

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION No. *154
ANSWERED ON 03/08/2023

CONSTRUCTION OF INDIGENOUS ICE-BREAKER

***154 Shri A. D. Singh:**

Will the Minister of **EARTH SCIENCES** be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps Government is taking to expedite the construction of indigenous ice-breaker;
- (b) whether India intends to use its G20 Presidency to strive for resumption of scientific exchange with Russia in the Arctic; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI KIREN RIJU)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

**STATEMENT LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE RAJYA SABHA IN REPLY TO PARTS (a)
TO (c) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION No.*154 REGARDING
'CONSTRUCTION OF INDIGENOUS ICE-BREAKER' FOR ANSWER ON 03/08/2023.**

- (a) Acquisition of Ice breaker (Polar Research Vessel) is towards undertaking Annual Indian Scientific Expeditions to Polar Regions as well as for carrying out research programmes in the Southern Ocean and Tropical seas. A revised cost estimate of the Polar research vessel was carried out through Indian Maritime University (IMU), a Central University under Ministry of Shipping. Based on this cost estimate, a draft Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) proposal for acquiring the vessel is prepared.
- (b) & (c) India has been engaging with all member states of the Arctic Council, including Russia, to enhance cooperation in matters related to the Arctic.

भारत सरकार
पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय
राज्य सभा
तारांकित प्रश्न सं.*154
3/08/2023 को उत्तर दिए जाने के लिए

स्वदेशी आइसब्रेकर का निर्माण

*154 श्री ए. डी. सिंह :

क्या पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

- (क) सरकार स्वदेशी आइसब्रेकर के निर्माण में तेजी लाने के लिए क्या कदम उठा रही है;
- (ख) क्या भारत आर्कटिक में रूस के साथ वैज्ञानिक आदान-प्रदान को पुनः आरंभ करने के प्रयास में अपनी जी-20 सम्मेलन की अध्यक्षता का उपयोग करने का विचार रखता है; और
- (ग) यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

उत्तर
पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्री
(श्री किरन रिजिजू)

(क) से (ग): विवरण सभा पटल पर रखा है।

“स्वदेशी आइसब्रेकर का निर्माण” से संबंधित राज्य सभा के तारांकित प्रश्न सं. *154, जिसका उत्तर 03 अगस्त, 2023 को दिया जाना है, के भाग (क) से (ग) के उत्तर में उल्लिखित विवरण।

- (क) आइस ब्रेकर (ध्रुवीय अनुसंधान पोत) का अधिग्रहण ध्रुवीय क्षेत्रों में वार्षिक भारतीय वैज्ञानिक अभियानों के साथ-साथ दक्षिणी महासागर और उष्णकटिबंधीय समुद्र में अनुसंधान कार्यक्रमों को चलाने के लिए है। ध्रुवीय अनुसंधान पोत का संशोधित लागत अनुमान शिपिंग मंत्रालय के तहत केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय, इंडियन मेरीटाइम यूनिवर्सिटी के माध्यम से लगाया गया था। इस लागत अनुमान के आधार पर, पोत के अधिग्रहण के लिए एक मसौदा व्यय वित्त समिति (ईएफसी) प्रस्ताव तैयार किया गया है।
- (ख) और (ग) भारत आर्कटिक से संबंधित मामलों में सहयोग बढ़ाने के लिए रूस सहित आर्कटिक परिषद के सभी सदस्य देशों के साथ कार्य कर रहा है।

श्री उपसभापति : फर्स्ट सप्लीमेंटरी, श्री वी.विजयसाई रेड्डी।

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: Sir, India has been trying to construct Polar Research Vehicle or icebreaker ship for the last one decade. The goal is yet to be achieved despite the maintenance of two operational polar scientific Research Stations in Antarctica, namely, Bharati and Maitri, by India. Sir, can the hon. Minister explain to the House the reasons why there is a delay?

