



Partnership

A Stargazing Event

Dickson LAU

Comet ISON (C/2012 S1) was one of the most publicized astronomical events for stargazers in 2013. In view of this, the Observatory and the Hong Kong Space Museum met in mid 2013 to discuss ways to conduct a series of joint comet observation activities.

On 25 November, a few days before the perihelion of the comet, an Observatory's stargazing team went to Cape D'Augilar with an 8" Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope and a 4" refractive telescope to prepare for the observation (Figure 1). On arrival, the sky was still clear and all team members were excited about the prospect of seeing a spectacular comet before dawn. However, soon after the telescopes were set up, easterly winds picked up with low clouds forming gradually. The number of observable stars in the sky became less and less, and ultimately there was not a single chance for even a glimpse of the comet.

Reaching perihelion on 28 November, Comet ISON disintegrated under the intense heat of the Sun and left behind only a trail of debris. An image of the comet was captured by the telescope of the Hong Kong Space Museum earlier in mid November (Figure 2). While the Observatory's stargazing team could not quite see the comet, they were nonetheless rewarded with some amazing astronomical photos of Orion Nebula(M42), Big Dipper and Jupiter with two of its satellites after the telescopes were set up at Cape D'Augilar.

Figure 2: Comet ISON (taken on 18 November 2013 by the Hong Kong Space Museum).



Figure 1: The Observatory's stargazing team (from left: Mr Dickson LAU, Mr CHEE Shiu-Chung and Mr CHAN Wing-Hang) used an 8" Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope for the observation at Cape D'Augilar.

HKO and SCHSA in Reminder to be Prepared for the Impact of Cold Spell

LEE Tsz-cheung

The Observatory and the Senior Citizen Home Safety Association (SCHSA) jointly held a press conference on 13 December to remind the public to be prepared for an upcoming cold spell. In particular, members of the public were encouraged to show their care to elderly people at home or in the neighbourhood, and to provide timely assistance to them when necessary.

