

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EARTH SCIENCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:263
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2015
Antarctica Expeditions
Chandrakasi Shri M.

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

- (a) the details regarding India's Antarctica expeditions including its periodicity;
- (b) the number of permanent stations established by different nations of the world in Antarctica ;
- (c) whether India's permanent research station Maitri is functional round the year and if so, the details including number of personnel deployed and the nature of the research activities undertaken ; and
- (d) the amount of expenditure incurred both in establishing Maitri and sending periodic expeditions to Antarctica since inception of the programme and also the achievements and the benefits gained by the country from the venture ?

Answer

The MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI Y. S. CHOWDARY)

(a) Indian Antarctic expedition commenced in 1981 that reached Antarctic on 08 January 1982. After operating from Ship and temporary shelters for two years, the first permanent research station "Dakshin Gangotri" was established in 1983 at 70.08°S, 12.00° E over the Ice shelf in Central Dronning Maud Land region. The station was abandoned in 1990 as it got buried under snow.

Since 1988, research base Maitri (coordinates 70.77° S, 11.73° E) is operational in the central part of Schirmacher Oasis, in Central Dronning Maudland region of East Antarctica. The newly constructed Bharati station operational since March 2012, is located at 69.40°S, 76.19°E in Larsemann Hills, Antarctica.

India's expedition is launched annually (once in a year) wherein about 100 to 120 members including Scientists, Engineers, Doctors and Tradesmen are sent in batches between November and January of the succeeding calendar year. So far there have been thirty five scientific expeditions including a parallel Weddell Sea Expedition in 1989 the year which had two expeditions.

(b) Currently 41 year-round permanent stations are operated by 30 nations.

(c) Yes Madam. The Maitri station is functional round the year. Currently, 24 personnel are deployed at the station. The Maitri Station occupies a strategic location in the Central Dronning Maud Land region of East Antarctica offering diverse opportunity of scientific research in disciplines such as Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology; Earth Sciences including Glaciology, Geomagnetism; Human Physiology and Medicine; Micro-biology; Environmental Sciences, etc.

(d) The total amount of expenditure incurred both in establishing Maitri, Dakshin Gangotri and Bharati as well as sending periodic expeditions to Antarctica since its inception, i.e from 1981-82 to 2014-15 is Rs. 1473.39 crores.

The achievements and the benefits gained by the country from the Antarctica expeditions is furnished at Annexure-I.