

Table Top Exercise conducted in Leh to strengthen disaster preparedness

Leh, August 19, 2025: A comprehensive Table Top Exercise on disaster preparedness was conducted in Leh under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, UT Ladakh, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, to enhance inter-agency coordination and strengthen response mechanisms for natural disasters in the region.

The exercise was held in the presence of the Administrative Secretary, Disaster Management, Shashanka Ala, Deputy Commissioner Leh, Romil Singh Donk, SSP Leh, Shruti Arora, and other senior district officers.

Key participants in the exercise included Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Sudhir Bahl; Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Syed Ata Hasnain, Member of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA); Lt. Gen. Hitesh Bhalla, General Officer Commanding (GOC) 14 Corps.

The exercise simulated multiple disaster scenarios, including earthquakes and flash floods, to assess the readiness and coordination between civil and military agencies in Ladakh's unique and challenging terrain.

The UT Disaster Response Force (UT-DRF) presented the current preparedness levels and response strategies, outlining Ladakh's vulnerability profile as a high seismic zone and the rising risks of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and cloudburst-induced flash floods.

Director, India Meteorological Department (IMD), Sonam Lotus, made a detailed presentation on early warning and disaster forecasting mechanisms, stressing the role of timely alerts, weather forecasting, and the challenges posed by Ladakh's complex topography.

Member of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Syed Ata Hasnain, highlighted the importance of regular mock drills to build knowledge and preparedness at all levels.

GOC, 14 Corps, Lt. Gen. Hitesh Bhalla, also underlined Ladakh's vulnerability to extreme weather hazards and the need for proactive mitigation measures.

Addressing the participants, Chief Secretary Dr. Kotwal emphasised synergy among stakeholders for timely and effective response and commended the collaborative efforts of the armed forces and civil administration in safeguarding the region.

As part of the exercise, Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Sudhir Bahl, Consultant NDMA, delivered a presentation on earthquake hazards, multisector preparedness, and structured response strategies, focusing on immediate action plans and standard operating procedures (SOPs).

The deliberations also highlighted the critical role of community members as first responders, the need for robust wireless communication, availability of machinery, medical facilities, and effective coordination through the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

The DDMA Leh and Kargil presented a presentation on a mock drill which was to be conducted on 21st and 22nd of August in both districts.

The exercise was attended by senior officials from NDMA, NDRF, armed forces, UT Administration, district officials of Leh and Kargil, representatives of security agencies including ITBP and CISF, civil defence volunteers, and officers from key departments. Officials from Kargil, including the Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner, SDMs, and Tehsildars, joined virtually.



