

# India's Antarctic Missions/Programme

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## What is Indian Antarctic Programme?

- It is a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional program under the control of the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It was initiated in 1981 with the first Indian expedition to Antarctica with a selected team of 21 members under the leadership of Dr S Z Qasim, Secretary of Department of Environment and former Director of National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) with the aim of conducting scientific research in the frozen continent.
- The program gained global acceptance with India's signing of the Antarctic Treaty(1959) and subsequent construction of the Dakshin Gangotri Antarctic research base in 1983, superseded by the Maitri base from 1989.
- The newest base commissioned in 2012 is Bharati, constructed out of 134 shipping containers.
- Under the program, atmospheric, biological, earth, chemical, and medical sciences are studied by India

## Indian Research stations in Antarctic

### Dakshin Gangotri

- The first Indian scientific research base station was established(with the help of Indian Army) in 1983-84 in Antarctica as part of the third Antarctic programme
- **Location:** South Pole
- This was the first time an Indian team spent a winter in Antarctica to carry out scientific work
- In 1989, it was excavated and is being used again as a supply base and transit camp

## **Maitri**

- In the year **1988** an **ice-free, rocky area** on the Schirmacher Oasis was selected to build the second research station named Maitri
- The building was erected on steel stilts, and has stood the test of time – conducting experiments in geology, geography and medicine
- India built this station close to a freshwater lake around Maitri known as Lake Priyadarshini.
- Maitri accomplished the mission of geomorphologic mapping of Schirmacher Oasis.

## **Bharati**

- About 3000 km east of Maitri, the new Indian research base 'Bharati' is located between Thala Fjord & Quilty bay, east of Stornes Peninsula in Antarctica
- The station with a very small footprint was commissioned on 18 March 2012 to facilitate year-round scientific research activity by the Indian Antarctic program.
- Bharati made India an elite member of the club of 9 nations that have multiple stations in the region