

India's highest Meteorological Centre in Leh

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In news

Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) launched country's highest Meteorological Centre in Leh, Ladakh

Key points about the centre

- The centre is located at 3,500 metres above sea level in Leh, it will be the highest Meteorological Centre (MC) in India.
- After Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, the Leh centre is the second MC located in the Himalayas. After Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, the Leh centre is the second MC located in the Himalayas.
- As per IMD, it will install ten Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) at key locations – Nubra and Zaskar valleys, Pangong Tso, Drass and Kargil.
- With this centre IMD will provide specialised weather forecasts for traffic movement on highways, agriculture, and defence personnel

Why is establishing a Meteorological Centre (MC) in Ladakh important?

- Because Ladakh remains vulnerable to erratic weather and changing climate that have adverse effects on the lives of the locals.
- In addition, the UT is a geo-strategic location from the security point of view.
- Ladakh has only two districts Kargil and Leh and it has varying micro-climatic zones ranging from plains, cold desert, hills and extreme dry places and all these micro-climatic regions require specific and localised

weather monitoring and information

- The IMD plans to augment its existing operations in the region so as to provide timely weather updates and warnings ahead of disasters like cloud bursts in this geographically unique region

Benefits of the centre

- It will benefit locals, the forecasts will benefit tourists, the defence sector, disaster management and agriculture departments in the region
- Being a seismologically active region, the scientists will also gather seismological data here

A brief note on IMD

- In the year 1875, the Government of India established the India Meteorological Department, bringing all meteorological work in the country under a central authority.
- From a modest beginning in 1875, IMD has progressively expanded its infrastructure for meteorological observations, communications, forecasting and weather services and it has achieved a parallel scientific growth.
- India was the first developing country in the world to have its own geostationary satellite, INSAT, for continuous weather monitoring of this part of the globe and particularly for cyclone warning.
- IMD is under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- The Director General of Meteorology is the Head of the India Meteorological Department, with headquarters at New Delhi. For the convenience of administrative and technical control, there are 6 Regional Meteorological Centres, each under a Deputy Director General with headquarters at Mumbai, Chennai, New Delhi, Calcutta, Nagpur and Guwahati.
- In addition, there are separate Divisions to deal with

specialised subjects. They are Agricultural, Meteorology, Civil Aviation, Climatology, Hydrometeorology, Instrumentation, Meteorological Telecommunication, Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre, Positional Astronomy, Satellite Meteorology, Seismology, Training

Mandate of IMD

- To take meteorological observations and to provide current and forecast meteorological information for optimum operation of weather-sensitive activities like agriculture, irrigation, shipping, aviation, offshore oil explorations, etc.
- To warn against severe weather phenomena like tropical cyclones, norwesters, dust storms, heavy rains and snow, cold and heat waves, etc., which causes destruction of life and property.
- To provide meteorological statistics required for agriculture, water resource management, industries, oil exploration and other nation-building activities.
- To conduct and promote research in meteorology and allied disciplines