

Indian students discover 2 new asteroids as part of AIASC conducted by SPACE

New Delhi: Indian students have done it yet again! 2 teams of SPACE-associated students have discovered 2 new asteroids as part of All India Asteroid Search Campaign conducted by SPACE in association with IASC (International Astronomical Search Collaboration). SPACE is the nodal agency for organising asteroid search campaign in India and providing training to students and amateur astronomers for asteroid hunting.

These achievements are even more momentous as the campaign, started in 2010, stepped into its fifth year. The discovery by **Aryan Mishra and Keerti Vardhan of Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Vasant Vihar has been designated as 2014 00372; and Akshat Sharma and Kshitij Jindal of Bal Bharati Public School, Pitampura had their object designated as 2014 OU6.** These discoveries are now waiting to be placed in the world's official minor body catalogue maintained by International Astronomical Union (Paris).

Mr Amit Verma, CEO, SPACE, said about the discoveries, "It is a wonderful endorsement of the efforts of the students, their teachers, the school and the team from space. This will surely catapult these students to a global platform to pursue science and build a career out of it."

The Near-Earth Objects discovered by the students are asteroids that have been nudged by the gravitational attraction of nearby planets into orbits that allow them to enter the Earth's neighbourhood. It is therefore important to keep a close watch on these objects for the safety of the Earth.

The previous year two teams of four students Shourya Chambial and Gaurav Pati from Amity International School, Pushp Vihar, New Delhi; and Balachandra Routhu and Ayush Gupta from Ryan International School, Sohna Road, Gurgaon, had discovered a Main Belt asteroids during Phases II and III of the campaign.

The programme was started by SPACE with an aim to increase the love for science, astronomy and scientific research in Indian students and has been successful in meeting its aim. The project has provided opportunities to **more than 500 students and amateurs** in India to discover asteroids and Near-Earth Objects.

Under the project till now, **1636 NEO Observations, 61 NEO Confirmations, 1 comet confirmation 96 Preliminary discoveries and 18 Provisional (confirmed) discoveries, amongst which a "TROJAN", an extremely rare asteroid, was also discovered in 2011.**

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Dr. Patrick Miller, Director, IASC said, “Congratulations!! You are one step closer to having the asteroid numbered and placed into the world's official minor body catalog maintained by the International Astronomical Union (Paris)”.

The PROVISIONAL discoveries are the asteroids which receive confirmation by International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC) with time. Once the discoveries will be reconfirmed the students will get the chance to name the asteroids.

About AIASC:

AIASC is conducted in collaboration with International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC, Hardin-Simmons University, Texas, USA). SPACE is the coordinator for this highly recognized programme in India, where participants get exclusive access to images of the sky taken by 24” telescope and 32” telescope positioned in Astronomical Research Institute (ARI) Observatory, USA. They download and analyze the data with specialized software to search for asteroids, which could be potential discoveries. All observations contribute to the Near Earth Object (NEO) data compiled by NASA and Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL).

About SPACE

SPACE, the pioneer organization working towards the development of science and astronomy in India, is an ISO 9001:2000 certified company which has been changing the face of science and astronomy awareness, education and innovation in India through path-breaking concepts, services and programmes. SPACE, has not only successfully implemented astronomy and space science curriculum in Indian education system but has also been able to provide International platforms to Indian students where they distinctively contribute in scientific discoveries at a very early age. SPACE, constantly strives to use scientific and astronomical programmes to foster scientific temperament in society, especially among the youth who are the harbingers of India’s future.

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