

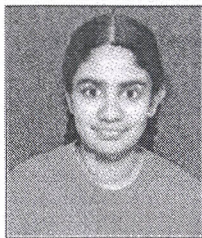
Minor planet named after city girl

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: City girl Hamsa Padmanabhan is on top of the world. A minor planet, code number 21575, will now be named 'Hamsa' after her. The celestial honour for the second-year B.Sc student of Fergusson College has been bestowed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Lincoln lab for her presentation at the Intel international science and engineering fair (ISEF) in 2006.

Hamsa is among six Indian students who have got planets named after them since 2006. The others are Debarghya Sarkar, Anish Mukherjee, Hetal Vaishnav, Vishnu Jayaprakash and Rishin Behl, a statement issued by the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (Iucaa) here said.

The top two performers at ISEF every year are feted by the MIT by naming a planet after them. The ISEF is the world's largest pre-college science fair that attracts over 1,500 young scientists from across the globe.



Hamsa Padmanabhan is a second-year B.Sc student of Fergusson College.

Minor planets or planetoids are asteroids, which are small solar system bodies in orbit around the Sun, especially in the inner solar system. They are smaller than planets but larger than meteoroids.

Hamsa won the second prize at ISEF in 2006 which was held in Indianapolis, US. She submitted a project, 'Physics of a simple prototype for static magnetic levitation'.

It is not the first time that Hamsa, who wants to be a physicist, had won an award. In 2004, she won the gold medal at the prestigious all-India test for ninth standard students, conducted by Educational Initiatives, an organisation started by IIM-Ahmedabad alumni to bring about qualitative improvement in school education.

The MIT Lab has discovered more than 200,000 asteroids so far, and has the right to name them. On July 4, 2002, Vishnu Reddy became the first Indian amateur astronomer to discover an asteroid. He named the asteroid 'Bharat'. It was 78,118th asteroid to be discovered.