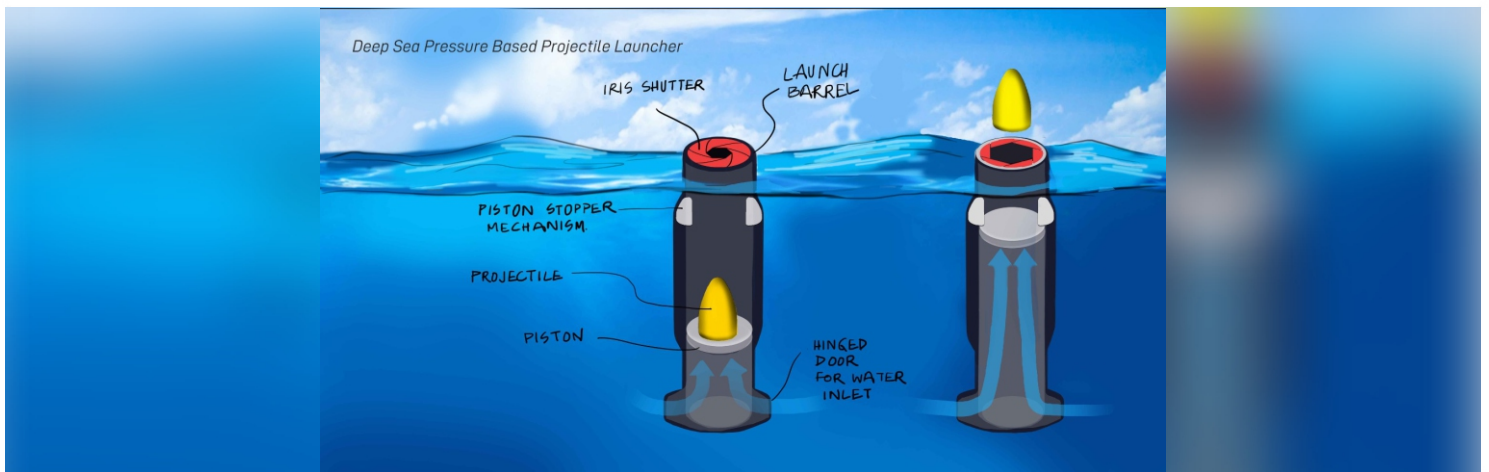


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3 city kids shine in NASA's space colony contest



PATNA: Three children from Patna have won a prize in the prestigious NASA Space Settlement Challenge, a contest which had around 600 students from across the globe participating in it in March.

Ashaz Haq (10), Aroush Fatima (9) of Standard 4 in Open Minds Birla School and Arifa Fatima (9) of Delhi Public School-Rajauri (Delhi) won second prize for the design of their space colony named 'Spaceville'. Arifa also hails from Patna.

Seven US students along with the trio were part of the team that won the second prize. The annual contest is organised jointly by the NASA Ames Research Center-San Jose State University and the National Space Society for students up to Standard 12.

"They worked on designing a space settlement for 5,000 people. The challenge was to design a liveable colony with focus on gravity, atmosphere, water, food supply, power supply, suitable and liveable environment, education complex, entertainment complex, law and order systems and supply chain mechanism, among others. The launching technology developed by my team uses small rockets costing \$10,000," team mentor Mirza Faizan told TOI over phone from the US. Mirza is an aerospace scientist from Patna, currently settled in the US.



According to Mirza, an application has been moved in the US for patent rights of the "low-cost space colony launching system" developed by his team. The team has also been asked to give a presentation on their "low cost technology" at the International Space Development Conference, organised by the National Space Society-USA in the US from May 25 to 29.

Aroush told this reporter he came to know about the contest when he was in the US on a vacation. "I decided to participate in it. On return, I contacted my cousins Ashaz and Arifa and formed a team. While looking for a mentor, we came across Faizan Sir who got us enrolled in his team, in which seven US children were already working," Aroush said on Saturday, adding the mentor guided them through Skype and phone calls.

