

Witnessing the rare event “Venus Transit” from Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad on 06 June 2012

The historic transit of the planet Venus across the disc of the Sun unfolded at about 3:40 hrs today (6th June 2012). The spectacular event was visible from sunrise up to 10:23 hrs across India. Arrangements were made for public viewing of this event at Thaltej Campus of Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad. A couple of telescopes and required support systems were installed in the campus. Several posters explaining the facts behind the scientific event and related explanations were displayed for the public. A large number of enthusiastic visitors, beginning from the kids of a few years of age who barely understand our solar system to senior people who do not want to miss the opportunity to see the event kept on coming till the event got over. Astronomers and volunteers tried to explain the various queries on Venus transit and the long periodicity associated with it. A few of the photographs showing the transit of Venus across the disc of the Sun at different epochs are given below in Figure 1. The prominent and moving big black spot in the figures represents the planet Venus transiting across the disc of the Sun where as the other relatively static fainter black spots are the Sunspots.

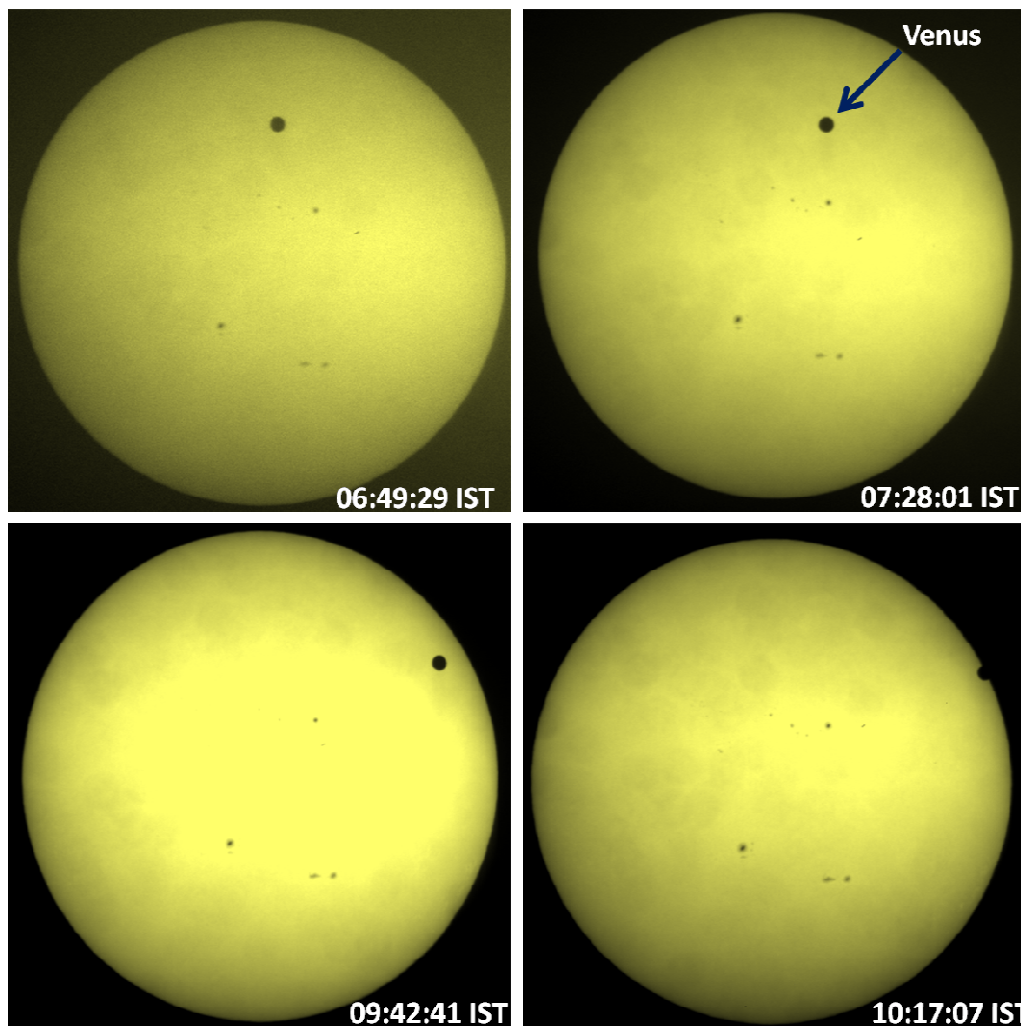


Figure 1: The sequence of photographs of Venus Transit captured by Solar Flare Telescope at Thaltej campus of Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad.

A total about 8000 images of Venus transit have been obtained using the 100 mm refracting solar flare telescope shown below in Figure 2. The high quality images will be used to study the structure of the Venus and its dynamics in the celestial sphere. The photographs were captured by the graduate student Mr. Arun Kumar Awasthi. The telescope is built indigenously in PRL under the supervision of Prof. Rajmal Jain. The telescope is being used to observe the solar flares. The Venus Transit program was co-ordinated by Prof. N. M. Ashok, Dr. Sachindra Naik and Prof. Rajmal Jain of Astronomy and Astrophysics Division of Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad.



Figure 2: The 100 mm diameter refracting full disk solar flare telescope installed at the terrace of main building at Thaltej campus of PRL, Ahmedabad. The auto-drive telescope is equipped with high quality filters and CCD camera suiting to take solar observations at fast cadence of 100 milliseconds. The images are processed with special software to extract the science information.

Gathering of people to view the historic celestial event of Venus Transit at the Physical Research Laboratory, Thaltej Campus



