Saturn’s moon could support life, says study

A file photo of Saturn and its main rings as captured by Cassini. | Photo Credit: NASA NASA

Complex organic molecules have been discovered originating from one of Saturn’s moons, Enceladus, adding to its potential to support life, researchers said on Wednesday.

The Cassini spacecraft first flew close to the ice-covered moon in 2005 as part of a mission to gather data on Saturn that will be analysed for years to come.

A team led by Frank Postberg and Nozair Khawaja of the University of Heidelberg in Germany said they had identified fragments of large organic molecules in ice grains that were ejected from geysers through cracks in the moon’s icy exterior.

Their findings were published in the journal *Nature*. “It is the first ever detection of complex organics coming from an extraterrestrial waterworld,” Mr. Postberg was quoted as saying.

The Enceladus findings come after data earlier this month showed organic compounds on the surface of Mars and seasonal fluctuations of atmospheric methane, marking some of the strongest evidence ever that the earth’s neighbour may have harboured life.

Cassini has previously detected lightweight organic molecules at Enceladus but the newly found fragments are much larger. Such large molecules can only be created by complex chemical processes including those related to life, ESA said.

“This is the most recent in a long series of discoveries made by Cassini,” ESA added.

The quadrivalent vaccine will have two A virus strains — H1N1 and H3N2 — and two B virus strains — Victoria and Yamagata

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