

SCIENCE DAY FEST

5,000 visitors turn up at IUCAA programme

For first time, 75% were individual groups

REPORTER

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Pune: The National Science Day 2010 celebrated at Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) on Sunday saw an overwhelming response with 5,000 visitors turning up on the occasion, of which 75 per cent were individual groups and rest from schools.

"We at IUCAA held an 'open' day on National Science Day today. We observe this day every year and get good response. This year, 5000 people turned up at the Centre. But there was a distinct difference this year. Almost 75 per cent of the visitors were individual groups comprising of graduates, post graduates, even parents. Rest 25 per cent were part of school tours," Scientific Officer, Public Outreach Programme, IUCAA, Arvind Paranjpe said while talking to *Sakaal Times*.

He said this change shows that the interest to know more about science, has moved beyond school students and touched the grown ups too.

"This is an amazing development. We are extremely thrilled

with this development. The aim of having an open day is simplifying science and taking it to the common man. We want more people take interest in science," Paranjpe said.

National Science Day, which takes place each year on February 28 to commemorate Nobel Prize winning scientist C V Raman's discovery of the Raman Effect. The Raman Effect confirmed that light was made up of particles known as 'photons.' It helped in the study of the molecular and crystal structures of different substances.

Various programmes like astronomy-related films, demonstrations of astronomy related instruments, demonstration of virtual observatory were held on the occasion.

A special workshop of building a simple cardboard spectroscope was the highlight of the open day. Spectroscopy studies spectrum of light source.

Some of the other events were display of latest trend in astronomy and astrophysics research, display of astronomy related instrumentation, films on astronomy, demonstration of science toys and virtual observatory.



NARLIKAR CONCERNED

■ Former director of IUCAA **Jayant Narlikar**, who held an intensive interactive session with the visiting students on National Science Day, was concerned as he found few questions posed by students were superstition-linked. "The question and answer session with children has always been a wonderful experience. Their questions are very pointed. This shows the high level of awareness

amongst them. But few of the questions asked were not indicative of being science oriented," Narlikar told *Sakaal Times*.

Some of the questions asked to him were regarding ill effects of viewing a Comet, Bermuda Triangle and Astrology. "They are taking such ideas seriously, whereas in abroad, they have ceased to exist. This is because in India, we are still stuck in superstition. But this is not so abroad. I hope, with more education and exposure, this issue will get solved eventually," he said.