

Galilean Nights Event ID: gn168

Number of telescopes: 20

Number of organisers: 35

Number of attendees: 500

Event photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/44644712@N07/>

Event Report:

For the 6th consecutive time "Star Party 2009 - Rendezvous of Celestial Surveillance" concluded successfully 26th of September, giving an unforgettable celestial experience to students, teachers, amateur observers and organizers as well.

Star Party 2009 project was named as the main IYA2009-Sri Lanka event and had a massive participation with more than 50 groups competing with each other. One of the key highlighted facts was the live web streaming, which continued throughout the program via the <http://www.StarParty2009.com> and <http://www.SkyLK.com> websites with 255 unique viewers.

The program kicked off with delivering a message across the importance & significance of International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009).

Along with the competition, a workshop was held as well. The workshop focused on the beginner level students. It covered basics of observational astronomy and mainly ran as training for the beginners to be able to compete next year. About 100 students participated in the workshop along with teachers. The students were divided into 5 groups and were introduced the basics of all aspects of astronomy-observational, cosmology, stars, black holes and extraterrestrial to new technology. At the observing site, they were taken a tour across the night starry skies introducing many celestial objects and constellations, including Jupiter – the mighty object observed by Galileo 400 years ago. It was an unforgettable moment for most students as it was the first time they were experiencing the beauty of the Universe where they have been living for so long.

While workshop was running, in other side of the event site, many student groups were busy catching the glimpse of Jupiter, Moon, Constellations and other celestial objects. The observation site; Kandy, is one of the nicest places to observe in Sri Lanka, it's less polluted and with fresh air-to-breath in, treats you with countless stars.

The competition also included two paper based exams covering topics like, Solar Observation, General Astronomy, Astrophysics, Cosmology, and Rocketry. Everything concluded next day (26th) morning with the distribution of the awards.

De Mazenod College, Kandana won the competition as Champions.
Sangamitta College, Galle became the runners-up.

Other Awards

Theoretical Round & Spot Test : Dharmaraja College, Kandy
Solar & Observational Astronomy : Royal College, Colombo
Constellation & Deep Sky Observation: Sangamitta College, Galle
Moon Mapping : De Mazenod College, Kandana
Planetary Observation : De Mazenod College, Kandana

This year event gathered an international attention thanks to support and dedication of few people. It was featured in Cosmic Diary, IYA2009, Cloudy Nights Telescopic Review, Portal to the Universe, Sidewalk Astronomers, and in many other web sites, forums and email listing.

Clearly Star Party has become the foremost biggest annual event among astronomy community in Sri Lanka. It has influenced many student groups to go far as to study and sharpen their observation skills months before the competition. Not only this is a competition, while experiencing the celestial beauty, but this is also an event that gathers all the keen future possible astronomers and a place to meet old friends.