

Madhya Pradesh Develops Six Villages for Astro-Tourism Experiences

New initiative combines dark-sky environments, astronomy and community-based rural tourism across six districts

BHOPAL, MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA, September 16, 2026 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- In parts of rural Madhya Pradesh in India, the night sky is becoming the focus of a new tourism initiative. The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has commenced the Astro Village Development Project under its Tribal Tourism Project, with work beginning in May 2026. The initiative focuses on naturally dark, low-light-pollution locations, creating settings for star-gazing and astronomy-based experiences while opening opportunities for local communities to participate in tourism.

The first phase covers six villages across six districts: Gyanpura in Dhar, Dhusawani in Chhindwara, Banja in Betul, Dhaba in Narmadapuram, Richhkudi in Damoh and Rancha in Umari. Each is being developed around its natural setting, with the night sky forming the central element of the proposed visitor experience.

According to Dr. Ilayaraja T., Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, the initiative brings together science and nature, providing opportunities to observe celestial features such as



Stargazing under the clear skies of Madhya Pradesh's Astro Tourism Villages.



Local guides conducting a laser-assisted constellation session for villagers in Madhya Pradesh's Astro Tourism Hubs.

stars, planets and the Milky Way while creating new tourism and employment opportunities for local communities.

Building an Astronomy Experience

The project will introduce facilities that allow the selected villages to support organized star-gazing and astronomy experiences. These include telescopes, binoculars and astrophotography cameras, along with dedicated star-gazing platforms and observation areas.

Interpretation centers will complement these facilities, providing information on the night sky, astronomy and celestial phenomena. This will allow the experience to extend beyond observation, introducing visitors to the science behind what they see.

The focus on naturally dark surroundings also places the project within the wider context of emerging interest in night-sky experiences and nature-based travel. Rather than relying on conventional built attractions, the initiative uses an existing characteristic of these rural locations—their relatively dark night skies—as the foundation for a new tourism activity.

From Local Youth to Astro Guides

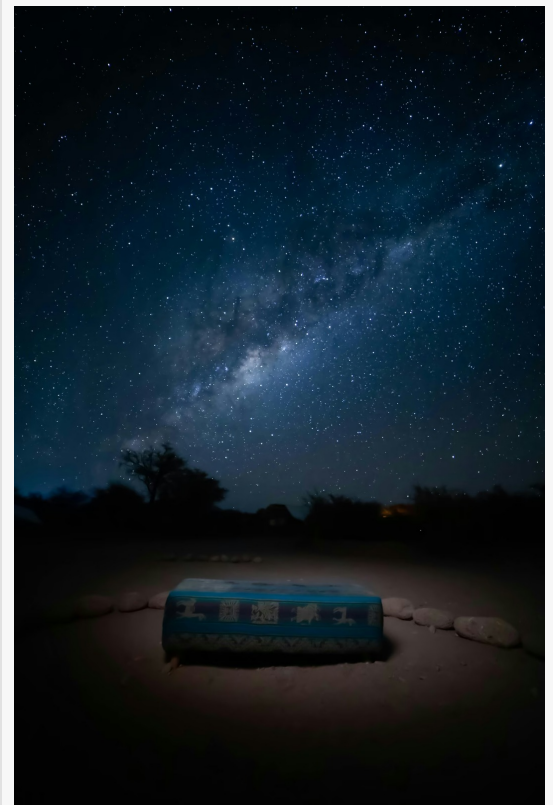
The project also places community participation alongside infrastructure development. Youth from the six selected villages will undergo a 90-day training program focused on constellations, astronomical phenomena and communicating these subjects to visitors.

Following the training, they will be developed as Astro Guides, creating opportunities for local employment and self-employment. The model is intended to enable residents to participate directly in tourism services and retain a share of the economic activity generated within their communities.

This community-focused component gives the Astro Village initiative a wider rural development dimension. The objective is not limited to creating



Travelers gazing at the Milky Way galaxy using high-powered telescopes in Madhya Pradesh.



places for observing the night sky, but also to build local capacity around a new tourism experience.

A New Dimension to Rural Tourism

The development of the six Astro Villages adds astronomy to Madhya Pradesh's growing portfolio of rural and nature-based tourism experiences. The project brings together dark-sky environments, science, nature and community participation, while creating a framework for developing tourism around the distinctive characteristics of rural destinations.

As interest in sustainable travel and experiences connected to nature continues to grow, initiatives such as these demonstrate how tourism can be developed around existing environmental assets while creating new livelihood opportunities for local communities.

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Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board

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