

Hot air balloon rides begin



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The five-day fund raising event ACT Fibernet Sky Fest 2015 began here on Wednesday at Gachibowli Stadium with IT secretary Jayesh Ranjan flagging off the event by releasing balloons in to the sky.

Para Jumping by the Indian Air Force team was the highlight of the inaugural event with two officers and ten airmen of the Agra-based IAF Akash Ganga performing daredevil sky jumping acts.

The team which was airborne at Begumpet reached Gachibowli at 4 pm and was dropped from 8,000 feet above the ground from two helicopters. They carried the Indian National Flag, an IAF Flag and an Akash Ganga flag and landed in a pre-determined spot on the ground.

Among the Para Jumpers was the Telugu young man Manoj Puri Goswami who jumped from sky for the first time in his home state, even though he has been sky diving for the past four years and has 400 jumps to his credit.

Para Jumping began as part of aerial assault techniques for wartime operations but has become a much sought-after fun and adventure activity, thanks to encouragement from the Indian Air Force, said organizers of the event. Para Jumping will be held as part of this event every day at the Gachibowli Stadium at 4 pm.

Jayesh Ranjan appreciated the 'noble ideals of generating funds for Sparsh Hospice which has been providing free treatment to terminally patients'.

The inaugural function



began with a performance by artists from Mexico and Spain, followed by a parade featuring Bathukamma and Mahankali sequences.

The event is being put together by Rotary Club of Banjara Hills. Rammohan Rao, president of the club said that in the last seven years Sparsh Hospice has helped 700 terminally ill patients. "Now this event is being organized to raise Rs 5.5 crore for the construction of a 50-bedded Sparsh Hospice Hospital," he said. Jagadish Ramadugu, organizing secretary of the fest announced that visitors who arrive to the fest between 2 and 4 pm today (December 24) will be exempted from the entrance donor pass fee of Rs 150.

The hot air balloon safari long ride was taken up by 28 people who paid Rs 15,000 each. The ride is 45-minute long, takes off from Gachibowli and lands in different parts of the city. A total of five hot air balloons are being used for this ride.