

2009 September - October
Sri Lanka Astronomical Association

Report 8 IYA2009-Sri Lanka

***September**

- 1) Observational Astronomy Workshop – Piliyandala Central College
- 2) The 365 Days of Astronomy Podcast - SkyLK
- 3) Star Party2009 – Ananda College & Mahamaya College

***October**

- 4) Apollo 11 Moon Rock Display
- 5) SF competition – Royal College Astronomical Society
- 6) Night camp – Mathematical & Astronomical Society of University of Colombo
- 7) 3rd International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics, Teheran, Iran
- 8) Beyond the Sky III – Night camp at Kaduwela
- 9) Astronomy Workshop – Galle Southlands College

Observational Astronomy Workshop – Piliyandala Central College.

11th September 2009

The Astronomical Society of Piliyandala Central College organized an observational workshop for its members and invited schools. The program focused on basic observations to, moon, deep sky and constellation drawing.

The program kicked off with a lecture by Dr. Rohan Munasinghe of Moratuwa University, on the current astronomical development worldwide. The lecture gave a complete idea on what is astronomy nowadays. The lecture was followed by a talk on "Why study Astronomy" by the chief guest of the event, Rev. Dr. Marvyn Fernando of Subodhi Institute.

After the two initial lectures, the program followed with some entertainment, and a lecture on basic observational astronomy. Later on the students got the opportunity to observe moon, and few deep sky objects.

All together there were about 100 students from 6 different schools at the workshop.

The 365 Days of Astronomy Podcast – SkyLK

365 Days Of Astronomy is an educational podcast, inspired by the International Year of Astronomy, that will publish one podcast per day, for all 365 days of 2009. The podcast episodes are written, recorded and produced by people all around the world.

IYA2009 Sri Lanka Node also requested two podcasts. The first one was done by the SkyLK team. It was done under the theme of "Gravitational Lensing".

You can listen to the episode at:

<http://365daysofastronomy.org/2009/09/03/september-3rd-quiet-skies/>

SkyLK:

<http://skylk.com/>

Star Party2009 – Ananda College & Mahamaya College

Commenced in 2004, "Star Party" is an observational astronomy competition where students groups from different parts of Sri Lanka compete together. It's organized by the astronomical societies of Ananda College, Colombo and Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy. Since then it has been held annually and has gain reputation as an Observation Competition and Astronomy Workshop over the years.

For the 6th consecutive time "Star Party 2009 - Rendezvous of Celestial Surveillance" concluded successfully 26th of September, giving an unforgettable celestial experience to students, teachers, amateur observers and organizers as well.

A special report on StarParty2009 can be viewed at <http://iya2009.lakdiva.net>

Apollo 11 Moon Rock Display

The National Museum of Natural History of Sri Lanka was established on September 23, 1986, now completes 23 years. A special exhibition titled "**Moonstones and mineral resources in Sri Lanka**" was held to coincide with the 23rd anniversary.

These moonstones were gifted by former USA President Richard Nixon. The exhibition held through 23.09.2009 to 07.10.2009 many schools students and public came to witness the historical moonstones.

At this exhibition, moonstones and related important photographs were on display. Exhibiting of Sri Lanka Ministerial Resources is the other part of this exhibition. The schoolchildren and the public got a wide understanding about our resources through those gems, graphite, mineral sands, mica, silica, sand sulphur, clay and limestones found in Sri Lanka.

Read a full report with pics at:

<http://thilinaheenatigala.blogspot.com/2009/10/moon-rocks-from-apollo-11-mission.html>

SF competition – Royal College Astronomical Society

Under the International Year of Astronomy 2009 programs, the **Royal College Astronomical Society** organized an all island science fiction competition for school students.

