

The First Astro Festival of Ladakh kickstarts in Leh

LEH, LADAKH – June 27, 2025 – The First Ladakh Astro Festival, 2025, commenced on 27th June, 2025 with a grand inaugural ceremony at The District Panchayat Resource Centre, Agling, Leh. The festival, a collaborative effort between the Tourism Department of UT Leh and the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), aims to foster interest in astronomy, promote scientific temperament among the youth, and boost sustainable astro-tourism in the region. The participants included a keen contingent of students from Govt. School Skalzangling, eager to engage with the wonders of the cosmos.

The ceremony was graced by Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, LAHDC, Leh, Tsering Angchok, as the Chief Guest, alongside Guest of Honor, Romial Singh Donk, IAS, Deputy Commissioner Leh and Gulam Mohd. (JKAS), Additional Deputy Commissioner, Leh.

The event began with a welcome address delivered by Padma Angmo, AD Tourism, Leh, and Dorje Angchuk, Engineer-In-Charge, Indian Astronomical Observatory, IIA.

A highlight of the inaugural session was an insightful expert talk by Dr. V. Girish, Deputy Director, Science Program Office, ISRO. Dr. Girish captivated the audience, particularly students from Govt. School Skalzangling and other participants, with his presentation on "Moon - An Enigma, and India's Lunar Missions." He meticulously covered fascinating facts and even mythical theories surrounding the moon, detailing India's groundbreaking lunar missions, Chandrayaan 1, 2, and 3, and offering glimpses into upcoming projects. The engaging session concluded with an interactive Q&A segment.

In his address, Chief Guest Tsering Angchok expressed immense pride that Leh was chosen to host this significant festival. He emphasized the critical need to inspire Ladakh's younger generations, to pursue science and Astro science, noting the current low enrollment in these fields compared to humanities, economics, and political science. He further highlighted the festival's potential as a resourceful initiative to attract sustainable tourism to the region. Additionally, he thanked the Department of Tourism for the arrangements and the idea of this unique festival.

The first part of the event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Stanzin Chondol, Assistant Tourism Officer.

The Ladakh Astro Festival promises to be a landmark event, igniting scientific curiosity and positioning Ladakh as a premier destination for astronomical enthusiasts.

Following a lunch break, the afternoon session featured a public talk by Dorje Angchuk, Engineer-In-Charge, IIA, who shared his personal journey with astrophotography, offering a unique perspective on the captivating field.

The day culminated in an enthralling Star Gazing event at the Leh campus of the University of Ladakh, Taru, from 7:30 PM to 10:30 PM, providing attendees, including the eager students, with a direct experience of Ladakh's pristine night skies.

The festival will continue tomorrow with a series of public talks by esteemed speakers including Phunchok Dorjey from TIFR, Tsewang Stanzin from the Indian Astronomical Observatory, IIA, and Prof. Manzoor Malik from the Physics Department, Kashmir University. The second day will also feature another Star Gazing event at the Leh campus of the University of Ladakh, Taru, from 7:30 PM to 10:30 PM.





