

## **IIT Hyderabad established its first astronomical observatory with a large telescope for public outreach, this August 15**

*The telescope due to its immense size will not only allow amateur astronomical observations including deep sky objects, planetary systems, stars, and nebulae but also provide research quality images with potential discoveries*

### **Highlights:**

- ***The 14-inch telescope is the second largest among IITs dedicated for the outreach***
- ***Large mirror size provides a detailed view of the night sky***
- ***Study of millions of faint and deep sky objects can be achieved with the telescope***
- ***Recorded images and data will be useful to support astronomical research***
- ***IITH will contribute significantly to the Indian astronomical community***

**Hyderabad, August 16, 2021:** As a first step towards starting astronomical activities as well as a student's training program, a large telescope facility has been established in the IITH campus. The telescope is equipped with a huge mirror with an optical diameter of 355 mm (second largest among IITs after IIT Kanpur) with a focal length of 1650 mm. Such a large mirror along with a Crayford focuser and elegant truss tube design will enable observation of the deep sky and faint objects which were never possible to detect with a small telescope. Small craters on the lunar surface, rings of Saturn are some of the small features that can be resolved with the telescope. An advanced digital camera will be used to record images and transient astronomical phenomena like meteor showers. Although the telescope would primarily aim for the outreach and night sky observational training programs, it has the capabilities of delivering research level performance which will be explored subsequently.

With this Telescope, IITH will be a part of the Indian astronomical community hosting a large telescope for an effective outreach with high-quality deliverance. The project is funded by Prof B S Murty, the Director, IIT Hyderabad, and managed by Dr Mayukh Pahari, Department of Physics. The facility was inaugurated by Padmashri and Padmabhushan, Dr B N Suresh, Chancellor and the Founding Director of the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram.

***Expressing his delight at the setting up this facility, Prof Murty added, "The enthusiasm and the curiosity of young students about objects in the sky are limitless. With this large telescope, we will provide them an opportunity to study celestial objects in greater detail than other small telescopes conventionally used for outreach programs. Activities like stargazing training programs, observing astronomical transients, working with celestial images will enhance their knowledge and add to their sense of human connection with space. We would also ensure that students from schools and various colleges in and around Hyderabad also get the advantage of this large telescope through various programs organized by the Astronomy Club of IITH."***

Due to its superior quality images, the data from the observatory may serve the national and international astronomical researchers by supplying supportive data. Such collaboration will provide a rare opportunity for the facility to become a part of the international observatory community so that IITH will be a part of major astronomical discoveries and become a recognized center for astronomy in India.



**Citing the importance of such facilities, Dr Mayukh Pahari, Assistant Professor, Department of Physics said,** “Unlike other observatories designed for the outreach program, our facility will provide a chance to work with high-quality astronomical images from deep sky objects as well as transient events so that school/ college students may have opportunities to contribute to the astronomical research.”

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**About IIT Hyderabad**

Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) is one of the eight new IITs established by the Government of India in 2008. In a short span of **12** years, the institute has become a top ranker and currently has **243** full-time faculty, **3,397** students (**20%** women), and nearly **200** state-of-the-art laboratories and five research and entrepreneurship centers. The institute has a strong research focus with more than Rs **575** crore of sanctioned research funding with PhD scholars accounting for about **30%** of total student strength. IITH has to its credit more than **6000** research publications, **195** patent disclosures, **1440** sponsored/consultancy projects, and about **50** startups.

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