

Chennai students discover 3 asteroids

Chennai, Dec 4:

Three asteroids have been discovered by a team of students from Hiranandani Upscale School, Kelambakkam and Natesan Vidyasala Matriculation Higher Sec. School, Mannivakkam as part of a nationwide campaign of International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC) programme, U.S., to popularize astronomy in the country.

The provisional discoveries by Vishwath Ramachandran - IX std. and Vishweshwar Ramanakumar - Grade X IGCSE have been designated as 2016 OL4 P10w65E and 2016 PR2 P10w89g, Mast. Kishore Kumar T-XI std & Mast. Siva Magadev M XI std. have been designated as 2016 OP4 P10w65D, also we had more preliminary discovery by students of St. John's Public, Medavakkam Alwyn Jose Raja & Mast. Sajith Mithranjan said Science Popularization Association of Communicators and Educators (SPACE), an NGO that works with IASC.

This provisional discovery has been confirmed and formally recognized asteroid discovery, as endorsed by international agencies concerned, having the highest value among all the discoveries/ observations credited, claimed SPACE, which acts as the nodal agency for organizing asteroid search campaign in the country and providing training to students and amateur astronomers for asteroid hunting.

Under the project, participants got access to the images of the sky taken by 24 inch and 34 inch telescopes



positioned in Astronomical Research Institute (ARI) Observatory in the United States. Students search for asteroids after downloading and analysing data with specialise software. "All observations contribute to the Near Earth Object (NEO) data compiled by NASA and Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL)," said a S.Venkata Narayanan South Zonal Business Manager, SPACE.

Over the span of 7 successful years, SPACE provided this opportunity to more than 600 participants across India, which has resulted in several achievements and discoveries, and many for the first time in India by school children. Through the training provided

by SPACE to Indian students, have achieved a remarkable number of 46 Provisional Discoveries of Asteroids, 2 Special Discoveries, 1462 Preliminary Discoveries of Asteroids, 62 Near Earth Object Confirmations and 1636 Near Earth Object Observations.

The principal IB Mrs. Sangita, Hiranandani Upscale School Said "The program was well organized and guided, motivated students to put in the best. The results are excellent and I wish the Best to the students and the Educators!.

Vishwath & Vishweshwar said "We feel the program is Amazing, learnt quite a lot, informative and enriching. We have thoroughly

enjoyed and would like to pursue programs in Space Science". Dr. N.Ramasubramaniam, Correspondent Shri. Natesan Vidyasala school mentioned that we have long association with SPACE organization, I am impressed with the SPACE efforts to enhance scientific temper in the field of Space Technology. Mast. Sivamagadev & Kishore kumar of Shri Natesan Vidyasala School said "

Initially we don't know anything about asteroids, post training we are fully equipped to take on the challenge, many thanks to our teachers and SPACE team for making this discovery to happen".



A Christmas-tree decorated with colourful lights at a CSI Churuch in Narimdu, Madurai, to mark the beginning of the Christmas Festival.