

Indian Standards (BIS), Building Materials & Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) and Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) etc. for the design and construction of earthquake resistant structures to minimize the loss of life and damage to property caused by earthquakes. These guidelines are in wide circulation amongst the public and the administrative authorities responsible for the design and construction of earthquake resistant structures in earthquake prone areas.

Plan to set up a polar research collaboration centre

1608. PROF. M. V. RAJEEV GOWDA : Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is a plan to set up a polar research collaboration centre with Norway, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the major decisions in that aspect with regard to India's geo-political agenda; and
- (c) the estimated date for the project launch?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (DR. HARSH VARDHAN) : (a) No Sir. There is however, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Norwegian Polar Institute (NPI), Tromso and the ESSO-National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), the Goa-based R&D Institution of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, for long-term collaboration in the areas of scientific research and logistics operations in the polar (Arctic and Antarctic) realm. Since 2008, India, under the aegis of ESSO-MoES is also maintaining a research base "Himdari" at Ny-Ålesund in the Svalbard archipelago of the Arctic.

(b) The scientific Agenda for polar research collaborations between India and Norway is primarily aimed at understanding the global climate change, with emphasis on the linkage between the polar climate variability and the Indian monsoon.

(c) Does not arise.

Air quality index of Delhi and Indian State capitals

1609. SHRI RONALD SAPA TLAU : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) air quality index of Delhi, Indian State Capitals, Amritsar and Taj Mahal from latest record, indicating the safe limit of cities for human and cities considered unsafe for human;