

ECLIPSED BY CLOUD COVER

This is the photograph taken by IIA scientists in China on Wednesday, showing the total solar eclipse through a green filter

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Bangalore: There was much frenzy, from scientists themselves over the experiments, and from the aam junta about the supposed ill-effects and superstitions. But the solar eclipse, the longest one this century, was a dampener in the city.

Several thousands of children and astronomy enthusiasts lined up on terraces and open spaces early on Wednesday morning but the thick monsoon clouds played spoilsport.

The Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) had sent two teams to China and Varanasi to conduct experiments. While the results were described as excellent from those two places, scientists in Bangalore had to

be content with gazing at the clouds. Dr Ebenezer, a scientist with IIA said that with the cloud cover early in the morning, the eclipse could not be seen at all. Bangalore was to have had a partial eclipse with 35% of the sun being uncovered.

SPECTACULAR SIGHT

Over 300 students and general public gathered at Lalbagh in the morning where the IIA had arranged for interactions between the public and scientists. Several pairs of filter glasses were provided to view the eclipse. "But the clouds cleared only after 7.30 am and, by then, the eclipse was over," he said.

The year 2009 is the year of astronomy. The IIA had carried information about the solar system and the eclipse, to distribute to the public. What caught everyone's fancy was a basic telescope with two lens of 100 focal length and 5 focal length which could be made at home. Students lapped it up, eyes wide with wonder at the telescope that could be made for under Rs 100.

Several students quizzed the scientists about the phenomenon and other areas of astronomy. The scientists also created awareness that, contrary to superstitions, there was no

The longest solar eclipse of the century was a dampener in the city. A dense cloud cover disappointed all astronomy enthusiasts

harm in eating food during the eclipse. The IIA had also arranged viewing of web casts at their campus auditorium. Several other organizations had arranged for the public and students to try and watch the eclipse safely.

For the religious, there were also a couple of swastik jaapa programmes organized for world peace by Shri Vardhaman Sthanakwasi Jain Sangha and several other organizations.

Divya Prakash, a doctoral scholar knew the clouds would ruin the day and smartly "held a hot cup of coffee in my hands and watched the live telecasts," she said.

The experiments conducted at China and parts of India were successful said scientists, though the actual results will be available only after the teams come back and analyze the data.

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DIDN'T SEE THE ECLIPSE

The cloud cover led to several disappointments. Shrishti Shenoy, a Class 9 student had got her parents to wake her up at the crack of dawn to watch the eclipse. For the astronomy enthusiast who had kept her filter glasses ready days in advance, it was a huge disappointment. "I watched the news later and saw the eclipse, but then it would have been so much better to see it for real," she said.



FOR FUTURE SANS DISABILITY



Parents of disabled children kept their wards buried neck-deep at Saath Gumbaz courtyard during the solar eclipse in Gulbarga on Wednesday. Nearly 60 children remained under the mud for six hours before being taken out at 10 am. The immobilized children cried through the ordeal while their parents expected a better future with the 'eclipse healing the disabilities'

CELESTIAL SHOW

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Bangaloreans enjoy watching the solar eclipse on Wednesday

