

Archana Bora discussed the environmental changes in the Baralacha Pass of NW Himalaya

In the valedictory session the SAAEG-sponsored first *Lifetime Achievement Award* was presented to *PadmaShree* K S Valdiya. Mr. Jokhan Ram was honored by SAAEG for his significant contributions in the field of hydrocarbon exploration. The best young scientist oral presentation award was given jointly to Ms Swati Deol and Mrs. Prabha Joshi and the best poster award went to Mrs. Manju Pandey. The major research results and new findings emerged from various deliberations were thoroughly discussed. It was realized that the main theme *magmatism, tectonism and mineralization* have been perfectly represented by papers presented and indeed several papers have integrated these processes to explain a larger crustal-mantle evolution scenario. Dr. M. K. Panigrahi at IIT-Kharagpur can organize the next MTM-2010. Dr. P. D. Pant delivered the vote of thanks. The seminar was concluded with closing remarks of *PadmaShree* K S Valdiya who stressed upon the need of interlinking the research results with mineral exploration programme, and expressed his view to draft a new mineral policy in Indian context.

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Launching of Indian Chapter of the International Polar Year (2007-2009)

The International Polar Year (IPY) extending from March 2007 to March 2009, aims to provide an international and interdisciplinary approach to understand the behavior of the polar regions. Their role in the broader Earth System, including the oceans, atmosphere, biosphere, cryosphere, and land surface, broadening the spirit of exploration and discovery that has been the characteristic of the previous IPYs (1882-1883, 1932-1933) and the International Geophysical Year of 1957-1958.

The primary objective of the current IPY campaign is to inform and inspire diverse public audiences by sharing our knowledge about polar science, its global

connections by communicating unique contributions to recent advances in Antarctic research and climate science world wide. A secondary objective is to help attract and educate the next generation of scientists and engineers. One of the major goals of IPY is the outreach to general public with special emphasis on school children where the future polar enthusiasts need to be introduced with the ongoing activities and the ways they can be a part of that system. India endorses the view of intensified outreach programme. In this regard, information on various activities during IPY campaign shall be made in Hindi/English to schools and colleges to generate public interest. Apart from this, various outreach activities have been planned in association with WWF (World Wildlife Fund) for school children, scientists, academicians, and policy makers starting March 2007 and going up to December 2008.

With the aim to bring the school children into this fold, the Indian Chapter of the International Polar Year (IPY) campaign (2007-2009) was officially launched on March 1, 2007 during a special Inaugural function organised by the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), at Goa by Prof. U. R. Rao, former Chairman, Space Commission. Speaking on this occasion Prof. Rao stressed on target oriented research in various domain of polar science and technology. He also realised that it is high time when youngster should come forward and take up polar research as their career. Dr. S. R. Shetye, Director, National Institute of Oceanography, Goa also spoke on 'Managing the climate' on this occasion. The inaugural function was attended by scientists, technocrats, school and college students apart from people from various sectors of life. In parallel a special lecture was delivered by a well known Polar Scientist Dr. S. L. Jain on the topic "Green House Gases and Global Warming" at Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi to mark the launching of Indian chapter of IPY.

During IPY campaign, NCAOR, has been actively involved in popularizing Antarctic science by inviting students from colleges from different part of India to NCAOR, where they can have a first hand

experience of Antarctica and the associated challenges. Many competitions like (Poster and slogan writing, stamp designing etc.) for school children and many invited lectures by eminent scientists, Polar Exhibition "People and the Poles and Photo Exhibition "Polar Ice" have also been planned during IPY. Details may also be obtained from our URL www.ncaor.org or WWF-India website www.wwfindia.org.

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30th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting During 30 April to 11 May 2007 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi

Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) is convened annually on rotation basis among treaty nations having consultative status. It has been India's proud privilege to host 30th ATCM Meeting this year at New Delhi during April 30 – May 11, 2007. The meeting was formally inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Shri Kapil Sibal at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on April 30, 2007 which was represented by about 300 delegates and experts from over 37 countries and organizations. Dr. U. R. Rao, former Chairman, Space Commission acted as the Chairman of the 30th ATCM.

The main attention of ATCM has been focused on protection of Antarctic Environment, regulation of growing tourism, global climate change and its impact on the icy continent and managing Antarctica as a continent of peace and science. A total of 45 Working Papers supported by over 140 Information Papers were deliberated during two weeks long meeting.

