

Training to scientists in gravitational astronomy

BENGALURU, DHNS: The International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS) in Hesaraghatta intends to train scientists in gravitational astronomy so that when the LIGO gravitational wave detector, proposed to be set up in India, is ready, there will be a community of researchers who can use the facility.

The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) came into the public eye when two such existing observatories in the US detected gravitational waves, confirming a 100-year-old theory by Albert Einstein.

Several researchers from ICTS were even involved in the large-scale international collaboration, which resulted in the discovery, which eventually won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 2017.

P Ajith, one of the faculty at ICTS, said: "While building the facility itself is a challenge, we also need to develop a community that will be able to use this data to do science." Towards this effort, ICTS has been organising annual summer programmes since 2013 for graduate students to learn about gravitational astronomy.

'Science programmes in Bengaluru attract a lot of attention and interest from the public'

Speaking at a press conference to highlight the achievements of the institute, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary, Rajesh Gopakumar, centre's director, said that science programmes in Bengaluru attract a lot of attention and interest from the public.

Spenta Wadia, founder director of the institute, said a request to the state government, asking for more land to create new facilities, was still pending.

"We need an additional five acres for more hostels and other infrastructure. We requested for it about three to four years ago and there was a recommendation from the Department of IT, BT, but there has been no progress on that," he said.

As part of its 'ICTS at ten' programmes, several public events have been planned, including a lecture at the centre by Nobel Prize for Physics 2017 winner, Prof Kip Thorne from Caltech, US, on January 11.