

## WHY PLANET PLUTO DETHRONED ?

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*The 26<sup>th</sup> general assembly of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) was held in the Czech capital Prague on August 14-25, 2006 and on 24<sup>th</sup> August, Pluto was stripped of its status as a planet. Basic reasons for dethroning Pluto are : (i) the eccentricity of Pluto's orbit is the highest of all planets in the solar system, and as such Pluto has not been able to clear the neighbourhood around its orbit; (ii) Pluto's orbit is inclined 17 degrees to the plane of the ecliptic, this is very unusual, (iii) the Common Centre of gravity of our earth and its moon lies below the surface of the earth, whereas the same of Pluto and its satellite Charon lies in space between them — this is another anomaly. Moreover due to the newly invented charge couple device (CCD) camera, a good number of small planets have been discovered in the outer solar system, they are all orbiting around the sun with orbital radii between 30 and 50 A.U. (A.U. is astronomical unit, which is the average distance of earth from the sun = 149,603,500 km). All these factors forced the IAU to draw a clear distinction between Pluto and the other eight planets.*

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