

# 'Blood moon' a sight to behold

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**La Luna, La Luna:** The different stages of the moon during the complete lunar eclipse seen from Jakarta, Indonesia. — AP

## Skygazers dazzled by century's longest lunar eclipse

**PARIS:** The longest "blood moon" eclipse this century dazzled skygazers across the globe, coinciding with Mars' closest approach in 15 years in a thrilling celestial spectacle.

As Earth's constant companion slowly sailed across the skies, crowds gathered around the world to catch a glimpse of the rare phenomenon.

Beside Lake Magadi, 100km southwest of the Kenyan capital Nairobi, young members of the Maasai community watched the eclipse through a high-powered telescope provided by a local couple.

"Until today I thought Mars, Jupiter and the other planets were in the imagination of scientists," Purity Sailepo, 16, said.

"But now I've seen it I can believe it and I want to be an astronomer to tell other people."

Unlike with a solar eclipse, viewers did not need protective eye gear to observe the rare display.

For about half the world, the moon was partly or fully in Earth's shadow from 5.14pm to 11.28pm GMT – six hours and 14 minutes in all.

The period of complete eclipse – known as "totality", when the moon appears darkest – lasted from 7.30pm to 9.13pm GMT.



At the same time, Mars hovered near the moon in the night sky, easily visible to the naked eye.

Amateur astronomers in the southern hemisphere were best-placed to witness the rare sight, especially in southern Africa, Australia and Madagascar, though it was also visible in Europe, South Asia and South America.

More than 2,000 people, including many children armed with binoculars, gathered in the Tunisian capital of Tunis.

"I hope this eclipse will bring us happiness and peace," said Karima, 46, without taking her eyes off the sky. However, bad weather thwarted the cosmic display in several parts of the world.

Widespread monsoon rainstorms and thick clouds hid the moon across much of India and its neighbours, which should have had prime view.

Similarly, eager observers who had assembled on cliffs and beaches in the English county of Dorset were left in the dark due to an overcast sky. — AFP

**Wow factor**  
Children looking at the blood moon at the Salman Astro Camp Bandung, Indonesia. — Reuters