



Palomar Observatory Gets 1st Woman Head

Why in News?

Prof. Mansi Manoj Kasliwal has made history by becoming the **first woman and second [Person of Indian Origin \(PIO\)](#)** to be appointed as the new director of **[Palomar Observatory](#)**, following **Shrinivas Kulkarni**, who was the **first PIO** to lead the observatory from 2006 to 2018.



Key Points

- **About:** Born in Indore, India, she moved to the **United States** at the age of 15. She earned her **Bachelor's degree from Cornell University** in 2005 and completed her **PhD in Astronomy at Caltech** in 2011. After a postdoctoral stint at **Carnegie Observatories**, she returned to Caltech, where she is now a tenured professor.
- **Recognition:** Prof. Kasliwal, a professor of astronomy at Caltech, is internationally recognised for her pioneering work on explosive cosmic events such as **[supernovae](#)** and **neutron star collisions**. She received the **New Horizons in Physics Prize** in 2022 for her leadership in electromagnetic follow-ups of cosmic phenomena.
- **Key Contributions and Achievements:**
 - **GROWTH Project:** Leads the **Global Relay of Observatories Watching Transients Happen (GROWTH)**, a global network of telescopes capturing transient cosmic events.
 - **Palomar Transient Factory & Zwicky Transient Facility:** Played a key role in the design of both facilities, uncovering thousands of supernovae and other astronomical

phenomena.

- **Multi-Messenger Astronomy:** Contributed significantly to follow-up observations of [gravitational waves](#) detected by the **Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory**.

Palomar Observatory

- **Location and Ownership:** Palomar Observatory, situated on **Palomar Mountain in north San Diego County, California**, is an astronomical research centre owned and operated by Caltech.
- **Research Telescopes:** The Observatory houses three active [research telescopes](#): the 200-inch Hale Telescope, the 48-inch Samuel Oschin Telescope, and the 60-inch telescope, serving a diverse community of astronomers from Caltech and partner institutions.
- **Historical and Ongoing Contribution:** Established nearly a century ago, Palomar Observatory has been a **leader in astronomical research**, operating nightly for scientific advancement, instrument development, and student training.

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