

Immediate Release

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Indian students hunting Asteroids!

First batch to earn NASA and Asteroid Grand Challenge Digital Badging through All India Asteroid Search Campaign 2016, conducted by SPACE in India

SPACE is giving opportunity to India school students to find real asteroids in outer space under its internationally acclaimed programme, **All India Asteroid Search Campaign (AIASC) 2016**, in collaboration with **International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC)**, conducted by Dr. Patrick Miller of Hardin Simmons University, USA as an educational outreach programme.

The campaign has provided this opportunity in **2 phases to 90 teams, each team (2 participants)** across India. **The teams have been selected on the basis of scientific parameters for Phase I – June 27-July 25, 2016 and Phase II – July 26-August 23, 2016.**

All India Asteroid Search Campaign, a unique and exclusive International platform created by SPACE for Indian students and amateur astronomers across India since 2010. **Over the span of 6 successful years**, SPACE provided this opportunity to more than 500 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 **19 Provisional Discoveries of Asteroids, 2 Special Discoveries, 96 Preliminary Discoveries of Asteroids, 62 Near Earth Object Confirmations and 1636 Near Earth Object Observations.**

The Campaign enables the students and amateurs to get exclusive access to astronomy images, which are otherwise not accessible till the post graduate level, and get training in advanced data analysis and software as well as interact with international scientists, all of which builds up to an invaluable real time research experience. Through this campaign, students have made confirmed discoveries of Main Belt Asteroids and important observations that contribute to the **NASA Near-Earth Object (NEO) Program at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (Pasadena, CA).**

In addition, SPACE announces **Asteroid Grand Challenge Digital Badging for All India Asteroid Search Campaign (AIASC) in collaboration with International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC) and Asteroid Grand Challenge (AGC)**, as a pilot programme.

Further, **these badges can be viewed across all platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The participants of AIASC 2016 are among the first group of students to join and earn badges under the system.**

About Asteroid Grand Challenge and Digital Badging

The **Asteroid Grand Challenge** is a large-scale effort under NASA, which uses multi-disciplinary collaborations and a variety of partnerships with other government agencies, international partners, industry, academia, and citizen scientists to detect, track, characterize, and create mitigation strategies for potentially hazardous asteroids.

The AGC recognized Digital Badge will be provided to the participants under AIASC which will be a **representation of their efforts as citizen scientists to help find all asteroid threats to the human population and know what to do about them.**