

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OF NARIT'S REGIONAL OBSERVATORY FOR THE PUBLIC, NAKHON RATCHASIMA

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Regional Observatory for the Public, Nakhon Ratchasima (ROPNM) is located at the Sirindhorn Learning Park on Suranaree University of Technology campus. It is a part of the collaboration between National Astronomical Research Institute of Thailand (NARIT) and Suranaree University of Technology (SUT). ROPNM is one of the regional observatories,

which allow the public in the Nakhon Ratchasima and nearby provinces to access the astronomical facilities in order to raise public awareness of science and inspire students to study in a field of science and technology. Thus, this will lead to a capacity building in education and basic research in the long run.

ROPNM consists of two buildings: the



Figure 1. Photography of Facilities at ROPNM

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Figure 2. Photography of Outreach Activities provided by ROPMN

first building is the exhibition building in which an exhibition hall and a planetarium are located, and the second building is the observatory with a sliding roof that contains small size telescopes and a 0.5 m telescope with a clamshell dome for public outreach activities, local research works and astronomy education. ROPNM opens daily to the public from 8.30 - 16.30 h.

Since the official opening ceremony by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on 16 November 2014, ROPNM undertakes a multi-faceted public outreach programs with ~ 20000 visitors, educational opportunities for kindergarten, primary and secondary school students, undergraduate level, teacher training activities, external lectures, and open house days along with major astronomical events for general public. In addition, there are ~ 20 senior research projects from Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, Rajamangala University of Technology Isan and Suranaree University of Technology.

For celebrating the 25th anniversary of Suranaree University of Technology, a special edition of Suranaree Journal of Science and Technology is dedicated on the Astronomy Education. Therefore, some examples to give an idea about the development and status of astronomy in Thailand (Soonthornthum, 2015), the outreach program at Chiang Rai Rajabhat University (Surina *et al.*, 2015) and the preliminary results of Thai students' Astrophysical - concept survey (Krittinatham and Kaewkong, 2015) have been presented in this issue.

References

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