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Space

Young Delhi boys discover asteroids

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Tags: Shubham Sharma , Mayank Sharma , DAV Centenary School , SPACE Director C B Devgun , Astrometrica , IASC



New Delhi: In what is being considered a rare feat by experts, four schoolboys from Delhi have discovered two asteroids.

Shubham Sharma and Mayank Sharma of DAV Centenary School, Paschim Vihar and young Astronomicans (amateur astronomer's wing of SPACE) Sahil Wadhwa and Akshay Gupta, who were part of two separate teams, have made two provisional discoveries of asteroids doing the

country proud, SPACE Director C B Devgun told PTI.

"This marks a rare achievement for SPACE and its associated educational institutes, as asteroids are hard to search for and needs dedication and continuous efforts. Provisional discoveries are the asteroids which have been confirmed by further observations," he said.

The teams used exclusive data to look at specific parts of the sky and by using a complex procedure called 'Astrometrica' they tracked objects by looking at the images of the sky provided by telescopes-based in the US to see which of the objects moving over time could be asteroid, he said.

The discoveries were made as part of the program All Indian Asteroid Search Camp conducted jointly between April and August this year by Science Popularisation Ass Communicators (SPACE) and International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC), Devgun said.

IASC Director Patrick Miller has congratulated the two school teams for achieving the rare feat.

Sahil Wadhwa had made provisional discoveries in 2010 and 2011 as well. About 75 schools/organisations had been selected from different parts of India, including Delhi and NCR, and other states to participate in the programme.

Asteroids sometimes called minor planets or planetoids are small Solar System bodies in orbit around the Sun, especially in the inner Solar System; they are smaller than planets but larger than meteoroids.

Congratulating the successful participants for their rare achievement, SPACE group CMD Sachin Bahmba said,

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"These children will eventually become the torch bearers of the scientific temper in the coming future."

IASC is an international educational outreach programme which includes Lawrence Hall of Science, Berkeley and Global Hands-on-Universe Association (USA) and other International organizations, which conduct programmes enabling students to be involved in hands-on, real time astronomy.

Using images taken of the sky in the night with the 24" and 32" telescopes at the Astronomical Research Institute (ARI) Observatory, USA, the programme gave students a chance to sift through data with specialized software to 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.

Near-Earth Objects (NEOs) are comets and asteroids that have been nudged by the gravitational attraction of nearby planets into orbits that allow them to enter the Earth's neighbourhood.

PTI

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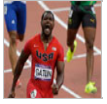



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