

NCPOR Goa hosts Asian polar science forum in Kochi; focus on stronger regional cooperation

AFoPS meeting discusses joint research, data sharing and Asian contribution to Fifth International Polar Year

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Goa/Kochi, September 19, 2026:

India's National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, hosted the Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2026 of the Asian Forum for Polar Sciences (AFoPS) in Kochi on September 18 and 19. The meeting brought together polar science representatives from across Asia to strengthen cooperation in Arctic, Antarctic and Southern Ocean research.



NCPOR, based in Goa, plays a key role in India's polar research programmes and international scientific cooperation. The two-day AFoPS meeting provided an opportunity for participating countries to exchange updates on their national polar programmes and discuss areas for joint research and scientific collaboration. Representatives from China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand attended the meeting, along with an observer from the United Arab Emirates.



Asian countries discuss preparations for IPY-5

A major focus of the meeting was the Fifth International Polar Year (IPY-5), planned for 2032–2033. Under the theme “IPY-5: AFoPS Roadmap for Collaborative Endeavours”, participants discussed national priorities, possible joint initiatives and ways to strengthen the contribution of Asian countries to the global polar science programme.

The discussions covered areas such as polar and ocean observations, data sharing, research infrastructure, logistics, capacity building and collaborative research. Participants also discussed scientific cooperation to improve understanding of changes in the Arctic and Antarctic, including sea-ice variability.

India shared updates on its Antarctic and Arctic programmes, Southern Ocean activities, polar infrastructure and international scientific cooperation.



NCPOR highlights India's polar education and outreach efforts

Education and public outreach were also discussed during a dedicated AFoPS session. Participating countries shared their experiences in creating awareness about polar science and engaging students and the wider public.

India presented its experience in Polar Education and Outreach, along with presentations from China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand.

Dr. Thamban Meloth, Director, NCPOR and Chair of the AFoPS AGM 2026, said the meeting provided an important platform for Asian countries to exchange expertise, identify common scientific priorities and strengthen cooperation in polar research.

He said sustained observations, data sharing, coordinated research and capacity building would be important in strengthening the contribution of Asian countries to global polar research, particularly in the run-up to IPY-5.

Business meeting discusses future direction

The AGM concluded with the AFoPS Business Meeting, attended by National Coordinators and National Representatives of member countries. The meeting reviewed the Forum's activities and discussed its future direction.

The AFoPS AGM 2026 marked another step towards closer cooperation among Asian polar research institutions. The discussions are expected to support collaborative work in polar science, observations, data sharing, research infrastructure, capacity building, education and outreach, with a common focus on preparations for IPY-5.

With NCPOR serving as India's nodal institution for polar research and based in Goa, the meeting also highlighted the important role of Indian scientific institutions in building international partnerships and advancing India's contribution to global polar research.

Source-NCPOR, Goa/PIB Panaji/AY/PK

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