

The only Indian in the largest ever Arctic expedition

Vishnu Nandan, a native of Kerala, will be part of the study of Arctic climate

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For four months from November, Vishnu Nandan will not see sunlight.

He will be aboard the German research vessel Polarstern, anchored on a large sheet of sea ice in the Central Arctic, drifting along with it during the pitch-black Polar winter.

A native of Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram, the 32-year-old polar researcher will be the only Indian among 300 scientists from across the world aboard the multidisciplinary drifting observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAiC) expedition, which will help the researchers better understand the impact of



Tough phase: Vishnu Nandan will deploy radar sensors on the sea ice surface from Polarstern.



climate change and aid in improved weather projections.

Year-long study

Spearheaded by the Alfred Wegener Institute in Germany, MOSAiC, the largest ever Arctic expedition in history, will be

the first to conduct a study of this scale at the North Pole for an entire year. Previous studies have been of shorter periods as the thicker sea ice sheets prevent access in winter. This research vessel has thus locked itself into a large sea ice sheet, before the winter,

and will drift along with it. A suitable sea ice sheet (floe) was identified two days ago.

Dr. Nandan, a remote sensing scientist, will travel in a Russian icebreaker ship from the Norwegian port of Tromsø in November to join the Polarstern on its second leg.

"The aim of the expedition will be to parameterise the atmospheric, geophysical, oceanographic and all other possible variables in the Arctic, and use it to more accurately forecast the changes in our weather systems. My role as a radar remote sensing specialist is to deploy radar sensors on the sea ice surface and accurately measure the ice thickness and its variations,"

Dr. Nandan said over phone from Canada, where he is currently working as a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Manitoba.

Since his journey is during the Polar winter, he will not see sunlight until his return in March.