

SKYWATCHING PROGRAMME

Event: The Great Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn

Organised by Dept. of Physics, Bankura Christian College

December 19-21, 2020



Details of the event:

Planets involved: Jupiter, Saturn

Time: Dec. 21st, 2020 at around 23:50 IST (climax)

Separation: 0.1° / 6.1 arcminute (at climax)

Location: South-West sky

Constellation: Capricornus

Visibility: Visible with bare eyes

Rarity of particular event: Extremely rare

First observed: July 16, 1623

Next occurrence: October 31st, 2040 after 17:00 IST

Helpful apps to track: Sky View, Star Walk 2

Watch out the clear sky between now and December 21 and see how the two giant planets are getting closer to each other as they head towards a "great conjunction". Jupiter and Saturn pass each other about once every 20 years, becomes closer after almost 400 years which is now taking place at night occur after about 800 years, which makes this event extra special and extremely rare.

In 1610, Galileo Galilei discovered Jupiter's four massive moons (natural satellites) Io, Europa, Ganymede, Callisto (later known as Galilean moons among 79) and also the Rings of Saturn. Just after 13 years, in 1623, Jupiter was observed to cross the path of Saturn and the event was named as a "Great Conjunction".

On the night of December 21, which also happens to be the winter solstice day (the longest night) of 2020 in the northern hemisphere, Jupiter will cross the orbit of Saturn just like it did in 1623 so close that sky watchers can enjoy the conjunction with their bare eyes!

Interested students / Individuals may visit our observatory (Mitchell Observatory) at 04:30 p.m. on 21.12.2020.

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