

Cosmology centre to come up in Mysuru

COSMOS will host India's first planetarium with Digistar 7 system and a Domex Screen

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Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday unveiled the foundation stone for the Cosmology Education and Research Training Centre called "COSMOS", featuring a high-tech planetarium, on the University of Mysore's Sri Jayachamaraja Wadiyar campus.

The COSMOS, which hosts India's first planetarium with Digistar 7 system and a Domex Screen, is scheduled for completion by March 2023 at a cost of ₹81 crore with funding from Ms. Sitharaman's MPLAD funds and support from Department of Science and Technology, Department of Atomic Energy, and Department of Space, among others.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Sitharaman said the Cosmology Centre will not only feature a planetarium from where "one can watch the



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiling the foundation stone for Cosmology Education and Research Training Centre on Jayachamaraja Wadiyar campus of University of Mysore in Mysuru on Sunday. ■ M.A. SRIRAM

beautiful midnight skies of Ladakh real-time", but also train young minds to use astrophysics related data gathered from different observatories and telescopes in the country for other applications and useful purposes.

Ms. Sitharaman said there was no better place than Mysuru to set up COSMOS and thanked the University of Mysore for offering land for

the project. Mysuru has carved a place for itself in the field of education and learning by producing a number of writers, artistes and creative geniuses, she said while hoping that COSMOS will similarly inspire a lot of young minds.

Annapurni Subramanian, Director of Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IAA), Bengaluru, which is managing the

project along with University of Mysore, said the state-of-the-art planetarium coming up as part of COSMOS will be the first of its kind in the country to have a DOMEX LED dome with technically advanced displays that "will give a real feel of the night skies".

K. Vijayraghavan, principal scientific advisor to the Government of India, said

the planetarium will also be able to source live data from telescopes all over India as well as archival data. Astrophysics related data has its applications even in fields of transport, health, agriculture and finance.

Vice-Chancellor of University of Mysore Hemantha Kumar said: "This unique real-time planetarium with playback engine will make an extremely powerful tool for education and training of students as well as teachers."

A comprehensive education and public outreach programme will be an integral part of COSMOS project, he said adding that regular teaching programmes for schools and college students will be organised. "There will be training on processing astronomical data, coding, hands-on experience along with systematic documentation of astronomy," he said.