

Rancho's Ladakh to house world's largest telescope

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SRINAGAR: Aamir Khan might have played Ladakhi scientific genius Phunsukh Wangdu in 3 idiots for reel-life drama, but Ladakh is now making real news as the world's largest solar telescope will be set-up in the cold desert to allow scientists to carry-out research to understand the fundamental processes taking place on the sun.

National large solar telescope (NLST) will be set-up at Pangong Tso Lake Merak in Ladakh region to help the scientific community to study the long term changes in earth's climate and environment.

Jammu and Kashmir chief secretary Madhav Lal said the government will extend full cooperation to the department of science and technology government of India in its endeavour.

"India's National large solar telescope will be set up at Pangong Tso Lake Merak in



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Ladakh region. The facility will also provide employment opportunities to the local population in the area," said Lal.

Lal was chairing a meeting in Jammu on Friday to discuss the modalities for setting up the solar telescope. The chief secretary said the construction, as well as op-

erational phases of the project can be undertaken with minimal disturbance to the local flora and fauna.

Lal Chand, chairman J&K Pollution Control Board, said "PCB clearance is not necessary for the project. It will now go the wild life board for clearance," Chand told DNA.

Giving details of the proj-

ect professor Tushar P. Prabhu from Indian Institute of Astrophysics Department of Science and technology said the site was selected after carefully studying various scientific and environmental aspects.

"It emerged from the studies that the Pangong lake site at Merak was very promising and offered longer sunshine hours," he told the meeting.

Prof Prabhu said the site selected for setting up the world's largest solar telescope fitted with a two meter (2m) reflector will permit the scientists to carry out cutting edge research to understand the fundamental processes taking place on the sun.

"The solar telescope will help the scientific community to study the long term changes in earth's climate and environment and also provide useful data to carry out research in order to minimize or remove disruptions to communications network and satellites due to periodic solar winds," he said.