During the first week of the meeting the Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP) and the Legal and Institutional Group deliberated on the issues related to Antarctic Environment under the Environmental Protocol of the Antarctic Treaty and various legal issues related to its governance. To quote a few, the CEP after reviewing the revised draft Management Plans for two ASMA of Larsemann Hills and Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, referred them to ATCM for adoption, which were finally

adopted by ATCM Whereas, the Working Group on Legal and Institutional matters addressed a number of important issues including, Review of Measures on the subject of Area Protection and Management, Review of Annexure II to the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, Operation of the Antarctic Treaty System, Liability – Implementation of Decision I of 2005, Biological Prospecting in the Antarctic Treaty Area and a number of other issues and put forth four decisions pertaining to review of the status of measures relating to area protection and management and the matters relating to the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat, which were adopted by the ATCM

While the second week was devoted to Antarctic Tourism and Operational Matters of the Antarctic Treaty System For example, the Tourism Working Group, after a detailed discussion, was able to agree upon two important Resolutions – one concerning ship-based tourism in the Antarctic Treaty Area, and the second associated with the issue related to Permanent Land Based infrastructures for tourism in Antarctica The Working Group recommended that Parties consistent with their National Laws, should discourage to authorize tour operators that use vessels carrying more than five hundred passengers from making any landings in Antarctica, rather encourage tour operators to coordinate with each other such that not more than one tourist vessel is at a landing site at any one time, restrict the number of passengers on shore at any one time to hundred or fewer, unless otherwise specified in applicable ATCM Measures or Resolutions and maintain a minimum 1:20 guide-to-passenger ratio while ashore, unless otherwise specified in applicable Measures or Resolutions

On the other hand, Working Group on Operational matters, amongst other issues considered the important aspects of safety and operation in Antarctica, the activities/projects undertaken by various parties during the International Polar Year covering a wide areas of science, international collaboration on data management, education, outreach and communication activities, outcome of the inspections of the infrastructure facilities of the Antarctic Programme carried out by various

designated agencies, tourist vessels, the science issues particularly with reference to scientific cooperation and facilitation programmes of the Parties/NGOs, operation and educational issues, exchange of information, etc , and has brought out a number of useful measures, decisions and resolutions The ATCM Passed a resolution to support long-term monitoring and sustained observations of the Antarctic environment and the associated data management as a primary legacy of the International Polar Year, to enable the detection, and underpin the understanding and forecasting of the impacts of the environmental and climate change

A special lecture on “Climate Change” by Prof Chris Rapley, Director of the British Antarctic Survey and the President of SCAR was organized on the occasion of ATCM XXX by the Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research (SCAR) which was very informative on global warming and climate change and spelt out the importance of Antarctic research in continuous monitoring of climate variations

After two weeks long meetings the 30th ATCM adopted 3 Measures, 5 Resolutions and 4 Decisions covering following issues

- Antarctic Historic Sites and Monuments – Monument to the Antarctic Treaty,
- Antarctic Protected Areas – Revised Management Plans,
- Antarctic Specially Managed Areas – Designations and Management Plans,
- Conservation of Southern Giant Petrel,
- Site Guidelines for Visitors to Antarctica,
- Long-term Scientific Monitoring and sustained environmental observation in Antarctica, etc

The historic two-week long 30th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) was concluded on the 11th May, 2007 Shri Pranab Mukerjee, Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs addressed the delegates in the closing session The next 31st ATCM is scheduled at Kiev in Ukraine in 2008 India look forward to mutual cooperation in the fields of Antarctic Governance and its scientific exploration as well as in common effort in efficiently tackling the global climate change Hosting 30th ATCM is indeed a testimony to India's

firm commitment to Antarctic Treaty and preservation of the fragile ecosystem of Antarctica

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Fourth International Meeting of Asia-Oceania Geoscience Society

The 4th Annual meeting of the Asia-Oceania Geosciences Society-2007 (AOGS 2007) was held at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, Bangkok, Thailand during 30 July 2007 to 4 August, 2007

The AOGS provided a venue for scientists from various disciplines to present their research outputs and develop projects for greater aspects of fundamental as well as applied researchers The AOGS offered important blends of reputed national and international scientists The knowledge gathered by the scientists would be immensely helpful by properly framing science policy, establishing institutional mechanisms and capacities in scientific interpretation, data translation and facilitating user uptake of local application

The entire programme was subdivided into following seven broad domains namely Atmospheric Sciences, Hydrological Sciences, Interdisciplinary Working Group, Ocean Sciences, Planetary Sciences, Solid Earth and Solar Terrestrial Different scientists all over the world assembled in the AOGS Their participation was mainly related to any of the seven domains mentioned above Scientists, faculty members and research scholars of several organizations of India viz University of Calcutta, National Geophysical Research Institute, National Institute of Oceanography, Indian Institute of Technology etc participated in the AOGS meet

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AGU Fall Meeting 2007

The Fall meeting of the American