Categories

Grades 6-8 "**I met an alien**"

Grades 9-11 "**Moon Colonization**"

Grades 12 – 13 "**Evolution of life in our solar system**"

Please visit the link for more info:

<http://thilinaheenatigala.blogspot.com/2009/10/royal-college-astronomical-society-sci.html>

Night camp – Mathematical & Astronomical Society of University of Colombo

Mathematical & Astronomical Society of University of Colombo (MAS) organized a night camp for their members. The program was warmly welcomed by the newcomers to the society.

Evening kicked off with an observational astronomy lecture which followed by observation sessions.

<http://www.uocmas.info/>

3rd International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics, Teheran, Iran

Last July the 3rd National Astronomy & Astrophysics Olympiad in Sri Lanka was held and 5 students were selected for the team representing Sri Lanka on "3rd International Astronomy & Astrophysics Olympiad which held on Teheran, Iran this month.

One of the team members, Yasith Mathangasinghe, was awarded a special prize for "The Most Creative Solution in Theory". He has produced the most creative solution in the entire competition, in a method that International Olympiad committee has not expected previously. The prize for "The most creative solution" is a precious one, regarding any kind of an International Science Olympiad in the world.

Team members:

Eranga Thilina Jayashantha

Ashan Ariyawansa

Yasith Mathangasinghe

Shyaminda Bandara Basnayake

Danula Sochiruwan Godagama

<http://ioaa2009.ir/>

Beyond the Sky III – Night camp at Kaduwela

30th September

"Beyond the Sky" is a series of night camps conducted by Royal College Astronomical Society. The third consecutive event of the series was held in Kaduwela Bombiriya Kumaratunga Munidasa Vidyalaya.

The program kicked off with a lecture on observational astronomy which followed by session on Basic Astronomy. Giving a new experience to the students, a special session was held via the World Wide Telescope. A presentation via WWT was projected to screen. It was a more like a trip around the universe. Students were very keen on the session as it was a new experience for them.

After a small break, the students were introduced to the Star Map and the proceeded to the school ground to catch the beauty of the night sky. First they were taken across the sky introducing constellations and how to identify them using the Star Map. The observation session was followed by moon observations via two telescopes.

More into the night, the program included an entertainment session by the students which was followed by a fun astronomy activity, which was conducted as a competition between the girls and boys.

The last session of the program included a Lander Activity and a group session. The program concluded successfully giving all the participants an unforgettable experience.

Program:

Introduction to observational astronomy
Session on Basic Astronomy
An interactive session via World Wide Telescope
Group session – How to use the star chart
Observation session on constellation and moon
Competition – recognizing the celestial object
Group session – students asks questions
Activity – Lander

Conductors:

Mr. Thishan Pavithra
Mr. Haritha Wickramasinghe
Mr. Sohan Gunaratne
Mr. Sameera Samarasinghe,
Mr. Dishan Anupama

Astronomy Workshop – Galle Southlands College

31st September

Astronomical Society of Galle Southlands College organized their annual workshop. This year workshop focused on hands-on activities such as Space Shuttle, International Space Station, Moon Colony and Discovery Shuttle.

The program kicked off with a talk given by the chief guest – Prof. Kavan Ratnatunga. He highlighted the importance of the upcoming Annular Solar Eclipse and elaborated the science behind it.

The second part was the program was hands-on activity, where all the members of the society and the students from the invited schools gathered in to four groups are started building a model of a Space Shuttle, Moon Colony, International Space Station and a small scale model of the Colombia Space Shuttle.

The ISS and the Moon Colony came out as the best model of all.

Program:

Talk on Solar Eclipse 2010 – Prof. Kavan Ratnatunga
Activity – Model making

Chief Guest: Prof. Kavan Ratnatunga.

Conductors:

Mr. Thilina Heenatigala
Mr. Pulasthi Kanaththage
Ms. Monika Madhavi
Mr. Thishan Pavithra
Mr. Thanura Hashantha
Mr. Prasanna Deshapriya
Mr. Buddhika Priyasad
Mr. Lasitha Senaratne

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.

=====