

Now, IUCCA unfolds plan to teach teachers

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THE INTER-UNIVERSITY Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), which was the nodal point in India in 2009 for the International year of Astronomy, is planning a program this year to teach the teachers.

"In the coming year, our aim will shift towards educating the educators," said Arvind Paranjypte, in charge of the IUCAA outreach program.

As part of the IYA, the IUCAA took up several outreach programs on a large scale and interacted with several school students last year. "Across the country, we interacted with school students, teaching them to make small telescopes, our faculty gave several lectures. At 12 different places in the country from Srinagar to Cochin we interacted with school children," Paranjypte said.

This outreach program would be continued this year as well - in the first week of January, IUCAA members were in Raipur to interact with school children. "It may not be as intensive as last year's but

since we have a database of all the schools this year, we will be able to continue with our campaign. Our focus will be on the teachers", Paranjypte said.

Astronomers are now saying was the IYA 2009 was the largest Science Education and Outreach program till date across the world. Paranjypte said that last year, in India academic centers across the country regularly conducted astronomy popularization programs like workshops, lecture series, and sky watch demonstrations, public talks, exhibitions, film shows, and produced research material as well. Several Amateur astronomy clubs also played important role in bringing astronomy to the general public, he said.

As part of the IYA 2009, last year, the IUCAA published an IYA diary containing 53 pages of information related to astronomy. "The diary was supplemented by a compilation of several interesting photographs as well. This diary will be available to the public this year as well, on a no-profit, no loss basis", Paranjypte said.