



Learning In Geography,
Humanities, Technology and
Science



A SEMINAR ON
GREENLAND & INDIA:
RESOURCES, CLIMATE CHANGE & STRATEGIC
ROUTES

*Presented by LIGHTS-SaGAA in collaboration with
Center for the Study of Regional Development (CSRD),
Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)*

Date - 23rd March 2026



Convenor

Dr. Sulagna Chattopadhyaya
Secretary General (LIGHTS)

Coordinator

Prof. Bhaswati Das
Associate Professor (JNU)

Location

**JNU Cartography Lab,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi**



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GREENLAND & INDIA:
RESOURCES, CLIMATE CHANGE & STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

About LIGHTS-SAGAA

Since 2003, Learning in Geography, Humanities, Technology and Science (LIGHTS), a society registered under the Registrar of Societies Act, 1860, has been at the forefront of advancing knowledge and empowering communities across the intersecting domains of geography, climate science, technology, and environmental sustainability.

Over the years, the organisation has developed a strong focus on Climate change awareness, Earth system processes, and the growing relevance of polar regions in shaping global environmental futures.

Under the LIGHTS Foundation, Science and Geopolitics of Arctic and Antarctic (SaGAA) has been institutionalized and structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral think-tank to bring together various research. SaGAA is committed to addressing one of the most challenging issues facing the global community and is the first of its kind in India to focus exclusively on the Arctic-Antarctic interface. It garners support from the government, academia, and media belonging to the highest level of decision and policy formulation strata in India

About CSRD, JNU

The seminar is being organised in collaboration with the Centre for the Study of Regional Development (CSRD), Jawaharlal Nehru University, one of India's leading academic centres for interdisciplinary research on geography, regional planning, environment, and development.

CSRD has long been at the forefront of scholarship examining the relationships between climate systems, human livelihoods, spatial inequalities, and policy frameworks. Its work integrates physical and human geography with socio-economic analysis, making it uniquely positioned to contribute to discussions on the global-local linkages between Arctic change and development challenges.

Through its strong research base and academic networks, CSRD brings critical analytical depth to the seminar, enriching conversations on how evolving dynamics in Greenland intersect with issues of climate resilience, regional development, and sustainable futures for India and beyond.

Setting the Context: Why This Seminar Matters

Greenland may lie nearly 8,000 km from India, yet its transformations are no longer distant events, they are shaping the economy, climate stability, security architecture, and everyday livelihoods of millions in South Asia.

As the world's largest island, with nearly 80% of its surface locked under ice, Greenland is both a climate sentinel and a geopolitical fulcrum. Rapid warming and accelerating ice melt are not only raising global sea levels but also altering atmospheric circulation patterns that influence the Indian monsoon, agricultural productivity, and coastal vulnerability. What happens in the Arctic is increasingly felt in India's farms, fisheries, and cities.

At the same time, melting ice is unlocking new sea routes across the Arctic, including corridors linked to the Northern Sea Route, transforming global trade geography and shortening transit times between Asia and Europe. These shifts carry profound implications for supply chains, energy markets, and maritime strategy, areas central to India's long-term economic resilience.

Greenland's vast reserves of rare earth elements and critical minerals, essential for clean energy, electronics and defence technologies, have drawn intense attention from major powers. From the strategic relevance of the NATO presence to the historic role of the Thule Air Base, the region has become a focal point of 21st-century geopolitics. Renewed interest - including past purchase proposals by leaders such as Donald Trump and strong sovereignty responses from Denmark - underscores how strategic the island has become.

Countries across the world are responding. Nordic states like Norway have leveraged Arctic resources for economic transformation, while global actors are expanding diplomatic, scientific, and security engagement. India, with its diverse geographies, polar research experience, and Observer role in the Arctic Council, is uniquely positioned to contribute to a 360-degree understanding of Greenland change - from climate science to governance and sustainable development.

Equally central to understanding Greenland's transformation is the role of Denmark, under whose constitutional framework Greenland functions as a self-governing territory within the Kingdom of Denmark. This unique governance structure places Denmark at the heart of Arctic geopolitics, balancing Greenland's aspirations for greater autonomy with broader strategic responsibilities within NATO and the European security architecture. As global interest in Greenland intensifies, Denmark's role as a political guarantor, security partner, and diplomatic intermediary between Greenland and major powers remains critical in shaping the island's future trajectory and the governance of the Arctic region.

This seminar is therefore both timely and necessary in a rapidly changing world where geography no longer limits impact, Greenland is not a distant frontier - it is a mirror reflecting the future risks and opportunities facing India. This conversation aims to bring those connections into sharp focus and spark informed dialogue on India's role in the evolving Arctic century.

Programme Schedule

Monday, March 23rd, 2026

02:30 - 02:45 pm	Welcome Address	
Coordinator Opening Comments	Prof Bhaswati Das, Associate Professor (Population Studies) at the Centre for the Study of Regional Development (CSR), School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).	
02:45 - 03:15 pm	Plenary Session: Greenland at the Crossroads: Climate, Sea Routes and Strategic Power	Amb Pankaj Saran, Fmr Deputy NSA, Convener Natsrat, President LIGHTS (TBC)
03:15 - 04:45 pm	Panel Discussion: Policy Pathways Linking Greenland's Future to India's Resilience	
	Moderator	Dr Sulagna Chattopadhyay, Convenor; President, SaGAA; and Secretary General, LIGHTS
	Panellists	Dr Rasik Ravindra, Former Director, National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)
		Amb (Dr) Acquino Vimal (TBC), Joint Secretary [UNES], Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)
		Dr Archana Singh (TBC), Scientist D, National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)
		Prof Suraj Mal (TBC), Associate Professor, CSR, JNU
		Prof Krishnandu Meena (TBC), Professor of Political Geography, JNU
		Prof Vinay Sinha (TBC), Professor, CSR, School of Social Sciences, JNU
		Professor, School of International Studies, JNU (TBC)
Professor, School Of Environmental Sciences, JNU (TBC)		
04:45 - 05:15 pm	Rapid Shot Session	Concise 5-minute interventions by students from diverse academic backgrounds will bring fresh, interdisciplinary perspectives linking science, strategy, and society to the evolving realities of Greenland and its implications for India.
05:15 - 05:45 pm	Networking Tea/Coffee	



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