



PRESS RELEASE

IIT Mandi Students Undertake Innovative Club Activities and Community Outreach Initiatives

IIT Mandi organised AstraX'19, TRAILS'19 and a cleanliness drive from 30th - 31st March 2019

MANDI, 4th April 2019: Indian Institute of Technology Mandi hosted AstraX'19 and TRAILS'19 events and organised a cleanliness drive as a part of its initiatives to provide students a platform to enrich themselves with varied experiences. IIT Mandi has many clubs for students that make learning an enjoyable experience and also offer the opportunity to compete with similar clubs at other institutes.

The Space Technology and Astronomy Cell of IIT Mandi organised a two day, inter - college Astro-meet event, **AstraX'19**, which featured a panel of national and international speakers, on 30th and 31st March 2019.

The event also hosted Dr. Chandra Kanth Mishra, IIT Madras faculty, and Indian Contributor to the Nobel Prize 2017 winning paper (Observation of Gravitational Waves from a Binary Black Hole Merger).

The event provided an opportunity for students to seek first-hand knowledge of Scientific Collaborations of Gravitational Wave Detector Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) LIGO India, Astronomical Society of India, European Space Agency and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), as well.

Talking about the AstraX'19 event, Dr. Arnav Bhavsar, Faculty advisor, Space Technology and Astronomy Cell and Assistant Professor, School of Computing and Electrical Engineering, IIT Mandi, said, "Organizing AstraX 2019 was a stellar achievement of the Space Technology and Astronomy Club (STAC) at IIT Mandi. Activities from STAC student members are now gaining visibility at national and international level. Such consistent and enthusiastic efforts from the students are enabling them to invite prominent scientists and researchers, and to organize a major event like AstraX. I am confident that the STAC will keep expanding further in various avenues such as observational and radio astronomy as well as applications of data science to astronomy and astrophysics, an upcoming field. We thank IIT Mandi for their continued support and encouragement to the club, which is enabling the students to follow their passions in astronomy and space technology".

The key speakers in this event were:

Dr. Chandra Kanth Mishra, Assistant Professor, IIT Madras, along with a member of LIGO India, delivered a lecture on, 'Black holes and Neutron stars'.

Dr. Redouane Boumghar, Data Scientist, European Space Agency and AI and Robotics Mentor, NASA Frontier Development laboratory, delivered a lecture on 'How machine learning on spacecraft operations supports the acquisition of good scientific data'.

Dr. Nandivada Rathnasree, Director, Nehru Planetarium, Delhi, delivered a lecture on 'Astronomy data visualisations in planetarium domes/ software and Jantar Mantar observations.

Mr. Juan Luis Cano Rodriguez, Aerospace Engineer, Satellogic and Python Professor, Instituto Empresa and Barcelona Technology School, delivered a lecture on 'Open source in the space industry, open source communities, the importance on open science.'

These lectures were helpful for students who are keen to pursue a career in Gravitational Physics.

In addition to these lectures, there were several competitive events that saw active participation from other colleges including IIT Roorkee, IISER Mohali, PEC and many more. Another important aspect of the event was the workshop on Satellite Technology and Space Communication by Space Development Nexus that provided the participants with an exposure to the science behind satellite missions.

Mountain Biking Event – TRAILS' 19

The Mountain Biking club of IIT Mandi organised a two-day mountain biking event, **TRAILS'19**, with the support from the Institute on 30th and 31st March 2019. This open challenge event included a 5 km race for beginners, 20 km race for intermediate riders and 48 km race for the experts. As many as 40 students and staff members of IIT Mandi participated in the event.

Keeping in mind the safety of the riders during this adventurous competition, special arrangements of a trailing vehicle with first aid kit and a mechanic were made. Also, live locations of all the competitors were mapped during the race for their additional safety. In making the competition a success, many volunteers informed the incoming traffic about the riders for their safety.

IIT Mandi Cleanliness Drive

Under the National Service Scheme (NSS) of the Government of India, 45 1st Year B. Tech students of IIT Mandi carried out a cleanliness drive at Panchvaktra Temple and Shiva Bawdi in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, under the supervision of Dr. Sumit Sinha Ray, Co-advisor of NSS - IIT Mandi and Assistant Professor, School of Engineering, IIT Mandi and Mr. Prateek Pathania, Office Assistant, NSS - IIT Mandi, with the assistance from the Municipal Corporation Mandi.

Talking about the cleanliness drive, Dr. Sumit Sinha Ray, Co-advisor of NSS - IIT Mandi and Assistant Professor, School of Engineering, IIT Mandi, said, "This cleanliness drive is a part of our endeavour to make our neighbourhood and Mandi free from plastic waste. I am proud of my students who I know will carry forward this mission even in the future."

Mr. B.R. Negi, Executive Officer and Mr. Pradeep Dixit, Sanitation Inspector of Municipal Corporation Mandi were also present at the location during the cleanliness drive. This cleanliness drive was jointly funded by Veer Mandal, Khatri Sabha Youth Wing and Vyapar Sabha.



Captions for the photographs attached:

Photo 1 - AstraX'19 - (L to R) Dr. Chandra Kanth Mishra of IIT Madras receiving a token of gratitude from Dr. Hitesh Shrimali of IIT Mandi

Photo 2 - Student participants of IIT Mandi during TRAILS'19 event

Photo 3 - Student volunteers, B.Tech 1st year, IIT Mandi during cleanliness drive initiated by NSS - IIT Mandi

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About IIT Mandi (<http://www.iitmandi.ac.in/>)

IIT Mandi is fast emerging as a leader in science and technology education, knowledge creation and innovation. Since the first batch of 97 students joined in July 2009, IIT Mandi has grown to host 1,300 students including 274 PhD, 46 MS and 17 I-Ph.D. research scholars, besides 110 Faculty and 150 staff. The Institute has a growing body of alumni, nearly 850 in number.

The Institute aims to grow to 5,000 B.Tech, M.Tech/M.Sc. and M.S./Ph.D. by 2029. With 1.5 lakh sq.m. currently under construction, IIT Mandi has a fully residential campus, in Kamand, with all students and 95 percent of the faculty residing within it now.

Since 2010, IIT Mandi's faculty has bagged nearly 180 projects worth more than Rs. 85 crore. The campus houses a notable number of laboratories and facilities. The Advanced Materials Research Centre (AMRC) was created in 2013 with an investment of about Rs. 50 crore and houses advanced instruments for characterization of materials with scope for drug delivery, electrical, electronics and biological applications. It has contributed to more than 200 research publications. The Institute also hosts the 'Class 100 Clean Room' facility, a world-class research center that is first-of-its-kind in India. In 2017, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, selected IIT Mandi to lead the prestigious Rs. 10 crore FarmerZone Project.

The Institute has an Interdisciplinary Academic Culture which is design-oriented. The unique, project-oriented B.Tech curriculum is centred on its 4-year long Design and Innovation stream. It is poised to become the first IIT to offer a B.Tech in Data Science & Engineering. Backed by a strong humanities component, IIT Mandi has brought globally state-of-the-art science and technologies to and consciously served the Kamand Valley, Himachal and the Himalayan region. There are many active MoUs with TU9 in Germany since May 2011. Students from the Worcester Polytechnic Institute, U.S., have been visiting IIT Mandi every year since 2013.

Launched in 2016, IIT Mandi's Catalyst is the first Technology Business Incubator in Himachal Pradesh. EWOK (Enabling Women of Kamand Valley) is another innovative program run by IIT Mandi, which focuses on imparting Skills training to village-scale businesses by village women.

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