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ICMR to open first high-altitude medical and public health research centre

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This new centre will strengthen the climate-resilient healthcare, biomedical research and public health situation in the Himalayan region of India



Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Jagat Prakash Nadda has laid the foundation stone of 'ICMR's High Altitude Medical and Public Health Research Centre' (ICMR-CHAMP) at Keylong, Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh.

The Centre is being established by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Its main objective is to strengthen multidisciplinary research, innovation, and capacity building focused on high-altitude and climate-sensitive regions of India.

The Himalayan ecosystem poses specific public health challenges due to extreme altitudes, extreme climatic conditions, difficult terrain, geographical isolation, and increasing climate variability. These factors influence disease patterns, access to healthcare services, occupational health, and emergency response.

The Centre will work towards mobilising scientific evidence for people living and working in these challenging environments and developing health solutions that are specific to the circumstances and widely applicable.

The research scope of the Centre will include high-altitude body function and adaptation, mountain medicine, climate-sensitive and emerging diseases, communicable and non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health, nutrition, mental health, environmental and occupational health, and disaster medicine. It will also work on bringing together digital health platforms, telemedicine, drone-powered health logistics, and real-time public health monitoring to improve access to health services in remote and hard-to-reach areas.

This initiative will promote institutional collaboration with the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS), research institutes of national importance of India and the Government of Himachal Pradesh. These partnerships will support translational research, scientific exchanges, capacity building, and evidence-based policy development, advancing the Government of India's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat in the field of health research and inclusive and climate-resilient healthcare.