

# 'Research institutes not attracting bright students'

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**Pune:** Veteran astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar has said that in India, research institutes do not attract bright students, as they are not in constant touch with them.

Narlikar was speaking at a special lecture organised by Maharashtra Academy of Sciences and PE Society's Modern College of Arts Science and Commerce at Modern College on Monday.

Also present were scientist Mayank Vahia of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai, and professor YS Shouche among others.

While talking about his life journey as a young student and then as a scientist, as written in his autobiography 'Char Nagrancha Maza Vishwa,' Narlikar said, "When I was in the University of Cambridge, I closely observed the process of setting up the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy (IOTA). At that time, the founder of the institute wanted researchers to give lectures at the University of Cambridge as well to help IOTA attract students interested in research. I think Indian research institutes must



Astrophysicist Jayant Narlikar at the special lecture organised at Modern College on Monday

also find out ways to stay connected with students."

He added that students have a great curiosity about science from a very young age, which must be explored.

Narlikar narrated experiences of his life when he studied in Banaras Hindu University and later when he went to the University of Cambridge. "Banaras Hindu University was a Hindi medium school. Nowadays, students feel they are polished only if they speak in English, which is wrong. I feel that the language does not matter if students have detailed knowledge of the subjects," he stressed.

When asked about the scope for engineers at The Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Narlikar said, "We have many engineers in IUCAA who are doing their PhD in astronomy and astrophysics. Astrophysics is now expanding and there are many research opportunities for students to work in this field."

Speaking about existence of parallel universe, Narlikar said that parallel universe is theoretically an interesting idea but there is no way to test whether it is true.

## LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS

■ **Life in universe** can exist only on planets which fall under the habitable zone, said scientist Mayank Vahia on Monday. **Speaking on the topic, 'Intelligent life on universe,'** Vahia said that scientists have found out that six planets in the universe seem to fall in the habitable zone but no evidence of life on any of them has been found so far. "When the sun was young, it was much hotter. At that time, planet Mars must have fallen into the habitable zone. Hence, now various missions have been launched to study it," he added.

Speaking about existence of aliens, Vahia said that there has been a lot of speculation that aliens have visited earth but there is no evidence to prove it.