

Press Release
at the event
“Meet the ASTROSAT Astronomers”

Date : 29th september 2015

From : Astronomical Society of India (ASI)

Yesterday was a red letter day for astrophysics in India. ASTROSAT, which is India's first multi-wavelength space observatory, was placed in its intended orbit in a flawless launch by ISRO on the morning of 28th September. The Astronomical Society of India (ASI), the professional body of astronomers in the country, congratulates ISRO.

What is ASTROSAT

ASTROSAT carries five instruments that can observe in the visible, near and far ultraviolet as well as soft and hard x-rays. These novel instruments can detect every individual photon with incredible time accuracy. Using the simultaneous multi-wavelength capability of ASTROSAT, astronomers in India and the world over can now answer fundamental questions about the composition of matter at high densities in neutron stars, the environment close to black holes, the nature of transient sources, hot young star formation and many more.

The role of the ASI : public outreach and science education

The Astronomical Society of India (ASI) represents the professional astronomy community in the country and is tasked with the promotion of Astronomy and related sciences in India. ASTROSAT provides enormous potential for engaging the public with astronomy and enhancing science education in this country and this is something the ASI is eager about.

ASTROSAT not only represents the collective effort of many Indian astronomers and engineers to build a world class space observatory, it will also exemplify how cutting edge science can be done using data that can be made accessible to science students everywhere. Through its Public Outreach and Education Committee (POEC), the ASI plans to bring this excitement of ASTROSAT to Indian classrooms, which the ASI sees as its primary task.

Resource material produced by the ASI for the public

To aid this endeavour, the ASI, through its POEC, has been producing resource material about ASTROSAT for the public.

1. Posters : A set of posters aimed at high school students are being designed. The first poster, on the mission itself, will be released today. These posters will be available for free on our website and we will translate them into many Indian languages.

2. Frequently Asked Questions : A number of questions that students have been asking about ASTROSAT in the past are answered in simple language, and is available on our website. These are also being translated into many Indian languages by astronomers across the country.

3. Documentary : We are creating short films where ASTROSAT astronomers will talk about the instruments on board, the astrophysical questions and the usage of data by students. These films will be available online for everybody and the trailer is now released on our website.

4. Student programmes : We are also hosting information on social media. Many astronomy institutes and planetaria in India, especially ISRO, are involved in outreach efforts about ASTROSAT and the ASI is actively collaborating with them as well. The ASTROSAT scientists are also keenly interested in promoting the usage of their data by students and teachers in the country and we hope to help make this possible.

The resource material listed above are hosted at <http://astron-soc.in/outreach/resources/astrosat/>

“Meet the ASTROSAT Astronomers”

To start this process, the ASI is organising three press events today simultaneously in Bengaluru, Mumbai and Pune where media can interact with the astronomers in these cities working on ASTROSAT.

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Bengaluru event: Hosted at Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium

Panelists :

- Dr. Annapurni Subramaniam (Indian Institute of Astrophysics)
- Dr. Firoza Sutaria (Indian Institute of Astrophysics)
- Dr. C.S. Stalin (Indian Institute of Astrophysics)
- Dr. Koshy George (Indian Institute of Astrophysics)
- Dr. Rekshesh Mohan (Indian Institute of Astrophysics)
- Dr. Shylaja (Director, Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium and member of POEC ASI)
- Dr. Dipankar Banerjee (Indian Institute of Astrophysics and Secretary of Astronomical Society of India)

Pune event: Hosted at Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics

Panelists :

- Prof. Dipankar Bhattacharya (IUCAA)
- Prof. Swarna K. Ghosh (Centre Director, National Centre for Radio Astrophysics NCRA-TIFR)
- Dr. Ranjeev Misra (IUCAA)
- Dr. Gulab Dewangan (IUCAA)
- Dr. Varun Bhalerao (IUCAA)
- Prof. Ajit Kembhavi (IUCAA and President of Astronomical Society of India)

Mumbai event: Hosted at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

Panelists :

- Prof. K. P. Singh (TIFR and Payload Manager of SXT in ASTROSAT)
- Prof. J. S. Yadav (TIFR and Payload Manager of LAXPC in ASTROSAT)
- Prof. H. M. Antia (TIFR)
- Prof. Sandeep Trivedi (Director, TIFR)
- Dr. Sudip Bhattacharyya (TIFR)
- Prof. P.C. Agarwal (Centre for Excellence in Basic Sciences)
- Dr. Arvind Paranjpye (Director, Nehru Planetarium and member of POEC ASI)