

Official Newsletter

3

Astrolabe

3rd International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics

Oct. 20, 2009 Tehran-Iran



3rd IOAA Is Now Official

TODAY'S PROGRAM

STUDENTS

The-Theory Exam (Poorya-ye Valli Hall)
Science Show (Camp amphitheater)

TEAM LEADERS

Visit to the Sa'daabaad Palace Museum
Visit to the Museum of Contemporary Arts
Visit to the Carpet Museum of Iran

3rd
IOAA
International Olympiad on
Astronomy and Astrophysics
Tehran, Iran, Oct. 17-26, 2009



►► *Stargate*

The Milky Way emerges in the sky as darkness arrives over a bizarre natural wonder of Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf. Constellations Aquila, Lyra, and a part of Cygnus are visible in this part of the Summer Milky Way. The dark dust band of our galactic disc blocks the light of numerous stars along the central line of the Milky Way.

In the words of the photographer "it was a scene of Star Wars... like being in another planet. Although the sound of a creeping snake reminded me of where I was standing! During this one-minute long photographic exposure with my digital SLR camera and a fish-eye lens I illuminated the walls with blue and red flash lights. It was like a gate opening to the stars. The valley, called Chaah-Kooh (the Well-Mountain), is so narrow that its giant walls (reaching to a height of 50 meters) are only a few meters apart. It was created by tectonic activities but carved by water and airflow over time. In fact inside its high narrow walls one can imagine how the sky might look like for future astronauts exploring the surface cracks of Jupiter's icy satellite Europa or Saturn's Enceladus!"

Photo by Babak A. Tafreshi
www.twanight.org/tafreshi

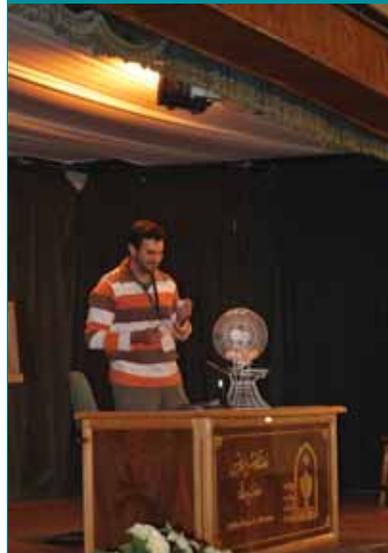
►► *Sunday with the Olympians*

3 PM: All the teams taking part in the 3rd IOAA, assemble in the northern part of the camp and take turns to sing their national anthems.

4 PM: The contestants get to familiarize themselves with the observation tools to be used in the observation exam. The markers of this exam are present to answer any questions the students may have. Those who wish to work with the equipment are allowed to do so for a few minutes.

5 PM: After the Astronomy Show, the students are divided into separate groups for the observation exam. The placement of contestants in each group is decided by drawing lots.

7 PM: The 3rd International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics is inaugurated in Tehran. The participants from 20 countries from different corners of the globe take part in the ceremonies which commences with the welcome speeches by Mohsen Djamali, the head of the Young Scholars Club, and, Seyyed Ramezan Mohsenpour, the acting Minister of Education. The participants then watch a short film about the history of Iran, and listen to Persian traditional music. Dr. Velayati, the foreign state adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran who is also a science historian, delivers a speech about the history of Iranian and Islamic astronomy. Babak Amin-Tafreshi then conducts a slideshow, displaying various cultural and historical features of Iran under the night sky. The participating teams are introduced on the stage to the applause of the people present at the event. Halfway through the program, a video clip about the history of astronomy in Iran narrated by Dr. Mir-Fakhraayi, the accomplished Iranian director and producer of scientific programs for the Iranian radio and television, elicits a great deal of enthusiasm and admiration among the audience.



SAY CHEEEEEEESE!!



Photo: M. J. Torabi

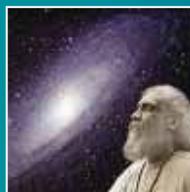
800 CE

Muhammad ibn-e Djaaber ibn-e Sanaan al-Bataani discovered the eccentricity of Sun's orbit. From a modern viewpoint, this corresponds to the fact that the Earth's orbit around the Sun is an ellipse.



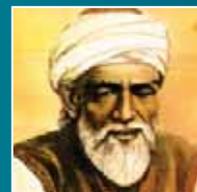
903 CE

Soofi Razi was born in Ray, he was the first person to record the Andromeda galaxy, and the Great Magellanic Cloud as non-stellar objects.



970 CE

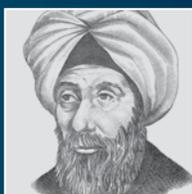
The Iranian scientist, Abu-al-Wafaa Boozdjaani, laid the foundation of trigonometry which is of great importance in facilitating astronomical calculations.





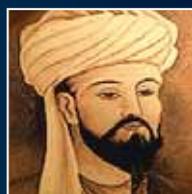
1021 CE

Ibn-e Haytham (Alhazen) combines astronomical mathematics and physics for the first time. He is the founder of optics.



1259 CE

Khaadjeh Naasir-al-Din Tusi, directed the building of the Maraagheh Observatory, created the Ilkhanid astronomical table, and devised the method known as the Tusi pair of circles to resolve the problems of the Ptolemaic planetary model.



