

IMD launches country's highest Meteorological Centre in Leh

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The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will now provide specialised weather forecasts for traffic movement on highways, agriculture, and defence personnel from its Ladakh centre, which was inaugurated on Tuesday. Located at 3,500 metres above sea level in Leh, it will be the highest Meteorological Centre (MC) in India.

The centre was virtually inaugurated by Minister for Earth Sciences (MoES) Dr Harsh Vardhan. After Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, the Leh centre is the second MC located in the Himalayas.

Key Highlights

- Even though there are only two districts, Kargil and Leh, the Union Territory has varying micro-climatic zones ranging from plains, cold desert, hills and extreme dry places. "All these micro-climatic regions require specific and localised weather monitoring and information," said RK Mathur, Lt Governor, Ladakh.
- The Lt Governor said weather-display boards would be installed at multiple locations and information would be provided via mobile-based applications.
- "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," said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general, IMD.
- "Along with the locals, the forecasts will benefit tourists, the defence sector, disaster

management and agriculture departments in the region,” said Mohapatra.

- The IMD will install ten Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) at key locations — Nubra and Zaskar valleys, Pangong Tso, Drass and Kargil. The department plans to relocate its movable radar from Sonmarg to Leh region soon.
- Being a seismologically active region, the scientists will also gather seismological data here, said M Rajeevan, secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*