Beat: Miscellaneous

Large asteroid to sweep by Earth overnight, to be streamed online

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USPA News - Roughly a year after a small asteroid entered Earth`s atmosphere and exploded over Russia, injuring nearly 1,500 people, another asteroid is set to sweep past Earth, though no danger is expected. The Slooh Space Camera will broadcast the travel of the asteroid online (www.slooh.com), starting at 9 p.m.

ET on Monday when the camera begins to track the 295-yard (270-meter) asteroid that was fondly dubbed Near-Earth asteroid 2000 EM26. The live webcast will be accompanied by discussions with Slooh host and astronomer Bob Berman, Slooh technical director Paul Cox, and special guest Dr. Mark Boslough, an expert on planetary impacts and global catastrophes. Viewers watching the event will also have the opportunity to ask questions during the show by using the hashtag #asteroid on the social networking website Twitter. "We continue to discover these Potentially Hazardous Asteroids - sometimes only days before they make their close approaches to Earth," said Paul Cox, Slooh`s Technical and Research Director. "Slooh`s asteroid research campaign is gathering momentum with Slooh members using the Slooh robotic telescopes to monitor this huge population of potentially hazardous space rocks. We need to find them before they find us!" The 2000 EM26 asteroid will brush past Earth almost exactly a year after a small asteroid entered Earth`s atmosphere and exploded over central Russia, damaging numerous buildings and injuring nearly 1,200 people. It happened on the same day that asteroid 2012 DA14 safely passed Earth, though the events were not related. The asteroid that impacted Russia was unexpected. It exploded in the sky 18 miles (28.9 kilometers) over Siberia, releasing energy equal to more than 20 atomic bombs. Major damage was done in Chelyabinsk where thousands of homes were damaged, caused by an asteroid just 65 feet (20 meters) in diameter. To remember the events of February 15, 2013, ten gold medals embedded with Chelyabinsk meteor fragments will be given at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, which began earlier this month. "On a practical level, a previously-unknown, undiscovered asteroid seems to hit our planet and cause damage or injury once a century or so, as we witnessed on June 20, 1908 and February 15, 2013. Every few centuries, an even more massive asteroid strikes us, fortunately usually impacting in an ocean or wasteland such an Antarctica," said Slooh host and astronomer Bob Berman. "But the ongoing threat, and the fact that biospherealtering events remain a real if small annual possibility, suggests that discovering and tracking all NEOs (Near-Earth objects), as well as setting up contingency plans for deflecting them on short notice should the need arise, would be a wise use of resources." In the wake of last year`s asteroid impact, NASA announced it would develop an Asteroid Redirect Mission (ARM) that aims to identify, capture and redirect an asteroid to a safe orbit of Earth?s moon. Astronauts aboard an Orion spacecraft would then land on the asteroid and bring back samples.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168

Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com