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IUB unveils Bangladesh's first Deep-sky imaging telescopes

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Muhammed Zafar Iqbal gives speech at the unveiling program of the first ever state-of-the-art deep-sky imaging telescopes at a program at the university auditorium in Dhaka on Thursday. -- Press release photo

Independent University, Bangladesh has unveiled the first ever state-of-the-art deep-sky imaging telescopes at a program at the university auditorium in Dhaka on Thursday.

IUB received two Unistellar Equinox Telescopes as a gift from the Dunlap Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics of University of Toronto, Canada, as part of the latter's global outreach program.

Renowned writer and physicist Muhammed Zafar Iqbal officially unveiled the telescopes and inaugurated the 'Durbin' project as the chief guest.

At the program, Lamiya Mowla, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Dunlap Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics and an astronomer working on the James Webb Space Telescope, delivered a special public talk on 'Ancient star clusters through James Webb Space Telescope'.

The talk was followed by an open question-answer session between Mowla and the audience, which comprised several hundred students from different schools, colleges and universities.

The telescopes will be part of the Astronomy Lab under the Department of Physical Sciences of IUB. The images taken by them will be used by IUB students, especially the researchers at the Center for Computational and Data Sciences.

Muhammed Zafar Iqbal said, 'Young men and women often ask me what they would have to do if they want to become an astronomer. I am extremely happy to know that IUB has taken this initiative to teach astronomy at the university level. I know IUB is developing a very good physics department here.'

Lamiya Mowla said, 'Special thanks to IUB and the Dunlap Institute for giving us the opportunity and space to open up deep space for students and astronomy enthusiasts of Bangladesh. I hope that we will be able to continue this collaboration in the future as well.'

IUB vice chancellor Tanweer Hasan said, 'IUB was the first university in Bangladesh to introduce observational astronomy research in 2020. This project is a major milestone in that effort. Creating new knowledge is one of the most important roles of a university. But it is also crucial for a university to impart that knowledge among not just its students, but spread it beyond classrooms. That is why, as part of IUB's community engagement strategy, the Durbin project will be open for every one interested in astronomy.'

Under the Durbin project, which is a joint outreach and education program of IUB and U of T, as many as 16 'citizen astronomers', at least 40 percent of whom are women as stipulated in the agreement, have been selected for getting trained in imaging with the telescopes and, later, lead the public outreach events organized for school and university students around the country.

In addition, IUB is already offering the unique but popular PHY 100 course for students without a math background. As part of this course, students will be doing projects on imaging using telescopes, which will also be used in other courses within the School of Engineering, Technology and Sciences.



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