

# 'Country's youth need to make new discoveries'

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**Pune:** The youth of the country should continue learning new things and make new future-relevant discoveries, said **Govind Swarup**, pioneer of radio astronomy in the country.

Swarup, professor at the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), and the key scientist behind the famed Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) built near Pune, was speaking on Saturday on 50 years of radio astronomy in India and the way forward'.



Radio astronomy holds prime importance in today's world and has helped solve many key questions, one of the most significant being the support for the Big Bang theory, said Swarup. "It was radio waves which helped establish the significance of the Big Bang theory namely the Steady State Model - which was a hot topic of contention in the 1970s," he said.

Radio astronomy is the branch of astronomy - which deals with the study of celestial objects through radio emissions from these bodies.

Swarup went back to the time of the birth of the

branch of radio astronomy - saying that it was Homi Bhabha who had pushed him to form a group of people studying the common subject in 1963. "Although I was doing my BSc, the mysteries of the universe always held my attention and I had the persistent urge to explore these mysteries," he said.

It was after the Kalyan radio telescope was built that Swarup went on to build what is known as the 'Ooty Radio Telescope'.

"Only importing equipment will not be enough for India, and we will have to learn new things by ourselves," he said, throwing light on another of his indigenous creations - the GMRT, built in north Pune - which is used even today for research. He said that created in the 1990s, it is still the world's largest radio telescope, operating in the frequency of 130-1430 MHz.

Talking about the future, Swarup said that "going forward, the challenge remains to keep innovating and enhancing the GMRT, for it to stay in the competition internationally". He added that while another challenge which still remains for radio astronomy, is to determine - "if we are alone in the universe or there are other living beings".