

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3225
TO BE ANSWERED ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 2023**

EXISTING ARCTIC POLICY

3225. SHRI MANISH TEWARI:

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of work done by the Ministry while being an observer to the Arctic Council along with the attempts to enhance its participation beyond its role of being a member of the Arctic Council;
- (b) whether the Government has been monitoring the geopolitical conflict between Russia and NATO in the Arctic region, if so, the manner in which the situation changed post the Russo-Ukrainian war;
- (c) whether the Government considers changing its existing Arctic Policy in the light of the geopolitical conflict between Russia and NATO post the Russo-Ukrainian war and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the views of the Government regarding the need of a new law similar to the India Antarctic Act, 2022 to enhance India's engagement in the Arctic region?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)**

- (a) Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) through its autonomous institute National Institute of Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) operates a research base 'Himadri' at Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard since 2008 from where various research activities pertaining to climate change is carried out. India commenced its dedicated Arctic Research in 2007 and continues to send multi-institutional expeditions to Arctic each year. India's research includes atmospheric, biological, marine, hydrological and glaciological studies. Systematic monitoring of the changes in an Arctic fjord in its oceanographic setup and biogeochemical processes are carried out. Measurements of aerosol properties, black carbon and precipitation in the Arctic are done. Studies are undertaken to understand the mass balance of Arctic glaciers and identify and quantify climate-relevant natural and anthropogenic compounds and processes in the Arctic cryosphere. NCPOR has entered into a MoU with Polar Knowledge Canada for accessing the research infrastructure at Canadian High Arctic Research Station at Cambridge Bay.
- (b) Yes sir. India, as an Observer state in the Arctic Council, has been engaging with all Arctic States on matters pertaining to the Arctic region. Russia was chairing the Arctic Council during 2021-23. In the wake of geopolitical tensions due to Russia-Ukraine conflict, the meetings of Arctic Council, which is an intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation in the Arctic region, have not been held regularly.
- (c) There is no proposal of changing the existing Arctic Policy.
- (d) An Indian law is not feasible in the Arctic region, because the Arctic region is spread across areas which are sovereign to eight Arctic states.
