

Chennai to witness Venus transit today

Astronomers and common people are eagerly waiting for the grand spectacle of Venus crossing directly between the sun and earth on Wednesday. The event can be seen through telescopes and goggles with filters. It is said that the Venus transit helped astronomers calculate the astronomical unit (AU), the distance between the sun and earth accurately before there were modern equipment. "The Venus transit is equivalent to an eclipse. But due to the lesser diameter of Venus, the sun will not be hid by the planet. A small moving dot will be seen on the sun disc during the transit period. In India, we can see the transit from sunrise till 10.50 am," said astronomer Mr Balu Saravanan Sarma of Tambaram Astronomical Association. While Venus transit observations have been planned at various places in the city including Birla Planetarium, Elliot's Beach and Tambaram Tank, the Tamil Nadu Science and Technology Centre (TNSTC) has planned some experimental concepts for students to create awareness about celestial activities. "We will ask students to mark the diameter of Venus and sun every two minutes and later ask them to calculate the distance between the sun and earth," said TNSTC executive director Dr P. Iyamperumal. Astrologically too the event gains a lot of importance especially after the 2004 tsunami. "The last transit of Venus took place on June 8, 2004 and we saw some mass destruction during that year. Depending on the alignment, a particular region of earth will face problems due to this transit," said scientific astrologer Mr S. Ramachandran. However, he added that the Venus transit would be beneficial for India as the country's horoscope was in a favourable position. AstroVed.com director Ms Maya Benkovich said the Venus transit would usher in new respect for women. "It is best to pray to Goddess Lakshmi," she said, adding that it would be good for people to get out of their houses and meet people, attend a network of business function and not go on spiritual retreat.

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