

Tenth planet to TE be called (BAN) 'Kalki'

BANGALORE, August 9 (PTI): Indian astronomers scanning the skies to discover the mysterious tenth planet that space scientists believe exists in the solar system, plan to call it "Kalki".

The project named as in Hindu mythology "Kalki" is supposed to be the next of Lord Vishnu's incarnation which suggests the steps of evolution of life on earth, according to Dr R. Rajamohan, of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) here.

The planet is believed to be responsible for the mass extinction of biological species on earth that occurred millions of years ago. The planet's orbital precession (shifting of the plane of the orbit while revolving around the sun) is supposed to have disturbed a comet cloud leading to a shower of fiery debris some of which struck the earth.

Dr Rajamohan said there were several "indications" of the tenth planet's existence including the unexplained variations in the orbits of Uranus and Neptune, believed to be caused by the gravitational force of a planet beyond Pluto.

Dr Rajamohan said the entire sky up to the 16th magnitude (an object 10,000 times more faint than the faintest object visible to the naked eye) had been searched in earlier surveys but the tenth planet had not been found. The Pioneer and other interplanetary probes had found nothing to prove that it existed. If it did exist, it was likely to be fainter than the 17th magnitude, he said.