1582 CE

Pope, Gregory the 13th, introduced his calendar which is the official calendar of the Western world and is the second most accurate calendar after the Iranian Djalaali calendar.



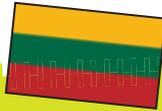
Q: How do you select the students that represent your country in IOAA?



India:
In the first stage, we hold an exam with about 15000 participants. From these, 300 are selected who take part in a second exam. The top 30 students are then taken to a camp since astronomy is not taught as a separate subject in Indian high schools. These students are trained for 30 days and there are several exams during these 3 weeks. Based on the grades in these exams 5 students are selected for our team.

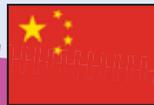
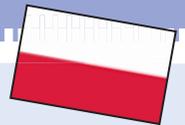


Thailand:
In Thailand we hold two Olympiads during the year. For the first one, we hold a camp in October with 350 students chosen from among all the students in the country. The second camp held in March with 200 students chosen from among the 350. Another exam is taken and 16 students are selected for the final stage. In the end 6 of them are chosen to participate in IOAA.



Lithuania:
We first hold a competition on the Internet and select a number of students based on this exam. Then there is a final exam where we select the final team.

Poland:
Our selection process involves 3 stages; at each stage a test is taken, and at the end of the process, 5 students are selected.



China:
Exams are held in 14 cities with about 2400 participants. From among these students 150 students are selected for the next stage. A final exam is held for this group and based on the results, 15 students are selected to take part in a camp. These 15 students will then be trained to take part in three Olympiads: International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA), International Astronomy Olympiad (IAO), and the Asian-Pacific Astronomy Olympiad (APAO).



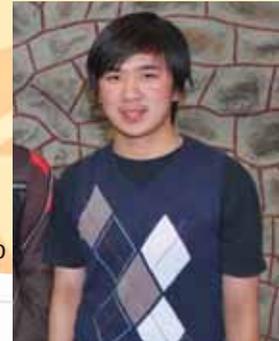
ri Lanka:
Basnayake Mudiyansele Shyaminda Bandara **Basnayake**

We as Srilankans we are really happy to be in Iran. As an asian people we have great friendship and we can continue our friendship forever.

Thank you.

Shyaminda
SRI LANKA.

A message for You From ...



Indonesia:
Stevanus Kristianto Nugroho

"Iran is a wonderful country, thank's a lot to everyone especially to our team guide. God Bless You!"

"_1_1" (Stevanus Kristianto N. Indonesia)



Iran is great, we wish IOAA wasn't so short!

Brazil: Leonardo Stedile



"Sawasdee" Nice to meet all of you.

Thailand: Thanawuth Thanathibodee Thailand



'Aynbowan' great time see you!

s.a.m Ashan (Sri Lanka)

Sri Lanka:
Galabada Dewage Ashan Ariyawansa



Photo of the Day

Painting the Moon

A painter appears to draw the Earth's shadow on the Moon during the partial lunar eclipse of September 2007 in France. This innovative photo was difficult to capture because of the Moon's rapid motion as it set. The paint brush had to be held precisely by the "painter" and the photo had to be taken very quickly.

(Laurent Laveder)



IYA2009 Projects in 209 Words Cosmic Diary

The Cosmic Diary is not just about astronomy, but more about what it is like to be an astronomer.

The Cosmic Diary aims to put a human face on astronomy: professional scientists will blog in text and images about their lives, families, friends, hobbies and interests, as well as their work, their latest research findings and the challenges that face them. The bloggers represent a vibrant cross-section of female and male working astronomers from around the world, coming from five different continents. Outside the observatories, labs, and offices they are musicians, mothers, photographers, athletes, amateur astronomers. At work, they are managers, observers, graduate students, grant proposers, instrument builders, and data analysts.

60+ professional scientists from 28+ countries are blogging in text and images about their lives as well as their work. To date, there are over 1000 individual blog posts which have attracted more than 55000 unique visitors. This Cornerstone project has already made waves in the scientific community.

Throughout the year, a number of bloggers will explain their special fields of expertise to the public by writing popular science articles. These describe cutting-edge scientific research to a wide audience, giving people unprecedented access to those at the forefront of scientific discoveries.

Check this astronomical Blog now on: www.cosmicdiary.org

(www.sheisanastronomer.org)



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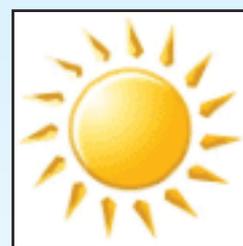
Weather Forecast for Tehran

TODAY

Clear to partly cloudy

High: 21 °C

Low: 12 °C

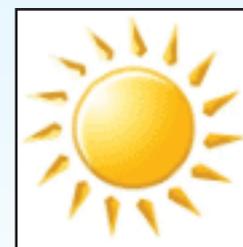


TOMORROW

Clear

High: 19 °C

Low: 12 °C



(Forecast by AccuWeather)

Front Page:

Official Inauguration of 3rd IOAA:

The ceremonies were held in northern Tehran (see page 3 for a short report).

Photo:
Oshin Zakarian

