

## Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022 – Update (July, 2022)



Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022 was passed in Lok Sabha on July 22, 2022. The bill is aimed at broadening the application of domestic laws to research stations that has been established by India in Antarctic region. It is applicable to both Indian citizens and foreign citizens.

### Important provisions of the bill include:

- It forbids Indian expedition to Antarctica without any permit or written authorisation of another party to Antarctic Treaty.
- It also includes provisions of inspection by an officer appointed by the government.
- It prohibits the introduction of plants, animals, birds, or microscopic organisms which are not native to Antarctica. In case of breach of this provision, violators would face imprisonment and penalties.
- Finally, it aims to set up a fund for the welfare of Antarctic research work as well as for the protection of environment there.
- **Committee on Antarctic governance and environmental protection** will be set to monitor, implement and ensure compliance with available international laws, standards of emissions and protection rules.
- It prohibits drilling, excavation or collection of mineral resources, except for the purpose of “scientific research with a permit”.

### India's research stations in Antarctic:

India has two active research stations in the Antarctic viz., Maitri at Schirmacher Hills and Bharti at Larsemann Hills. Maitri was commissioned in 1989 while Bharti was commissioned in 2012. Antarctica is the southernmost continent on Earth. It comprises the geographic South Pole. By area, it is the fifth-largest continent and is located in Antarctic region of Southern Hemisphere.