

WATCH

Dec. 26-Jan. 1, 2011

Very 'happening' New Year day in store

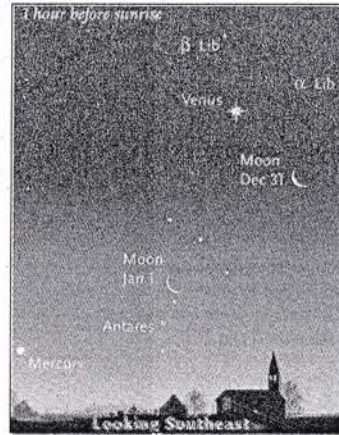


We are into the last week of 2010. Let's remember some of the unforgettable moments of this year. Indians observed annular solar eclipse on January 15, PuneKars observed 94 per cent partial eclipse. As the next such eclipse will happen in 2019, most PuneKars grabbed this opportunity. On January 29 we observed Mars approach closest to the Earth. On February 16, sky-watchers attempted to catch Jupiter-Venus conjunction just after sunset. March was the best time to view Saturn as it was at opposition.

In mid February, Jupiter lost its south equatorial belt. The belt was missing for almost ten months, and this month it started re-forming. For almost last two years, Saturn rings were "edge on", now it has started opening up and

now one can see about 10 degree opened rings.

During 2010, two good comets - McNaught and Hartley 2 - showed their presence in the sky. In November, sky-watchers waited for Leonid meteor shower, but this year it disappointed us. Most reliable Geminid Meteor shower showed some bright meteors even from light polluted Pune city. Last two weeks it was the time to see crescent Venus as next 500 days we are going to miss this phase of the planet. As moon is rising late night, lets try to see two famous enclosure asterisms lie upper right of Jupiter this week. The small dim Cirlet of Pisces and farther on, the big, brighter Great Square of Pegasus. And look for bright Fomalhaut below Jupiter. Orion rises in east around sunset and brightest star of the sky, Sirius, is rising up on south-east hori-



zon around 7 pm. This is the star which was used by Egyptians to calculate the length of the day for their calendar equations.

By December 28 the moon will be in the morning sky accompanying Saturn, Spica and Venus. Venus is gaining height through this

SATELLITE SHOW

■ On December 28, PuneKars can observe -7 magnitude bright Iridium flare by Iridium 90 satellite. This flare will be seen in the south sky at 27 degree above horizon. On south horizon look for Achenar and Fomalhaut, the flare will be seen between these two bright stars at 7.08 pm.

On December 31 Hubble Space Telescope (HST) will fly over Pune in the morning. At 5.49 am it will be seen in the gateway of heaven, and it will move on ecliptic passing close to Saturn then to Venus and will go bellow horizon near Mercury at 5.57 am. At 5.53 am it will be very close to Venus.

week and next too. Same time Venus is waxing its phase, by end of this week phase of Venus will be more than 45 per cent. New year morning will be really happening. Bright Venus, Crescent Moon, Antares and Mercury will be up in the sky to welcome first morning of year 2011.

— ANIRUDDHA DESHPANDE & DEEPAK JOSHI
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ALL ABOUT CALENDAR

■ To know how calendar is created and different calendars used around world, attend public lecture arranged by Jyotirvidya Parisansta on Sunday, December 26, at 6.30 pm in Tilak Smarak Mandir Basement Hall.