

November – December 2008  
Sri Lanka Astronomical Association

### **Report 3 IYA2009-Sri Lanka**

#### **\*November**

- 1) National Astronomy Meeting (NAM) 2008
- 2) Royal College Astronomical Society - Annual Workshop

#### **\*December**

- 3) Prof. Jayant Narlikar visit.

### **National Astronomy Meeting (NAM) 2008**

The first "National Astronomy Meeting (NAM) 2008 was held on 29<sup>th</sup> Saturday, November 2008.

#### Attendees:

Prof. Kavan Ratnatunga – Sri Lanka Astronomical Association  
Rev. Dr. Marvyn Fernando – Astronomy & Space Study Center  
Prof. Michael Snowden – IAU  
Mr. Tharaka Gamage – Science Writer (SciTech Publishing)  
Mr. Thilina Heenatigala – Sri Lanka Astronomical Association  
Mr. Yohan Ferreira – Space Generation Advisory Council  
Mrs. K.P.K. Korlagama – Colombo Planetarium  
Mr. Nalaka Abeysekara – Colombo Planetarium

Teachers, invited school students and Press officials.

Date: 29th Saturday, November 2008

Time: 2:00pm – 6:00pm

Venue: Auditorium of Sri Lanka Association of Advancement of Science, Colombo

#### Program:

Welcome - Rev. Dr. Marvyn Fernando  
What is IYA2009/Sri Lanka involvement in IYA 2009 - Prof. Kavan Ratnatunga  
Planned programs for IYA2009 - Mr. Thilina Heenatigala  
Network of school astronomical societies - Mr. Thilina Heenatigala  
"Astronomy with Small telescopes" - Prof. Michael Snowden  
Discussion: School involvement

#### Summary:

The first National Astronomy Meeting 2008 was hosted and organized by Sri Lanka Astronomical Association.

The NAM08 focused on "Sri Lanka's views on International Year of Astronomy 2009 and school based astronomy education". The Meeting was launched with a speech given by Rev. Dr. Marvyn Fernando about the "Importance of IYA2009" concluded with an open invitation to everyone. This was followed by an "Introduction to IYA2009" by the IYA2009 – Sri Lanka Node Spoc – Prof. Kavan Ratnatunga.

Mr. Thilina Heenatigala addressed the audience by introducing the IYA2009 – Sri Lanka Node Committee and the planned program. He also gave a speech on the importance of participation of school based astronomical societies.

After two hours of the meeting, a break was given which gave the opportunity to interact with each other. The next item after the meeting was an important lecture by Prof. Michael Snowden on “Astronomy with Small telescopes” – which addressed some really important issues.

The meeting concluded a success where people remained chatting with each other for a while even after it officially concluded.

---

### **Royal College Astronomical Society - Annual Workshop 2009**

The Royal College Astronomical Society (RCAS) has been conducting their annual workshop since 2001. Each workshop concentrated on a theme. This year theme was “Life in the Universe”

#### Attendees:

Prof. Kavan Ratnatunga – Guest of Honor  
Mr. Thilina Heenatigala – Sri Lanka Astronomical Association  
Mr. Lasith Prasanna – Astronomy & Space Study Center  
Mr. Yohan Ferreira – Space Generation Advisory Council

Teachers, invited school students and Press officials.

Date: November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008

Time: 2:00pm onwards

Venue: Navarangahala, Royal College. Colombo 07

#### Program:

Welcome Speech – “IYA2009” by Prof. Kavan Ratnatunga.  
Presentation – “Life in the Universe”  
Activity – Jupiter Antenna

#### Summary:

This years’ annual RCAS workshop themed as “Life in the Universe”. The workshop was attended by students and teachers from all parts of the country and also some former RCAS officials.

The workshop kicked off with an introduction to IYA2009 by Prof. Kavan Ratnatunga. It was followed by a presentation on “Life in the Universe” – which was a video lecture by Prof. Alex Filippenko.

The main highlight of the workshop was building an antenna to listen to Jupiter. The students were divided into 15 groups and were given instructions and materials to build the antenna. Few of the antenna were connected to a radio and students tried to listen to the signals from Jupiter.

The workshop had a participation of 250.

---

**Prof. Jayant Narlikar visit**

Prof Narlikar was deputed to Sri Lanka by the International Astronomical Union under the auspices of its Commission 46 Programme Group for World Wide Development of Astronomy (PGWWDA). He visited Sri Lanka from 30 November to 08 December 2008. The purpose of this trip was to assess the ambience of astronomy in Sri Lanka's academic community and to inform them about the benefits of joining the IAU.

He visited the following places;  
Ministry of Science & Technology  
University of Colombo  
Colombo Planetarium  
Arthur C Clarke Center  
University of Moratuwa  
Institute of Fundamental Studies

A full report on his visit was published on "International Astronomical Union" C46 Newsletter 70 – March 2009 edition.

Please view it at <http://physics.open.ac.uk/~bwjones/IAU46/pdf/IAUNL70.pdf>

---

Thilina Heenatigala  
National Node Secretary  
IYA2009 – Sri Lanka  
<http://aalk.lakdiva.net>

Sri Lanka IYA2009 National Node website  
<http://iya2009.lakdiva.net/>

Astronomical Association of Lanka  
<http://aalk.lakdiva.net>

International Year of Astronomy 2009  
<http://www.astronomy2009.org>

International Astronomical Union  
<http://www.iau.org>

=====  
Contact Details

Mr. Thilina Heenatigala.  
National Node Secretary  
Secretary  
IYA2009-Sri Lanka

- e. thilina.heenatigala@yahoo.com
- m. (+94)-71-624-5545
- w. <http://thilinaheenatigala.blogspot.com>
- a. 27, Stalmaj H. S., Athurugiriya 10150, Sri Lanka.

=====