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: Sir, actually, there are three research stations in the Pole, two in the Antarctica Region, that is, the South Pole; Himadri in the North Pole and Maitri and Bharati in the South Pole. Definitely, we do need icebreaker or ice-ship, whatever you may call it, to continuously make ourselves accessible to our research stations which are required for various reasons. Especially, in today's time, it is extremely critical to maintain research station in the polar region because from there, you have better advantage to understand climate change and for other scientific purpose. As for the questions specifically raised by the hon. Member, I also feel deeply concerned that the machine which we should have acquired is not with us because of the reason which he has stated. Sir, in 2014, the Cabinet had approved Rs.1,051 crore, which was the estimated cost at that time and the tender was floated. The company which had participated and got the right to build the ship, failed to do it due to it raising certain conditions which were not part of the tender process, or which were not part of the agreed terms. So, considering the legalities and in national interest, the Government of India decided to abandon that. However, another effort was initiated and now we are ready with the proposal to be moved by the EFC. The cost is estimated at Rs.2,600 crores. Now, since the increase in the total estimated cost is more than double, we will have to be really careful. But, I am hopeful that in this financial year, we would be ready to propose this estimate and move to the Cabinet. And, within a time-span of five years, we should be ready with the ship. There is a bigger concern. I discussed it with the Shipping Minister; Mr. Sonowal is sitting here. Yesterday also, I had an informal discussion with him. As per Prime Minister's vision, we would like to manufacture the ship in our country. It is not an ordinary ship. It is an icebreaker. It would be used for research in the polar region as also in the tropical ocean, because when you are not going to the polar region, the ice-cutting machine will be stopped and it will function like a normal ship. So, our Shipping Ministry is also in talks with some of the countries like Russia which are very advanced in making this kind of icebreaker ship. So, I am hopeful that in the next five years' time, we would be able to build the ship hopefully in India.

ले. जनरल (डा.) डी. पी. वत्स (रिटा.) : माननीय उपसभापति जी, आपकी इजाजत से मैं मिनिस्टर ऑफ अर्थ साइंसेस से प्रश्न पूछना चाहता हूँ। हिमालय की करीब चार हजार किलोमीटर की रेंज है और वह सर्दियों में बर्फ से ढक जाती है। वैसे तो अटल टनल के अलावा बहुत सी टनल्स और रोड्स बनाकर बॉर्डर रोड ऑर्गेनाइजेशन ने बहुत ही सराहनीय काम किया है। मैं मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहूंगा, what steps are being taken by the Ministry of Earth Sciences to keep the life normal for the inhabitants so that they don't migrate to the lower areas?

SHRI KIREN RIJJU: Sir, the role of the Ministry of Earth Sciences is mainly the research work and to provide the necessary inputs for all the implementing/executing ministries and organisations in carrying out the national agenda. We have five main areas of function in our Ministry. One of the functions is Cryosphere and the Climate Programme. Now, the Himalayas, at the higher reach, is covered with snow and the area comes under my Ministry. We had a station called 'Himansh', which is located in the Lahaul-Spiti area in Himachal Pradesh. I propose to go there; I will take Mr. Anurag Thakur with me because that is his home State. So, right after this Parliament session, I have proposed to visit the HIMANSH station to spend some time with our researchers and scientists. I have recently been to North Pole in the Arctic Continent. I have spent a few days there, and I have really understood what our scientists and researchers are doing there, which is of great importance not only for India but for the global community. For the Himalayan region, I have already expressed that since Himalaya belongs to India, its name also is related to India and our value system. Himalaya must be a focus area. So, North Pole, South Pole, Himalayas, these are the three poles on the planet earth. The third pole, which is the Himalaya region, we are giving a lot of focus to it and for that, there are various other organisations which are also working in the Himalayan region. So, for the safety and the well-being of our people living in the Himalayan region, specially the higher region, where the hon. Member is mentioning about the migration or thinning of the population due to lack of proper basic amenities, for the sustenance of life in border areas, Prime Minister Modi ji has already launched vibrant village programme. So, that will also encompass all the requirements so that we will not only ensure our border population to continue to live in the higher portions of the Himalayan region, but also provide them better facilities which will also be important from the strategic security angle also. The Himalayan region is a priority area and, after 2014, most of the border areas and border villages are being provided with the basic amenities and the life of border people is changing. I myself coming from the border area, I understand what the life in

mountains, in Himalaya, in border areas is. So, definitely, we are excited that we have got a Prime Minister who has given full priority to the Himalayan region.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 155. Shri Binoy Viswam; not present.

* 155. *[The questioner was absent.]*