland will be a central issue through the 21st century. That is because melting ice adds to rising sea levels. Serreze noted that the amount of melting will likely increase in the future.

Greenland also serves as the engine for an important ocean [current](#) that influences Earth's climate in many ways, including storm activity. The current is called the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, or AMOC. The current is slowing down because more fresh water from Greenland's melting ice is entering the ocean, Serreze said.

A shutdown of the current could lead to long-term freezes in Europe and parts of North America.

"If this global current system were to slow substantially or even [collapse](#) . . . as we know it has done in the past — normal temperature and [precipitation](#) patterns around the globe would change [drastically](#)," said climate scientist Jennifer Francis of the Woodwell Climate Research Center, a non-profit based in the American state of Massachusetts.

She added that the changes would have very damaging effects on farming and ecosystems.

As more ice melts, Greenland is also changing color from the white of ice to the blue and green of water and land. These darker colors hold more heat from the sun and can increase the speed of warming.

Greenland lies in between northern Canada, northern Europe, and Russia. That area may become more valuable to countries if melting in the Arctic Ocean continues to increase and more ships pass through the area.

Seth Borenstein wrote this story for The Associated Press. Andrew Smith adapted it for VOA Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

- 1. territory (n.)** a piece of land that belongs to a country or a group

The US purchased a territory from Russia in 1867, and it became the state of Alaska.

- 2. current (n.)** the large-scale movement of water in a river, lake, or ocean

A warm ocean current brings tropical fish to the area.

- 3. collapse (v.)** to break down completely

The bridge collapsed when the typhoon passed through.

- 4. precipitation (n.)** rain, snow, or hail: some form of water falling from the sky

Today, there will be increased precipitation in the eastern half of the country.

- 5. drastically (adv.)** in a very big way (often negatively)

The number of influenza cases drastically increased in January.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What major resources does Greenland have?
2. How is the melting of ice in Greenland affecting the climate?
3. If the AMOC slows down or disappears, what would the effects be?
4. What do you think about President Trump pressuring Denmark to sell Greenland?
5. What major economic effects is global climate change having on Japan? Consider agriculture, the fishing industry, and tourism.