



# India Hosts 46th ATCM and 26th Meeting of CEP in 2024

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## Why in News?

India, through the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and the [National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research \(NCPOR\)](#), is set to host the **46<sup>th</sup> Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM 46)** and the **26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP 26)** in Kochi, Kerala, from 20th to 30th May 2024.

- This reflects India's commitment to global dialogue on environmental stewardship and scientific collaboration in Antarctica.

## What is the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM)?

### ▪ About:

- ATCM is an annual meeting of the original 12 parties to the [Antarctic Treaty](#), and other parties that have shown interest in Antarctica through research.
  - The **Antarctic Treaty, signed in 1959** and established Antarctica as a region dedicated to **peaceful purposes, scientific cooperation, and environmental protection**.
    - Over the years, the Treaty has garnered widespread support, with 56 countries currently party to it.
    - **India has been a Consultative Party** to the Antarctic Treaty since 1983. In 2022, India enacted the [Antarctic Act](#), reaffirming its commitment to the Antarctic Treaty.
  - From 1961 to 1994 the ATCM generally met once every two years, but **since 1994 the meetings have occurred annually**.

### ▪ 46<sup>th</sup> ATCM Agenda:

- It covers **strategic planning for sustainable management of Antarctica and its resources**, policy, legal, biodiversity prospecting, inspections and exchange of information and data, research, collaboration, capacity building and cooperation, addressing climate change impacts, development of tourism framework, and promoting awareness.

### ▪ India's Engagement in the ATCM:

- India as a Consultative Party, participates in the decision-making process alongside other Consultative Parties.
- **Antarctic Research Stations:**
  - **Establishment:** Its first Antarctic research station, Dakshin Gangotri, in 1983.
    - India operates two year-round research stations in **Antarctica: Maitri (1989) and Bharati (2012)**.
  - Indian Scientific Expeditions to Antarctica have been conducted annually since 1981.

## What is the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP)?

### ▪ About:

- The CEP was established under the **Protocol on Environmental Protection to the**

### **Antarctic Treaty (the Madrid Protocol) in 1991.**

- The CEP advises the ATCM on environmental protection and conservation in Antarctica.
  - ATCM and CEP are pivotal in the **international community's ongoing efforts to safeguard Antarctica's fragile ecosystem** and promote scientific research in the region.
  - Convened annually under the **Antarctic Treaty System**, these meetings serve as forums for Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties and other stakeholders to address Antarctica's pressing environmental, scientific, and governance issues.
- **26<sup>th</sup> CEP Agenda:**
- It focuses on evaluating the Antarctic environment, assessing impacts, managing and reporting; responding to climate change; developing area protection and management plans, including marine spatial protection; and conserving Antarctic biodiversity.

### **Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (the Madrid Protocol) in 1991**

- **Protocol designates Antarctica as a “natural reserve, devoted to peace and science”.**
- It sets **basic principles for human activities in Antarctica** and prohibits mineral resource activities, except for scientific research.
- The Protocol **can only be modified by unanimous agreement of all Consultative Parties until 2048**, and the prohibition on mineral resource activities cannot be removed without a binding legal regime.
- The Protocol builds upon the Antarctic Treaty and Recommendations to extend and improve the Treaty's effectiveness in protecting the Antarctic environment.

### **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)**

- NCPOR is an autonomous **institution established in 1998, under MoES.**
- India's scientific and strategic endeavours **in the polar regions (the Arctic and Antarctic)**, the Himalayas, and the Southern Ocean are under the NCPOR in Goa.

Read more: [India's New Post Office in Antarctica](#)

## **UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

### **Prelims:**

#### **Q. On 21st June, the Sun (2019)**

- (a) does not set below the horizon at the Arctic Circle
- (b) does not set below the horizon at Antarctic Circle
- (c) shines vertically overhead at noon on the Equator
- (d) shines vertically overhead at the Tropic of Capricorn

**Ans: (a)**

#### **Q. The formation of ozone hole in the Antarctic region has been a cause of concern. What could be the reason for the formation of this hole? (2011)**

- (a) Presence of prominent tropospheric turbulence; and inflow of chlorofluorocarbons
- (b) Presence of prominent polar front and stratospheric clouds; and inflow of chlorofluorocarbons
- (c) Absence of polar front and stratospheric clouds; and inflow of methane and chlorofluorocarbons

**(d)** Increased temperature at polar region due to global warming

**Ans: (b)**

**Mains:**

**Q.** How do the melting of the Arctic ice and glaciers of the Antarctic differently affect the weather patterns and human activities on the Earth? Explain. **(2021)**

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