

Leonid meteor showers

November 17, 2020

In news

Leonid meteor showers are currently making their yearly appearance and will reach their peak in India on November 17 and 18

A brief note on Leonid meteor showers

- They emerge from the comet Tempel-Tuttle, which requires 33 years to revolve once around the Sun.
- These meteors are bright and among the fastest moving—travelling at speeds of 71 km per second.
- During this year's showers, peaks of around 10 to 15 meteors are expected to be seen every hour.
- According to a CNN report, the Leonid showers include fireballs— bright and large meteors than can last longer than average meteors, and “earth gazers”— meteors which appear close to the horizon with colourful and long tails.
- Meteor showers are named after the constellation they appear to be coming from. The Leonids originate from the constellation Leo the Lion— the groups of stars which form a lion's mane.

What is a meteor shower?

- Earth passes through large swathes of cosmic debris in its journey around the Sun.
- The debris is essentially the remnants of comets' great frigid chunks of matter that leave behind dirty trails of rocks and ice that linger long after the comets themselves have passed.
- **As the Earth wades through this cloud of comet waste, the bits of debris create what appears from the ground to be a fireworks display in the sky known as a meteor**

shower.