

## **Indian Solar Physicist Wins American Astronomical Society Prize**

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<http://www.asianscientist.com/academia/aas-karen-harvey-prize-dibyendu-nandi-2012/>

*AsianScientist* (Jun. 12, 2012) - The prestigious American Astronomical Society (AAS) has for the first time honored a space scientist from the Asia-Pacific region.

The event took place today at Anchorage, Alaska and the recipient is 38-year-old Dibyendu Nandi of Kolkata, who over the years has done extensive research on the sun and various aspects of solar activity.

For his research, Nandi, who is attached to the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Kolkata, is being honored with the Karen Harvey Prize at the 220th meeting of the AAS.

The prize, according to an official announcement, is in "recognition for a significant contribution to the study of the sun, early in a person's professional career."

In a brief interview with *Asian Scientist Magazine* from Anchorage, Nandi explained his breakthrough discovery relating to the sun for which he is receiving the award.

"The main thrust of my discovery is that the sun's memory regarding its past activity is very short. This implies that very long term forecasting of solar activity and space weather is ruled out," he said.

The 500-member AAS solar physics division established the Karen Harvey Prize in May 2002. The prize honors a solar physicist who was president of the Solar Physics Research Corporation and treasurer of the solar physics division. The first person to receive the Karen Harvey Prize was Dana Longcope in 2003.

Nandi said that he did his research at the IISER and a student from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Bidya Binay Karak, collaborated with him.

He told *Asian Scientist Magazine* that he felt truly honored that an important organization like the American Astronomical Society is for the first time acknowledging the achievement of a scientist in the Asia-Pacific region who is not residing in the US. According to him it would provide fillip to the growing ties between India and the US in the field of science and technology.

Nandi's statement assumes significance in the context of the second US-India joint commission meeting on science and technology cooperation being held on Monday in Washington DC.

He said that the award consists of a citation and a check of US\$1,000, which Nandi plans to donate towards the society's student fund.

In earlier interview to the media he has been quoted as saying that the subject is close to his heart and he has devoted a significant fraction of the last decade in this field.

Nandi has published a series of papers on solar activity, including one that explained for the first time the disappearance of sunspots. He was the lead author for this paper which was published in the journal *Nature*.

He is a part of ISRO's Aditya's mission to the sun which is slated for lift off later this year or in 2013. After obtaining his Ph.D. degree in the field of solar physics from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, he spent seven years in the US working at the Montana State University on various NASA projects.

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