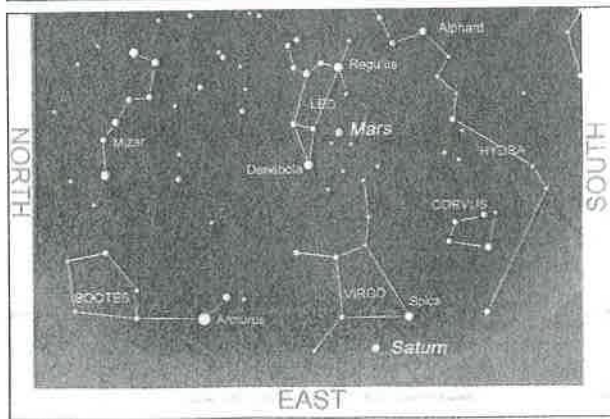
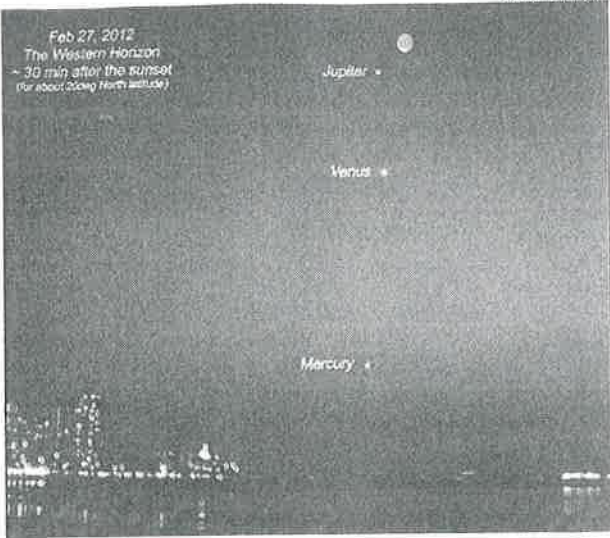


# Countdown to celestial show begins today

Arvind Paranjpye



TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Pune:** The countdown to one of the most interesting celestial phenomena will begin Wednesday when five planets, visible to the naked eye, will be seen on a single night.

Starting with the crescent of the moon on Thursday, the first of the five planets - Venus - can be seen on Saturday after sunset followed by Jupiter, Mercury, Mars and Saturn in the following days.

February 27 will be the best time for astronomy lovers to watch all of them on one night.

Director of Nehru planetarium Arvind Paranjpye said, "Starting February 23, over the next 20 days or so it would be possible for one to see all the five planets visible to the naked eyes in one

On the night of February 27, all planets will be seen one after another. The moon will be a bit above and to north of Jupiter. Mars is in Leo constellation and rises about an hour after the sunset, above the eastern horizon. It can be identified by its reddish hue. It can be seen all through the night. Saturn follows it after two hours, said Arvind Paranjpye, director of Nehru Planetarium

night. But the important period would be the first 10 days. The moon can be used as an indicator to spot the planets."

On Wednesday, sky watchers will be able to see a thin crescent of the moon just above the western horizon. Then on the next day, February 23, the moon with its crescent phase will be seen just above Mercury.

Then as the crescent moon climbs above the hori-

zon it first passes close to Venus on February 25 and then it is a bit above Jupiter on February 28.

On Thursday, the crescent moon will be close to Mercury to its north. This would be a good chance for one to spot Mercury, as it will be a bit below and to the left of the crescent moon.

Once you have spotted Mercury, mark its position. Though its position will change as the time moves on, the general direction will remain more or less the same, Paranjpye added.

On February 24, the moon will be between Mercury and Venus and on the following day, the moon is below and to the right of Venus (see graphic).

On February 26, the moon will be between Jupiter and Venus while on the night of February 27, all planets will be seen one after another. Paranjpye said, "The moon will be a bit above and to north of Jupiter. Mars is in Leo constellation and rises about an hour after the sunset, above the eastern horizon. It can be identified by its reddish hue. It will be seen all most all through the night. Saturn follows it after

two hours."

To study this astronomical phenomenon with the help of experts, the Akashmitra, an amateur astronomers' club in the city, has organised an event on February 26, at the planetarium of New English School on Tilak Road.

The event will start at 6.30 pm. A large telescope will be used to show the position of planets. The event will be free and open to all.