

# New Satellite of Uranus Discovered

BANGALORE, March 17.—The Indian Institute of Astrophysics has discovered a new satellite of planet uranus. The discovery, according to a press release by the Press Information Bureau, was made on March 10 by Dr. Bhattacharya and Mr. Kuppuswamy of the Institute while working at their Kavalur observatory in the North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu.

Disclosing this the Director of the Institute, Dr. M. K. V. Bappu, said it was a matter of importance to the astronomical fraternity to become aware of a hitherto unknown satellite in the solar system. Of the 13 satellites discovered during the 20th century two were discovered in England and France, and the remaining ten found by the United States. "It is a matter of considerable pride to us, to be able now to add the name of India to this very limited group of countries."

Dr. Bhattacharya who made the discovery along with Mr. Kuppuswamy, said on March 10 there was an expected occultation of a faint star by the planet uranus that was being observed from their Kavalur observatory. While

looking for this occultation event, "we found a sharp and unexpected diminution in the light of the star for about nine seconds." This occurred in the vicinity of the planet uranus and hence it was immediately suspected that one of the uranus satellites might have occulted the star, he said. But subsequent calculations showed that none of the currently known satellites were likely to have been in that particular position at that time. They, therefore, concluded that only a hitherto unknown satellite of uranus, with an orbit closer to the planet than any of the known ones, could have occulted the light of the star.

The two scientists estimate the diameter of this satellite to be about 30 km. and point out it is a faint body not likely to be photographed by even the biggest telescope in the world. It is most likely to be detected by future space missions when they reach the vicinity of uranus.

Hitherto the discovery of this faint object has been made by only foreign scientists using big telescopes. The Indian scientists have made this discovery using a medium-size telescope it is stated. —BOSR.

Hindu 18<sup>th</sup> March 1979