
Mohanbhai I. Patel (D.Sc.) Institute of Excellence in Astronomy and Astrophysics

The Indian Planetary Society (IPS), the nation's leading science research organization, has announced the launch of India's first world-class institute of Astronomy and Astrophysics. The institute has been set up in collaboration with Charotar University of Science and Technology (CHARUSAT) in Anand, Gujarat. The institute will be a first-of-its-kind with observatories for solar and stellar studies and will commence from August 2015.

The institute is built on the campus of CHARUSAT and is named Dr Mohanbhai I. Patel (D.Sc.) Institute of Excellence in Astronomy and Astrophysics. A group of world renowned astrophysicists and scientists will be on board as visiting faculties in addition to a brilliant core group of in-house teaching faculty. Also, each year the institute will invite Nobel laureates and scientists of international repute to interact and share knowledge and experiences with students, for a week.

The centre will offer courses for M Phil, Ph D and M Sc physics with specialization in Astronomy and Astrophysics. The education imparted to students

here will also incorporate courses in science of ancient India and its relevance with modern science. We also plan to educate students in Sanskrit and music. The aim of the management is to make this institute a centre of excellence in higher learning and strive to become the 'Taxasheela or Nalanda or Vikramasheela of modern India', says Dr J. J. Rawal, President, IPS.

The campus houses a world-class library, laboratories, audio-visual unit, photographic unit, conference hall and an auditorium. The campus will also have its own hostel and recreation facilities for students as well as the faculty. Most importantly, the institute will offer scholarship to students securing merit as they progress each year and also will provide financially disadvantaged but deserving students full scholarships for their entire academic career at the institute.

The year 2015 is the centenary year of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity and the birth centenary year of Sir Fred Hoyle. Both their works have been found to be the foundation of modern physics and cosmology. To commemorate and

to felicitate their contribution to science, the IPS in collaboration with CHAROTAR will organize an international conference, during 21–24 June, to pay tribute to their life's works.

The conference will cover topics on various aspects and applications of Einstein's theories, Life and work of Einstein and Life and work of Sir Fred Hoyle. It will also discuss the contribution of Indian scientists in all these fields including recent developments on black hole, worm holes, quasars, pulsar and so on. Eminent astrophysicists and cosmologists from across the world have been invited (including Elizabeth Butler, daughter of Fred Hoyle), to enlighten the young generation, students, teachers and researchers. There will also be an exhibition and a half-an-hour documentary film on recent developments in science. Members of the scientific community can participate in the conference by registering at www.ipsindia.org.

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