

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OCEAN DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:436
ANSWERED ON:02.03.2005
ANTARCTIC MISSIONS
Mahtab Shri Bhartruhari

Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Antarctic Missions sent by the government during the last two years; and
- (b) the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (KAPIL SIBAL)

(a) India has sent two scientific Expeditions, 23rd and 24th during 2003 and 2004 to Antarctica. A special team of Astrophysicists was also sent in November, 2003 to Maitri to conduct experiments on total solar eclipse which occurred on 23rd/24th November, 2003 near Maitri Stations. The 24th expedition is currently working in Antarctica. A high level delegation led by the Minister of the department visited Maitri Station and nearby areas in Antarctica in February, 2005, for the first time in the history of Indian Antarctic Programme.

(b) The 23rd expedition, in addition to the ongoing research programmes in Earth Science, Atmospheric Science, Meteorology, Biological and Environmental Science carried out [following work:

- i. During the total solar Eclipse, experiments on rare Shadow Bands, Corona and Thermal Inertia were conducted. The multi-spectral coronal observations were dominated by low angle scattering specific to clear Antarctic atmosphere and low elevation of sun at the horizon.
- ii. Reconnaissance survey was carried out between 66o East and 78o East longitude in the Eastern Antarctica to identify a suitable site for the third Research Station in Antarctica. A suitable site at 76o East longitude and 70o South latitude in Prydz Bay near Amery Ice shelf has been identified.
- iii. Engineers from Structural Engineering Research Centre (SERC), Chennai and Engineers India Ltd. (EIL), New Delhi assessed the Maitri station building for structural strengthening of the Station.