

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 368
TO BE ANSWERED ON WEDNESDAY, 24TH JULY, 2024

ANTARCTIC TREATY CONSULTATIVE MEETING HELD IN KOCHI

368. SHRI DHAIRYASHEEL SAMBHAJIRAO MANE:
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and 26th Meeting of the Committee for Environment Protection was held in Kochi and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of total number of delegates across the world who participated in the said meet and the outcome thereof;
- (c) whether Maitri station built 35 years ago is destroyed completely and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to build Maitri-2 research station in Antarctica and if so, the details thereof and the facilities with which it is likely to be equipped; and
- (e) whether India's station at Antarctica continent don't have adequate number of deployment of employees and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
AND EARTH SCIENCES
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH)

- (a) Yes. The 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and 26th Meeting of the Committee for Environment Protection were held from 20th to 30th May, 2024 in Kochi, Kerala. The meeting was organized by the Ministry of Earth Sciences through its autonomous institute the National Center for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa.
- (b) A total of 404 delegates were registered for the 46th ATCM of which 328 attended in person and 76 attended virtually. Over the ten-day meeting, delegates delved into critical topics such as the Antarctic environment, the implications of climate change, and related governance issues. For the first time, a comprehensive discussion on regulating Antarctic tourism was initiated. During the meeting, decision was adopted to craft a robust, compliant, and dynamic framework for managing the increasing tourism and related non-governmental activities.
- (c) No. India's second research station, Maitri, built in 1988-89 in Schirmacher Oasis, East Antarctica is still operational. Every year Indian team under the Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica stays at the research station and uses the infrastructure for summer as well as winter expedition.
- (d) Yes. A suitable site has been identified in the Schirmacher Oasis, East Antarctica to build Maitri-II research station and a detailed topographic map of the designated area has been prepared.
- (e) No. India's station at Antarctica continent has deployment of adequate number of employees. Every year a team comprising of about 100 scientific and logistic personnel is deployed to fulfill the objectives of the particular expedition.
