

India sets up permanent research base near North Pole

Science and Technology Minister Kapil Sibal Tuesday inaugurated a permanent base near the North Pole to enable scientists to carry out research, especially on climate change.

The research base named 'Himadri' was equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and was situated on the west coast of Spitsbergen, the largest island in the Svalbard archipelago of Norway.

'Himadri will be managed by the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences," a ministry statement said.

With the opening of 'Himadri', India has become the 10th country to have established its full-fledged research station in the region. Other countries that have already set up their stations include Norway, Germany, Britain, France, Japan, South Korea and China.

While inaugurating the research base, Sibal expressed happiness that the Indian Arctic Programme that started in August 2007 as a small contingent of five scientists has expanded to become a full fledged research station in less than a year, the statement added.

Among others, Federal Minister of Germany Annette Schavan, Norwegian Minister Tora Aasland and French Senator Christian Gaudin attended the inaugural function held near the North Pole.

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