

With an eye on the sky

IIA will be working with ISRO in developing ASTROSAT

This year has been particularly significant for the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, a premier institute devoted to research in astronomy and astrophysics.

Year 2009 was declared the 'International Year of Astronomy' to celebrate the 400 years since Galileo first used the optical telescope, considered to be the beginning of modern astronomy.

Besides various outreach programmes and activities aimed at "bringing the importance and excitement of doing astronomy to the common people", IIA has been collaborating with institutes in India and around the world on a range of projects.

At home, IIA will be working with the Indian Space Research Organisation to develop ASTROSAT, India's first dedicated as-

tronomy mission and another satellite, Aditya-1, to study the solar corona.

IIA's history goes back to 1786 when an observatory was set up in Chennai by an officer of the East India Company.

William Petrie hoped "to provide navigational assistance to the company ships and help determine the longitudes by observing the eclipses of the Moon and satellites of the Jupiter." The observatory moved in 1899 to Kodaikanal and later became an autonomous society, the Indian Institute of Astrophysics. It was in 1975 that the headquarters was shifted to Bangalore.

Cutting-edge research

Now, with its observing facilities (at Kodaikanal, Kavalur, Gauribidanur and Hanle), laboratories (physics, electronics, photonics and mechanical laboratories), extensive library and computer centre, IIA is at the cutting-edge of research in astronomy and astrophysics.



The 93-inch telescope, Asia's biggest, set up at the Kavalur observatory of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics.

The first observatory was established in 1786

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