

# INDIAN ANTARCTIC BILL 2022

## In News:

The Parliament of India has passed the Indian Antarctic Bill, in 2022. The Bill aims to extend the application of domestic laws to India's research stations in the Antarctic region.

## About:

- 1 The bill aims to ensure the de-militarization of the region along with getting rid of mining or illegal activities.
- 2 It also aims that there should not be any nuclear test/explosion in the region.
- 3 The bill is pursuant to India's accession to the Antarctic Treaty, the Protocol on Environment Protection (Madrid Protocol) to the Antarctic Treaty and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.

## Key features of the bill:

The Bill provides a harmonious policy and regulatory framework for India's Antarctic activities through well-established legal mechanisms and will help in efficient and elective operations of the Indian Antarctic Programme.

It will also facilitate India's interest and proactive involvement in the management of growing Antarctic tourism and sustainable development of fisheries resources in Antarctic waters.

It will also help in increasing the international visibility, and credibility of India in Polar governance leading to international collaboration and cooperation in scientific and logistics fields.

The Bill also proposed to set up Indian Antarctic Authority (IAA) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, which shall be the apex decision-making authority and shall facilitate programs and activities permitted under the Bill.

The enforcement of such laws will confer Jurisdiction on the courts of India to deal with any dispute or crimes committed in parts of Antarctica.

## Present Status:

1. India today has two operational research stations in Antarctica named;
  - a. **Maitri** (Commissioned in 1989).
  - b. **Bharati** (Commissioned in 2012).
2. India has successfully launched 40 annual scientific expeditions to Antarctica till date.
3. With the Himadri station in Ny-Alesund, Svalbard, Arctic, India now belongs to the elite group of nations that have multiple research stations within the Polar Regions.

## About Antarctic treaty:

The Antarctic Treaty was signed in Washington D.C. in 1959 and was initially signed by 12 countries. India signed the Antarctic Treaty in 1983 and received consultative status in 1983.

The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources was signed at Canberra in 1980, for the protection and preservation of the Antarctic environment and, in particular, for the preservation and conservation of marine living resources in Antarctica.

India signed the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty in 1998. Antarctica lies south of 60 degrees South Latitude, which is a natural reserve, devoted to peace and science and should not become the scene or object of any international discord.