Catch a falling star

Nasa’s Explorer scans cosmos, posts spectacular photos on the net

Los Angeles: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) has released a trove of data from its sky-mapping mission, allowing scientists and anyone with access to the internet to peruse millions of galaxies, stars, asteroids and other hard-to-see objects.

Many of the targets in the celestial catalog released online this week have been previously observed, but there are significant new discoveries. The mission’s finds include more than 33,000 new asteroids floating between Mars and Jupiter and 20 comets.

Nasa launched the Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer, which carried an infrared telescope, in December 2009 to scan the cosmos in finer detail than previous missions. The spacecraft, known as WISE, mapped the sky once and a half times during its 14-month mission, snapping more than two million images from its polar orbit.

The spacecraft’s ability to detect heat glow helps it find dusty, cold and distant objects that are often invisible to regular telescopes. The batch of images made available represents a little over half of what’s been observed in the survey. The full cosmic census is scheduled for release next spring.

“The spectacular new data just released remind us that we have many new neighbours,” said Pete Schultz, a space scientist at Brown University.

University of Alabama astrophysicist William Keel already started mining the database for quasars – compact, bright objects powered by super-massive black holes. “If I see a galaxy with highly ionized gas clouds in its outskirts and no infrared evidence of a hidden quasar, that’s a sign that the quasar has essentially shut down in the last 30,000 to 50,000 years,” Keel said.

WISE ran out of coolant in October, making it unable to chill its heat-sensitive instruments and observe faraway objects. It spent the next four months seeking out near-Earth asteroids and comets that should help scientists better calculate whether any are potentially threatening. The spacecraft went into hibernation in February.

The mission, managed by NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, was hundreds of times more sensitive than its predecessor, the Infrared Astronomical Satellite, which launched in 1983 and made the first all-sky map in infrared wavelength.

Galaxies on the Net

Data from NASA’s sky-mapping telescope released

Associated Press Los Angeles, April 16

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NASA launched the Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer, which carried an infrared telescope, in December 2009 to scan the cosmos in finer detail than previous missions. The spacecraft, known as WISE, mapped the sky once and a half times during its 14-month mission, snapping more than 2.5 million images from its polar orbit. The spacecraft’s ability to detect heat glow helps it find dusty, cold and distant objects that are often invisible to regular telescopes.

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Why intake of salt raises your blood pressure

Scientists have found that salt intake makes it harder for the body to juggle BP regulation and temperature simultaneously. A team led by Robert Blankfield at Case Western Reserve University and Ellen Glickman at Kent State found that salt and water ingestion lowered body temperature more than just ingestion of water. Body temperature also decreased more in individuals who are salt resistant than those who are salt sensitive. “Salt sensitive individuals maintain temperature equilibrium more effectively but this also increased their BP,” Blankfield says.

IIM-Ranchi to start parallel MBA courses

SVAI GANJ

INDIAN Institute of Management-Ranchi (IIM-R) will begin parallel MBA courses, with a focus on specialisation in data analytics, human resource management and banking and finance management from June, 2012.

IIM-R is eighth in the now 59-year-old history of Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).

The courses, according to IIM-R director M J Xavier would serve two basic aims. First, these would aid in bringing diversity to the campus, where at present, an overwhelming majority of the students are male engineers. Second, it would help IIM-R establish a niche for itself as a management institute and carve out an identity within the larger IIM system.

“I have stated earlier as well, that I am not going to try and force diversity in the campus. If the majority of the students who make the cut are male engineers, so be it. The parallel courses will deal with issues of diversity within the campus, while helping in the creation of courses that are relevant given the changing context,” Xavier said.

The much coveted IIMs across the country currently offer a standard post graduate diploma in business management (PGDBM). The institutes had recently come under attack from critics who argue the system is exclusionary in nature and is largely skewed in favour of candidates with an engineering background.

Xavier, however, feels the need at present is for the IIM system to remodel itself in keeping with the demands of the times, and offer various courses which would be more inclusive of diversity, rather than trying to force diversity within the present PGDBM programme.

