

Through the looking glass

Mercury transited the Sun for the first time since 2006. The transit or passage of a planet across the face of the Sun is a relatively rare occurrence. As seen from Earth, only transits of Mercury and Venus are possible. There are approximately 13 transits of Mercury in a century.

The start of the celestial event is the first contact between the disks of the Sun and Mercury and is also known as the Ingress Exterior. First contact occurred at approximately 16:30 Indian Standard Time. The exact time varied with location. It took a little more than three minutes for the entire disk of Mercury to appear over the bright solar disk. The second contact is also known as the Ingress Interior. India witnessed only the initial part of the transit. The Sun set before the completion of the seven hour event. The duration of visibility was longer towards the western parts of the country, where the Sagar school is located, as the Sun sets later.



The Sagar School will broadcast the celestial event over the internet and provide visual observation of the rare transit using large telescopes and safe solar filters. The duration of visibility of the transit is approximately two hours and 10 minutes before the Sun sets. The school is located in Rajasthan known for clear skies in May and so we expect to see the event clearly. The 14inch permanently mounted celestron telescope at the School observa-

tory is capable of capturing the event in great detail. The observatory has all facilities required to webcast the event over the internet such as imagers, accessories like camera, solar filter and high speed internet the entire event will be managed by the students of the Astronomy Club.

Friends and associates of the school, experts in the field, students and staff of other institutions and the media both electronic as well as print are expected to view this event.