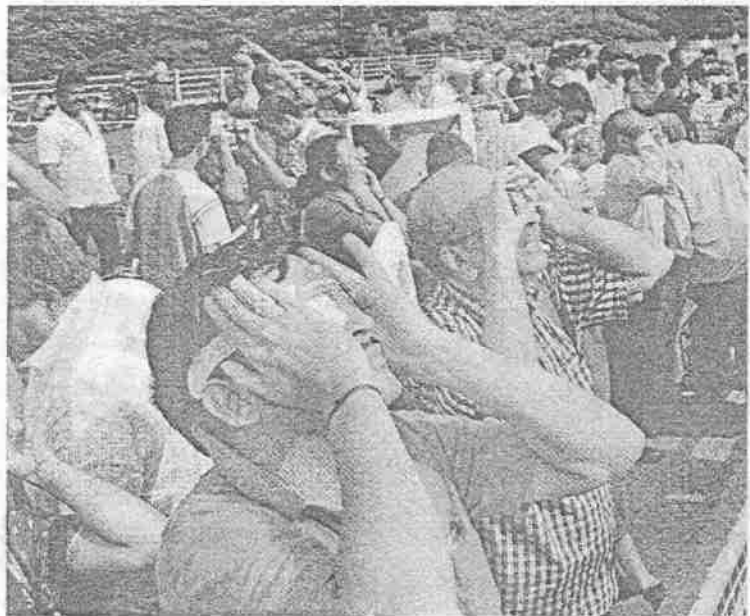


Clouds play spoilsport with Venus transition

Anand Chaihi

Vaibhav Thombare



VIEW BLOCKED: A clouded sky on Wednesday morning made it tough for stargazers to have a clear view of Venus transit across the sun (in red circle) for about an hour. The sky cleared later and the celestial event could be viewed from certain areas like Dehu, from where the Sakal Times lensman caught the moment on camera.



MOMENT OF JOY: Many Puneites watched the "transit of Venus" by taking necessary precautions, on Wednesday on a bridge near Balgandharva Rangmandir to witness the rare cosmic event.

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Pune: Cloudy conditions marred a clear view of the Venus transiting across the sun for about an hour Wednesday morning, even as thousands of enthusiasts gathered at various locations to watch the spectacle in Pune.

Clouds that played hide and seek in the city's skies cleared at around 8 am, providing Puneites a glimpse of the rare celestial phenomenon that occurs once in a century.

"I was a bit disappointed to see a cloudy sky, which blocked the transit of Venus, but was delighted to view it for a while when thick clouds made way and the sun shone. It was exciting to watch a dark object moving from left to right slowly," an elated 22-year-old Pratibha Chorage said after the astronomical event concluded.

The view was comparative-

ly clear on Ahmednagar road, where people gathered in large numbers to see the planet's transit. Although dark clouds hung above, the sky cleared later and enabled thousands of people to view the event.

Hundreds of astronomy enthusiasts, including students from various schools, gathered at places like the Government Polytechnic, Balgandharva Bridge, Bund Garden Bridge, Parvati Hill and the Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) to view the rare and much-awaited transit in the morning sky.

"During its movement, Venus took the form of a small black dot slowly shifting across the northern hemisphere of the sun," Preeti Mathe, a college student, said. Describing it as one of the most spectacular astronomical events of the century, she said the movement of Venus was witnessed till 10.20 am. The transit started with the sun-

rise and ended at around 10.20 am. "With Venus appearing as a small black dot on the Sun's surface during its transit, it was one of the most eagerly-awaited celestial events," said New Era Lak Road Planetarium.

Vinayak Ramdasi, who heads a group of astronomy lovers, camped in Ahmednagar to witness the celestial phenomenon. The crowd of onlookers was heavy on Wednesday, since the next Venus transit would be witnessed on December 11, 2117 and on December 8, 2125. There was a vehicle rush since early morning. People crowded various locations in the city to watch Venus. The disc of the Sun. Varad-based organisations advised protective eye gear, which were also conducted to people from the city to diffractations like the Lunar Eclipse where this once-in-a-century event could be seen better.