

## City students discover three new asteroids

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



Kishore Kumar, Sivamagadev, Vishweshwar and Vishwath

### Chennai:

The provisional discoveries were by Vishwath Ramachandran, Class 9, and Vishweshwar Ramanakumar, Class 10, of Hiranandani Upscale, and Kishore Kumar T, Class 11, and Siva Magadev M, Class 9, of Shri Natesan Vidyasala. There were also more preliminary discoveries by students of St John's Public, Medavakkam by Alwyn Jose Raja and 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 recognised asteroid discovery, as endorsed by international agencies concerned, having the highest value among all the discoveries/observations credited," claimed city-based organisation SPACE, which acts as the nodal agency for organising 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 the 'Pan Starrs' (The Panoramic Survey Telescope and Rapid Response System) Telescope, which is located at Hawaii, US and uses a 1.8m (60 inch) telescope to survey the sky to look for asteroids, comets and Near Earth Objects (NEO). Students search for asteroids after downloading and analysing data with special software.

"All observations contribute to the Near Earth Object (NEO) data compiled by NASA and Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL)," said S Venkata Narayanan South Zonal Business Manager, SPACE. Vishwath and Vishweshwar said in unison, "We learnt quite a lot from the programme. It has given a new outlook and has opened new avenues for us to explore in astronomy." Meanwhile, Sivamagadev and Kishore Kumar said, "Initially, we didn't know anything about asteroids. We just signed up because of the sheer fascination we shared for astronomy. Now, post training we are well equipped and wish to make a career in the same field."