Centre For Geography and Geology

ANTARCTICA EXPEDITION

Dr. Jitendra Kumar Pattanaik, Assistant Professor, Centre for Geography and Geology, was a member of 36th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica (ISEA) in the year 2016-2017. He has spent 81 days in the Indian station 'Maitri', Schirmacher Oasis, Antarctica from 7th December 2016 to 25th February 2017. This was a rare opportunity for a scientist to be a part of scientific expedition to Antarctica. National center for Antarctica and Ocean Research (NCAOR), Goa is the Nodal organization for this expedition. Every year selected scientist and logistic support visit to Indian stations at Antarctica for scientific research work. Scientific mission of Dr. Pattanaik was to carry out geological and geomorphological field investigation around Maitri station, which were also included to collect rock samples from Boulders and Roche Moutonnee to the purpose of surface exposure dating using ^{10}Be and ^{26}Al cosmogenic radionuclides. This study will help to estimate the timing and rate at which glaciers/ice was retreated from the Schrimacher Oasis region. This result has greater importance to explain the global climate change. He has collected nearly 75 rock samples for his research work.



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Prior to this expedition Dr. Pattanaik has undergone thorough medical examination at AIIMS, New Delhi, Snow-ice acclimatization training at ITBP training institute Auli, Uttarrakhand, firefighting and safety training at Sea Scan Maritime Foundation, Goa to sustain extreme climate and unforeseen challenges.

He travelled from Cape Town, South Africa to Novo Airbase, Antarctica by a special flight operating to provide logistic support to the scientific community of different country. Airstrip at Novo Airbase is on blue ice and maintained by Russian station, Indian Station and airbase team. This airbase is operational only during austral summer i.e. November to February, and remains close during rest of the year. All the summer expedition members were accommodated in the living module container, specially designed for Antarctica, at Maitri station. Other than the research work of Dr. Pattanaik, he participated in various activities such as relocating, checking and documenting fire extinguisher in the station, also encouraged and taken a yoga classes among their colleagues and fellow researchers. As part of the routine cleaning around Maitri station, he assisted and successfully redeemed the assigned job by expedition leader. Dr. Pattanaik also visited Russian station 'Novolazarevskaya' located in the Schrimacher Oasis area for scientific discussion and to see the overall facilities available at Russian station. This expedition provided a unique, unforgettable and lifetime experience to Dr. Pattanaik.

