

# Students share the thrill of seeing solar eclipse

Back from their week-long mission to Russia to view the total solar eclipse, five Indian students shared their experience and knowledge gained from studying the celestial event at a function in Russian Centre of Science and Culture in the Capital on Monday.

"It was indeed thrilling and exciting to witness the spectacular celestial event," said Shivansh Chaturvedi, who was part of the Indian scientific expedition "Heliodysey-2008" at Novosibirsk in Russia.

The expedition culminated on August 1 when the total solar eclipse was viewed by Shivansh and Kaustubh Bansal (Delhi), V. Vismayaa, (Tamil Nadu), Charchit Gaur and Utkarsh Agrawal (Rajasthan).

The event was aimed at inculcating scientific temper and popularise celestial events among people across the country. The study carried out by the Indian delegation with seasoned astronomers was aimed at dispelling myths surrounding the celestial event.

The students said they were very moved by the landmark palaces at St. Petersburg and the sophisticated scientific training facilities at the Star City in Moscow. The photographs displayed at the exhibition highlighted various facets of the solar eclipse.

Selected from hundreds of applicants from across the country on the basis of an online exam based on astronomy, science and general knowledge by the Science

Popularisation Association of Communicators and Educators (SPACE), the students were accompanied by a 35-member group of scientists and science enthusiasts.

Congratulating the proud Indian students, who got the opportunity to examine the fascinating astronomical event, Nehru Planetarium Director N. Rathnasree said the mission had helped to inculcate scientific temper and rational thinking among the young students. She spoke of the enormous potential lying ahead in comprehending the mysteries of universe.

RCSC Head of the Science and Technology Section Sergey Isaev lauded the spirit and enthusiasm of Indian students who undertook this historic

endeavour for the benefit of the people. He hailed the efforts of SPACE in the promotion of the scientific urge in younger generation.

With the help of a multi-media presentation, SPACE president C.B. Devgun narrated different aspects of the studies carried out by the expedition. The Heliodysey team observed the total solar eclipse and did experiments at Novosibirsk. Students and participants ranging in age from four years to 70 years took part in the experiments on temperature variation, humidity change and light flux change.

The team met astronomers from other countries and exchanged views and experiment details.

Madhur Tankha