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Class-XII

English

Vistas

Chapter-3

Journey to the End of the Earth

Part - 2



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disrupted: रूकावट



Climate change is one of the most hotly contested environmental debates of our time. Will the West Antarctic ice sheet melt entirely? Will the Gulf Stream ocean current be disrupted? Will it be the end of the world as we know it? Maybe. Maybe not.

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crucial: महत्वपूर्ण
pristine: मूल रूप में

Either way, Antarctica is a crucial element in this debate — not just because it's the only place in the world, which has never sustained a human population and therefore remains relatively 'pristine' in this respect; but more importantly, because it holds in its ice-cores half-million-year-old carbon records trapped in its layers of ice.

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opportunities : अवसर
foster : पालना, विकास करना

If we want to study and examine the Earth's past, present and future, Antarctica is the place to go.

Students on Ice, the programme I was working with on the Shokalskiy, aims to do exactly this by taking high school students to the ends of the world and providing them with inspiring educational opportunities which will help them foster a new understanding and respect for our planet.

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carting : ले जाना
absorb: समझना

It's been in operation for six years now, headed by Canadian Geoff Green, who got tired of carting celebrities and retired, rich, curiosity-seekers who could only 'give' back in a limited way. With Students on Ice, he offers the future generation of policy-makers a life-changing experience at an age when they're ready to absorb, learn, and most importantly, act.

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blase : रूचि न होना



The reason the programme has been so successful is because it's impossible to go anywhere near the South Pole and not be affected by it. It's easy to be blase about polar ice-caps melting while sitting in the comfort zone of our respective latitude and longitude, but when you can visibly see glaciers retreating and ice shelves collapsing, you begin to realise that the threat of global warming is very real.

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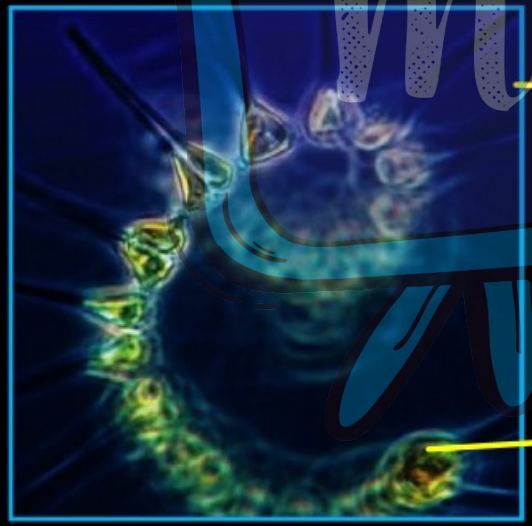
biodiversity : जैव विविधता
repercussions: परिणाम
nourish : पालन करना



Antarctica, because of her simple ecosystem and lack of biodiversity, is the perfect place to study how little changes in the environment can have big repercussions. Take the microscopic phytoplankton — those grasses of the sea that nourish and sustain the entire Southern Ocean's food chain.

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assimilate : जोड़ना

wondrous : आश्चर्यजनक रूप से

These single-celled plants use the sun's energy to assimilate carbon and synthesise organic compounds in that wondrous and most important of processes called photosynthesis.

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parable : कहानी

Scientists warn that a further depletion in the ozone layer will affect the activities of phytoplankton, which in turn will affect the lives of all the marine animals and birds of the region, and the global carbon cycle. In the parable of the phytoplankton, there is a great metaphor for existence: take care of the small things and the big things will fall into place.

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Walk of the ocean

epiphanies: अनुभव
wedge : थोड़ी जगह में जाना

My Antarctic experience was full of such epiphanies, but the best occurred just short of the Antarctic Circle at 65.55 degrees south. The Shokalskiy had managed to wedge herself into a thick white stretch of ice between the peninsula and Tadpole Island which was preventing us from going any further.