



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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White Dwarf "Bow Shock" Observation

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News Context: Astronomers using the Very Large Telescope (VLT) in Chile have observed a white dwarf (RXJ0528+2838) creating a spectacular, multi-colored bow shock as it travels through interstellar gas.

- **Stellar Remnant:** A White Dwarf is the dense core left behind after a star like our Sun sheds its outer layers. It is roughly the size of Earth but with the mass of the Sun.
- **The "Bow Shock":** Similar to the wave at the front of a moving ship, this shockwave is formed as the star compresses and heats the interstellar gas in its path.
- **Colorful Spectrum:**
 - **Red:** Hydrogen excitation.
 - **Green:** Nitrogen.
 - **Blue:** Oxygen.
- **Scientific Mystery:** Usually, such shockwaves require an "accretion disk" of gas siphoned from a companion star. This specific white dwarf lacks a disk, yet drives a powerful outflow, challenging current theories of **Stellar Evolution**.

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