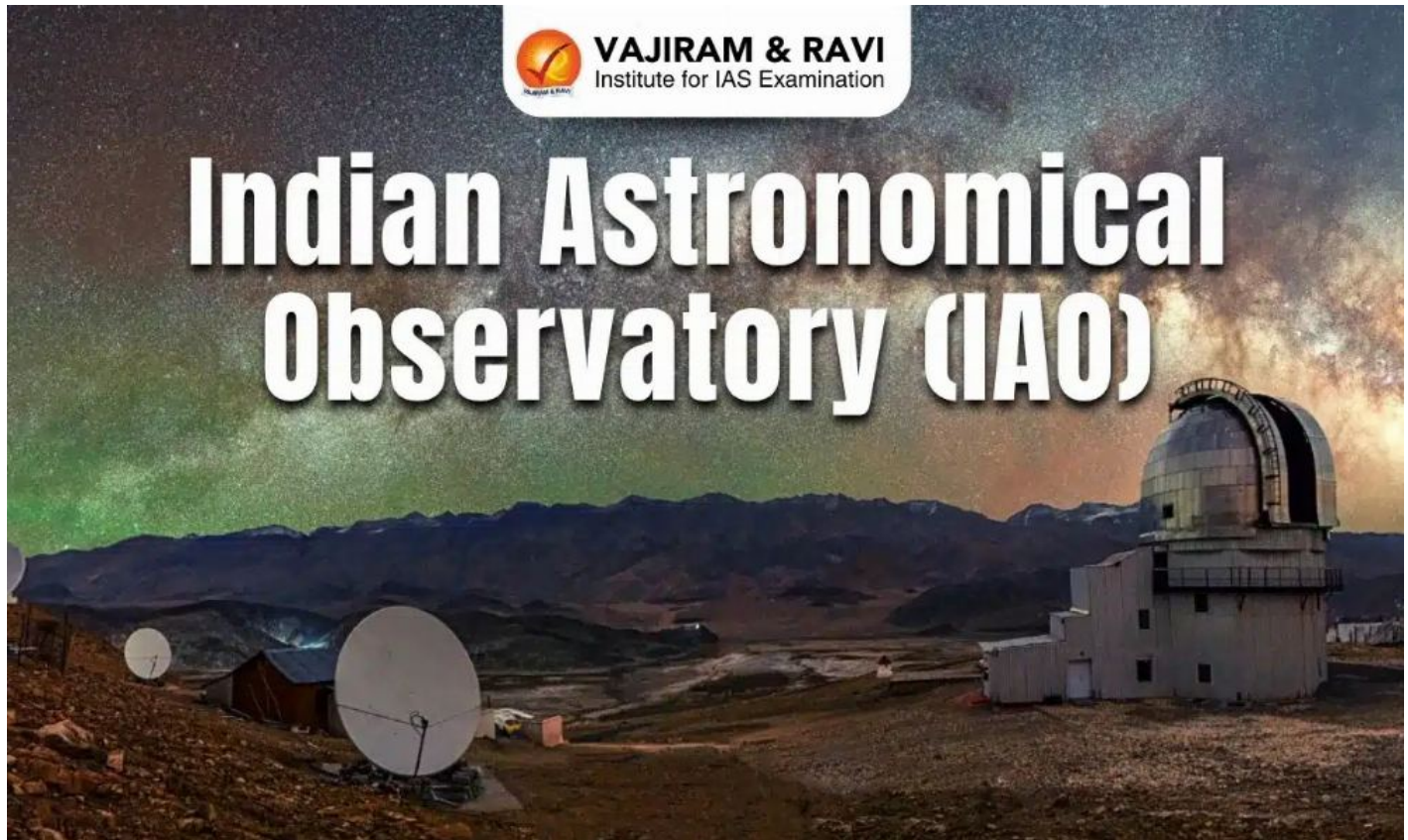


Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO)

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Indian Astronomical Observatory Latest News

Indian astronomers have successfully photographed the interstellar comet C/2025 N1 (ATLAS), also known as 3I/ATLAS, using the Himalayan Chandra Telescope (HCT) of the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) at Hanle, Ladakh.

About Indian Astronomical Observatory

- The Indian Astronomical Observatory, also known as the **Hanle Observatory**, is located in the **Hanle Valley, Ladakh**.
- It is situated at an altitude of **4500 metres above mean sea level** to the north of Western Himalayas.
- Inaugurated in 2001, the observatory is **run by Bengaluru's Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)**.
- The site is a **dry, cold desert** with **sparse human population** and the **ancient Hanle monastery** as its **nearest neighbour**.
- The **cloudless skies and low atmospheric water vapour** make it one of the **best sites** in the world **for optical, infrared, sub-millimetre, and millimetre wavelengths**.

- It houses a **2-meter aperture Himalayan Chandra Telescope (HCT)**, which is remotely **operated from the Centre for Research and Education in Science and Technology (CREST) in Bengaluru**.
- It also features a **solar power plant**, satellite-based communication systems, and a **liquid nitrogen plant for cooling detectors**.
- Hanle is also home to a **unique Dark Sky Reserve designated by the International Dark-Sky Association**.
 - A Dark Sky Reserve is a designated area that **aims to preserve** and protect the **quality of its night skies by minimising light pollution**.
 - Dark Sky Reserves are typically located in areas with **exceptional natural darkness and starry skies**.
 - And Hanle, with less than 1000 people living in the village, is the perfect area.

Source: **ETVB**

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/indian-astronomical-observatory-iao/>

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