

to the Ministries/Departments concerned and progress will be monitored *vis-a-vis* these and reviewed as indicated above.

Criteria for defining 'minority community'

*286. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evolved any definition of the term minority community; -

(b) if not, whether Government propose to do the same; and

(c) the details of present criteria Government have adopted for the purpose of implementation of various schemes or otherwise?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) and (b) Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, pertaining to 'Definitions' states: 'minority' for the purpose of this Act means a community notified as such by the Central Government".

(c) For purposes of implementation of various schemes for the welfare of minorities, the criterion adopted is the notification dated 23rd October, 1993, which notified Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) as minority communities.

Team for research in arctic circle

*287. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sent recently a team to the Arctic circle for research purposes;

(b) if so, researches they are supposed to do;

(c) how many such delegations have been sent to the Arctic circle earlier during the last five years;

(d) whether Government would make a claim to the resources of the Arctic circle; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The first expedition to Arctic region was launched on 3rd August, 2007 from New Delhi. A team of five (5) Indian Scientists has gone to the international research facility at Ny-Alesund at Spitsbergen Island in Svalbard Archipelago of Norway. The scientists belonging to National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), Goa; Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad; Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune; and Lucknow University, have initiated research in the fields of atmospheric sciences, microbiology, geology