



# Formation of 5 New Districts in Ladakh

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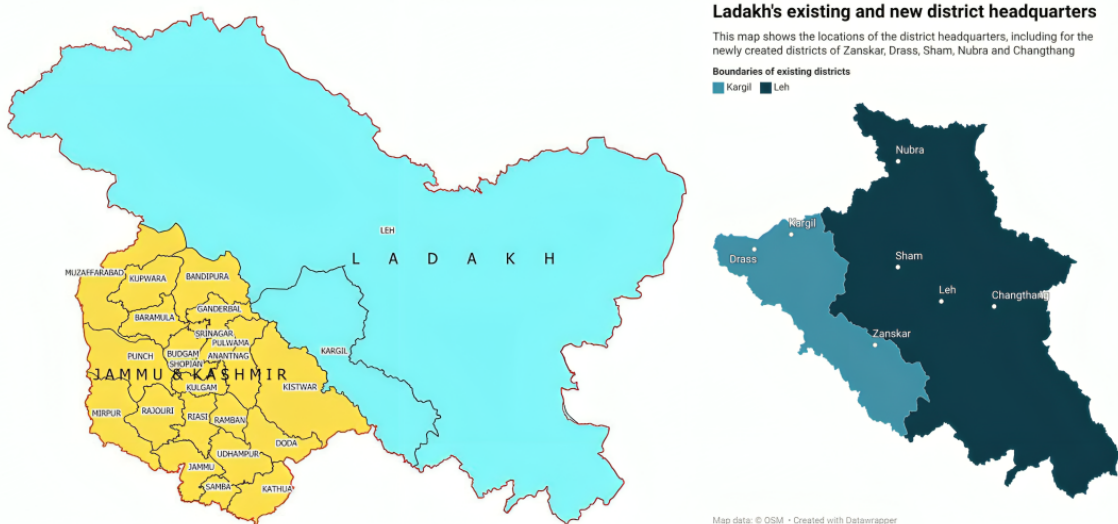
## Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs Minister granted "**in-principle approval**" for the formation of **five new districts in Ladakh**, increasing the Union Territory's total number of districts to seven.

- This move, aimed at improving **governance and development in the region**, has been widely discussed and welcomed by various stakeholders.

## What are the New Districts in Ladakh and Their Purpose?

- **Significance:** Ladakh is one of **India's largest and least populated Union Territories**. The current administrative structure, with **just two districts Leh and Kargil** has struggled to address the needs of its vast and difficult terrain.
  - Due to its **large area and inaccessibility**, the existing administration faced challenges in reaching grassroots levels effectively.
  - The new districts are expected to alleviate these challenges by providing more localised administrative units.
  - Ladakh's geopolitical significance and strategic location have made it a focus of development efforts, **aiming to enhance both civilian and military infrastructure**.
- **New Districts:** The **five new districts are Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang**.
  - After [Article 370's removal in 2019](#), Ladakh became a Union Territory under the **Union Home Ministry's direct administration**.
  - The creation of these districts aims to bring governance closer to the people, ensuring that benefits and services reach even the most remote areas.
  - Ladakh is part of the [Prime Minister's Development Package \(PMDP\)](#), which includes significant funding and infrastructure projects aimed at the region's growth.
    - The creation of new districts will further support these developmental efforts.
- **Next Steps:** The Home Ministry has directed the Ladakh administration to form a **committee to assess various aspects of the new districts**, including headquarters, boundaries, structure, and staffing.
  - The committee is **required to submit a detailed report within three months**, after which the final proposal will be reviewed by the Union Home Ministry for further action.
- **Political and Public Reactions:** Political parties questioned whether the new districts would have elected [Autonomous Hill Development Councils](#), like Leh and Kargil, to ensure meaningful local governance.
  - While many welcomed the move, some social activists and former politicians called for **greater political representation and functional autonomy** to make the new districts effective in local governance.



## How New Districts are Created in India?

- The power to create, **alter, or abolish districts lies with State governments**, done either through an executive order or by passing a law in the State Assembly.
  - States believe smaller districts improve administration and governance.
- The **Centre has no role in creating or altering districts** but is **involved when a State wants to change a district's name**, requiring clearances from multiple agencies.
- **Trends in District Creation:** According to the [2011 Census](#), there were **593 districts in India**. Between 2001-2011, 46 new districts were created by States.
  - As of 2024, there are currently **718 districts in the country**, partly due to the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in 2014, with **Telangana having 33 districts and Andhra Pradesh having 13 districts** (the state now has 26 districts).

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