

Drang Drung glacier in Ladakh losing ice rapidly, finds study by IIT Indore scientist

Gaurav Talwar

@timesofindia.com

Dehradun: Drang Drung Glacier in Ladakh has been losing ice or receding at an average rate of 1m per year between 2021 and 2023, according to scientists who carried out the first detailed glaciological study of the glacier. Spanning around 70 sq km, Drang Drung is the largest glacier in the Zaskar range.

The study, hailed as a milestone in Himalayan climate science, was led by Mohd Farooq Azam of IIT Indore. Initial findings from the two-year investigation were recently published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Glaciology* by Cambridge



MILESTONE STUDY: Despite its relatively clean surface, the glacier is steadily retreating, leading to the formation of a growing proglacial lake at its terminus

University Press.

Despite its relatively clean surface, the glacier is steadily retreating, leading to the formation of a growing proglacial lake at its terminus. "This proglacial lake looks safe as of now, but its volume is in-

creasing due to glacier recession, so we are keenly observing it," said Azam, who is also affiliated with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The glacier is a crucial water source for the Doda and Zan-

skar rivers, sustaining nearly 5,000 people in downstream communities.

Azam stressed the need for long-term monitoring, expanded field infrastructure, and satellite-based support to better understand the impacts of climate-driven glacier melt on water resources in this ecologically fragile region. Speaking about their research, he said, "Monitoring a large glacier like Drang Drung is logistically demanding due to its vast, rugged terrain and harsh weather." The study helps address a critical gap in Himalayan cryosphere research and represents a key step toward improving disaster preparedness and sustainable water management in Ladakh.

Times of India dt: 08/06/2025