“In keeping with the demands for management students across the world, it is important that IIMs remodel and adapt. These courses will be a stepping stone in that direction,” he explained. Also, this would mean that at IIM-R, which is being mentored by IIM-Calcutta in its first year of operation, would not increase the student strength in the PGDBM programme beyond 60 students.

IIM-R would also implement the concept of smart classrooms, a scheme under which, at a cost of Rs 10 lakh, the institute will connect IIM-Tiruchirapalli, Raipur and Rohtak.

Technologically, heightened classrooms would connect students across the four institutes giving students across IIMs the advantage of interacting with high-profile visiting faculty.
Narlikar declines to be part of UGC search panel

It has been set up to identify a chairperson for the Commission

Aarti Dhar

NEW DELHI: The search committee, set up by the Human Resource Development Ministry for identifying a chairperson for the University Grants Commission (UGC), has been unable to meet as one of the experts approached by the Ministry has declined the offer.

Informed sources told The Hindu that astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar has declined to be part of the committee due to "preoccupation." However, the three others approached by the Ministry — Madhava Menon and Goverdhan Mehta (both academicians) and Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) — have agreed to be members of the committee which is expected to be notified soon.

The Ministry initiated the process of looking for a chairperson after its hopes of an early establishment of the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) remained unfulfilled with the Bill awaiting Cabinet clearance.

The Bill envisages creation of NCHER, an overarching regulatory body that would subsume all existing regulatory bodies, including the UGC and the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

The charge of the UGC at present is with its Vice-Chairperson Professor Ved Prakash as per the UGC Act, 1956.

The Ministry delayed the search process after Professor Sukhadeo Thorat’s term ended in February as it intended to introduce the NCHER Bill, 2011 in Parliament during the Budget session, but could not do so because of the ongoing turf war between the HRD Ministry and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on the jurisdiction of medical education.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry will soon issue an ordinance to extend the term of the Board of Governors of the Medical Council of India, which was created after the MCI general council was superseded following the arrest of its former president, Ketan Desai, on charges of corruption.

The MCI was superseded through an act of Parliament only for a year on the hope that the Ministry would be able to create a National Commission for Human Resource in Health — a regulatory body that would bring under its purview all councils related to health — by then. However, this too has not happened as the bill to this effect is yet to get a Cabinet clearance.
WHAT THE # @%&!

WHY IS INDIA SO BUGGIED ABOUT SUPERGENE NEW DELHI METALLO-1 ?

Despite the patriotic arguments, Indian experts agree that it is important to focus on India’s usable drinking water which is contaminated with sewage in many parts of the country. There’s also a need for a document on an antibiotic policy.

copy the needs so many times that the haystack of these turns into a haystack of needles. We then seized the DNA that was amplified and it had an identical sequence to NDM-1. We also looked inside the factories to find where the gene actually occurred. A combination of these three methods gives a very powerful proof of presence.”

The fact in India seems convincing. Dr Chaudhuri, chairperson of the department of microbiology at Delhi’s Guru Angad Dev Hospital, admits that NDM-1 is not rare on the streets. “It is a hospital born infection, not a street borne infection. It’s an infection that can be acquired in SCUs by high-risk patients.”

Indian experts also think there is a link between NDM-1’s prevalence and antibiotic use in India. “You have to know between the lines. Tobacco is known to be a problem in India. There’s also a need for a document on an antibiotic policy.”

Going Global

December 2008: The bug is named for New Delhi after a Swedish national colony in India. There is little data.

from India to suggest how widespread it is.

May 2009: A man in India who had been treated in a Swiss hospital is found to be carrying the bug.

June 2010: There are three reported cases of superbug infection. All three died.

August 2010: A medical team reports three cases of superbug infection from the intensive care unit of a hospital in Chennai.

September 2010: India’s first superbug case in a man in his 50s who has just returned from vacation in India and is now hospitalised with a holiday.
For providing personal home tuitions to difficult wards to training bright children to crack competitive examinations like ITT-JEE, the coaching industry is emerging as an alternative education system.