

For Immediate Release

Date: September 14, 2015

Eureka! Here is the Asteroid!

2 Students have discovered an Asteroid in All India Asteroid Search Campaign conducted by SPACE

New Delhi: 2 students, Aakash H Nair and Saumya Agrawal from Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya, Rishabhdev District, Udaipur have discovered an Asteroid (2015 PZ9) in All India Asteroid Search Campaign 2015 (AIASC), conducted by SPACE in association with International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC) conducted by Dr. Patrick Miller of Hardin Simmons University, USA. The discovery has been formally announced by International Astronomical Union (IAU).

Mr Sachin Bahmba, Chairman & Managing Director, SPACE has marked the discoveries an achievement and said, "I hold the opportunity to congratulate our asteroid discoverers and observers on behalf of SPACE and wish them a bright and prosperous future. These achievements have added new feathers to the golden hat of AIASC and SPACE."

Ms Neeta Puri, Principal, Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya has extended her most reverential thanks from the unfathomable depth of her heart to SPACE for the wonderful work being done by all concerned regarding AIASC and said, "Needless to say, SPACE provided wings to two enthusiastic students, Aakash H Nair and Saumya Agrawal of our school to explore space. These two boys have been able to achieve the highest laurel in the shape of Provisional Discovery of an Asteroid (2015PZ9). The Scientifically fragrant guidance, motivation and information provided by SPACE will help these boys go a long way in the field of Space Science. VKV's association with SPACE will last till eternity."

SPACE- a pioneer organization working towards development of science and astronomy in India, is extremely proud to bring to your kind attention that Indian students have achieved **1 Provisional Discovery, 8 Preliminary Discoveries and 111 NEO (Near Earth Objects) Observations** under **AIASC 2015** conducted during **26 April to 11 August** this year. AIASC is an international science program to find asteroids conducted by SPACE in India every year in three phases lasting over 3 months. This is a major astronomical discovery by school children.

Under the guidance of SPACE, for the very first time, SPACE Chennai and SPACE Ludhiana have also organised the campaign for this year and brought the programme to those areas.

AIASC enables 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.

SPACE INDIA

Head Office: WZ-19, Asalatpur, A-3 Block, Janak Puri, New Delhi -110058

Ph.: +91-11-25522193, **Fax:** +91-11-25532193

Email: getintouch@space-india.com **Website:** www.space-india.com

In addition to the Provisional Discovery, which is a formal discovery there are also 8 preliminary discoveries which are still awaiting confirmation by independent observers.

The 8 Preliminary Discoveries are achieved by the following Indian students:

Delhi-NCR

Amaan Rastogi & Dhruv Mehta, Delhi Public School International, Saket; Anubhav Swamy & Anuj Gupta of Ryan International School, Sohna Road, Gurgaon; Manas Chawla & Merak Tandon of The Indian Heights School, Sector-23, Dwarka; Harshit Yadav & Ishaan Panda of Ryan International School, Pocket-8, Vasant Kunj (2 Discoveries); Vasu Swaroop & Anish Singh of Vivekanand School, D-Block, Anand Vihar.

Rajasthan (Udaipur)

Aakash H Nair & Saumya Agrawal of Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya, Udaipur (1 Discoveries)

Tamil Nadu (Chennai)

Jerix James & Giridhar Sundaram of St. John's International Residential School, Chennai

About AIASC

SPACE conducts this campaign in association with International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC) conducted by Dr. Patrick Miller of Hardin Simmons University, USA. Since 2010, SPACE organizes All India Asteroid Search Campaign in India (AIASC), in association with International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC pronounced "Isaac") an educational outreach programme.

SPACE is the only organisation in India which organizes this programme every year with Indian students and amateurs across India. The campaign is divided into 3 phases each lasting a month, so that each team (a team of 2 participants) gets sufficient time to work and discover asteroids. SPACE also supervises and coordinates this programme for the complete duration of 3 months.

In this programme images taken the night before with the 24", 30" and 32" telescopes at the Astronomical Research Institute (ARI) Observatory, located at Charleston, Illinois - 61920. Students make original 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). This programme enables 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.

Over the span of 5 years, SPACE provided this opportunity to more than 800 participants across India, which has resulted in several achievements and discoveries, and many for the first time in India by school children! Students and amateurs in India participating in this

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programme, make original discoveries of asteroids and other NEO observations by analysing this data with the help of software after the highly specialized and advanced training provided by SPACE.

SPACE has been conducting the Asteroid Search program in India from the past 5 yrs with more than 500 students in which **20 Provisional Discoveries (18 Provisional Discoveries & 2 Special Discoveries of 1 Trojan and 1 Virtual Impactor Object), 105 Preliminary Discoveries and 62 NEO Confirmations and 1747 NEO Observations** of known asteroids has been achieved by Indian students.

About SPACE

SPACE, the pioneer organization working towards the development of science and astronomy in India, is an ISO 9001:2000 certified organization and has been working towards cultivating 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 provided international platforms to students, where they distinctively contribute in scientific discoveries at a very early age.

We constantly strive to use scientific and astronomical programmes to foster scientific temperament in society, especially among the youth who are the harbingers of India's future.

Terminologies

Trojans are asteroids belonging to one of two groups that orbit the sun at the same distance as Jupiter, at the Lagrangian points roughly 60 degrees ahead of it and behind it. Trojans are harder to spot as they are further and fewer than Main Belt Asteroids.

Virtual Impactor Objects are asteroids whose paths are potentially deemed hazardous to Earth as they may impact it.

MBA are Main Belt Asteroids found in the Main Belt, located between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. These are the ones mostly discovered, as they are closer and there are many more of them

Preliminary Discoveries are the first observations of asteroids found in the Main Belt located between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter which need further confirmation to go to Provisional status.

Provisional Discoveries are discoveries of asteroids which have been confirmed by International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC). The students get the chance to name the asteroids after some years of observation

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NEO Confirmations is the second observation of Near-Earth Objects (NEO) confirming their existence and refining the calculations of their orbits.

NEO Observations is the third and fourth observations of known Near-Earth Objects (NEO) allowing in tracking asteroids and further refinements to their orbit calculations.

For further enquiries, kindly contact the undersigned:

Monica Sangwan
Assistant Manager-PR (Outreach)
SPACE
Mob: +9818867657

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