



Curtain Raiser

Union Health Minister Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda to lay foundation stone of ICMR Centre for High Altitude Medicine and Public Health Research at Keylong on 12 October

Keylong to house ICMR's first dedicated centre for high-altitude medicine and public health research

New centre to strengthen climate-resilient healthcare, biomedical research and public health preparedness across India's Himalayan region

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The Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda, will lay the foundation stone of the ICMR Centre for High Altitude Medicine and Public Health Research (ICMR-CHAMP) at Keylong in Lahaul & Spiti district, Himachal Pradesh, on 12 October 2026. The Centre is being established by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, to strengthen multidisciplinary research, innovation and capacity building focused on India's high-altitude and climate-sensitive regions.

The Himalayan ecosystem presents distinctive public health challenges arising from high altitude, extreme climatic conditions, difficult terrain, geographical isolation and increasing climate variability. These factors influence disease patterns, healthcare access, occupational health and emergency response. The Centre will strengthen scientific evidence generation and the development of context-specific, scalable healthcare solutions for people living and working in these challenging environments.

The Centre's research mandate will encompass high-altitude physiology and acclimatisation, mountain medicine, climate-sensitive and emerging diseases, infectious and non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health, nutrition, mental health, environmental and occupational health, and disaster medicine. It will also explore the integration of digital health platforms, telemedicine, drone-enabled healthcare logistics and real-time public health surveillance to improve healthcare delivery in remote and hard-to-reach areas.

Located in Lahaul & Spiti, the Centre will provide an important institutional platform for sustained field research involving high-altitude and tribal populations in a strategically significant border region. Its location will facilitate longitudinal studies and investigations

into the relationship between environmental conditions, climate variability and health outcomes. The Centre is expected to contribute to national priorities in tribal health, disaster preparedness, digital health innovation and the development of climate-resilient health systems, while strengthening India's contribution to global research in high-altitude medicine.

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

The foundation stone laying ceremony will feature a traditional Bhumi Pujan, ceremonial groundbreaking and unveiling of the foundation stone, followed by the plantation of native Himalayan saplings under the Green ICMR Campus Initiative. The programme will also include the inauguration of a scientific exhibition, the launch of the Centre's institutional video and website, presentation of the building layout, and the release of a commemorative postal special cover by the Union Health Minister.

The ceremony will be attended by Shri Sanjay Seth, Minister of State for Defence, Government of India; Shri Jai Ram Thakur, Leader of opposition, former Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh and Member of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly; Ms. Kangana Ranaut, Member of Parliament from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh; Ms. Anuradha Rana, Member of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly representing Lahaul & Spiti; and Shri Ravi Thakur, former Member Legislative Assembly,.

Other distinguished dignitaries attending the event will include Air Marshal Sandeep Thareja, Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services; Dr. Rajiv Bahl, Secretary, Department of Health Research and Director General, ICMR; Smt. Manisha Saxena, Joint Secretary, Department of Health Research; Shri Vivek Kumar Daksh, Senior Deputy Director General (Administration), ICMR, Addl DG (Extramural) Dr Alka Sharma and Sr. FA, Dr Richa Pandey. Senior officials from the Central and Himachal Pradesh Governments, representatives of the Armed Forces, scientists, public health experts, research institutions and other key stakeholders will also participate in the ceremony.

SR/GS

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