

Secretary, MoES inaugurates state-of-the-art Atmospheric Chemistry Laboratory and MoES Early Career Researchers' Hub website, at IITM, Pune

MoES ECR-Hub to serve as a source of connection, growth and discovery for young scientists and early career researchers in their scientific journey: Dr. Ravichandran

WiFEX-II will extend localized, runway-specific fog predictions to more airports in North India: Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences

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The Secretary, Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr. M Ravichandran ceremonially inaugurated the state-of-the-art Atmospheric Chemistry Laboratory and launched the website of MoES ECR-Hub, which stands for 'Early Career Researchers' Hub' for Earth Sciences, at Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune today. MoES ECR-Hub is a dedicated platform for the next generation of scientists tackling the planet's most pressing challenges. Dr. Ravichandran also visited the SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research) and WiFEX (Winter Fog Experiment) Control-room in the IITM premises. He interacted with the IITM scientists and researchers and was also briefed about the Metropolitan Air Quality and Weather Forecasting Services (MAQWS) in course of the visit.



While launching the MoES ECR-Hub (<https://ecrhub.github.io/>), Dr. Ravichandran urged all that this Hub is a source of connection, growth and discovery for young scientists and early career researchers in their scientific journey. He said that their curiosity, passion and innovation are the keys to building a resilient and sustainable future. He also said that this initiative reflects the firm belief of the Government that the future of our nation and the planet lies in the hands of a strong, inspired and well-supported scientific community.



Briefing the mediapersons on the strong foundation of WiFEX, Dr. Ravichandran said, “What began at IGIA — India’s busiest and most fog-affected airport — has grown into a robust observational network now reaching Jewar Airport, Noida, and Hisar, Haryana, covering key aviation corridors across North India”. Dr. Ravichandran informed that this model can reliably predict when fog will begin, how dense it will be, how long it will last, and when it will clear — achieving more than 85% accuracy for very dense fog (visibility below 200 meters). For airlines, pilots, air traffic controllers, and passengers, this means fewer costly diversions, fewer delays, safer runways, and more informed travel during the challenging winter fog season, informed the Secretary, MoES.



The Winter Fog Experiment (WiFEX), which was launched in the winter of 2015 at Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), New Delhi, has completed a remarkable milestone of ten successful years of dedicated research into North India’s dense winter fog and its impact on daily life and aviation safety. Led by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), with support from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), WiFEX is one of the world’s few long-term open-field experiments focused solely on fog — an elusive winter hazard that regularly disrupts air, rail, and road transport across the Indo-Gangetic Plain. WiFEX is stepping into its next phase — **WiFEX-II** — which will extend localized, runway-specific fog predictions to more airports in North India.

For more details on WiFEX, [click here](#).

IITM Director Dr. Suryachandra A. Rao, Dr. Shailesh Nayak, Director, NIAS Bengaluru and Dr. Sachin Ghude, Project Director, WiFEX were present amongst the senior scientists and dignitaries on the occasion.

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