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## Asteroid named after Indian astrophysicist Jayant Murthy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** Bengaluru's Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) said Friday that International Astronomical Union (IAU) has named an asteroid after renowned Indian astrophysicist Jayant Murthy in recognition of his pioneering work in ultraviolet astronomy and space missions. The asteroid, previously known as "2005 EX296", has now been designated "(215884) Jayant-murthy" by IAU's Working Group on Small Bodies Nomenclature. It orbits the Sun between Mars and Jupiter, completing one revolution every 3.3 years.

Murthy, who retired from IIA in 2021 and continues as an honorary professor, expressed delight. "I am thrilled to



**HONOURED:** Jayant Murthy

have an asteroid named after me in connection with my work on the NASA New Horizons Science Team to observe ultraviolet background radiation in the universe," he said.

The naming recognises Murthy's contributions to the New Horizons mission, which studied Pluto in unprecedented detail during its flyby in 2015 and has since ventured deeper into the Kuiper Belt, IIA said.

His research focuses on

measuring the cosmic ultraviolet background, a task best accomplished from the outer Solar System where interference from the Sun and interplanetary medium is minimised.

Annapurni Subramaniam, director, IIA, termed the asteroid naming "a very rare honour". Murthy joins the ranks of previous IIA directors MK Vainu Bappu and JC Bhattacharyya, who also have asteroids named after them.

Joice Mathew, a former student of Murthy's currently at Mt Stromlo Observatory in Australia, echoed the praise. "This recognition is undoubtedly well-deserved," Mathew said, adding everyone familiar with Murthy must be "thrilled to know there's now a 'Jayant-murthy' up in the sky".