

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE – 22nd July 2009 Century's Longest Astronomical Phenomena

Rashtriya Vigyan Evam Prodyogiki Sanchar Parishad (RVSP) is organising a number of activities around the natural phenomena during the Year of Astronomy (2009). The celebration started with the safe Observation of Total Solar Eclipse of 22nd July 2009 through the belt of totality passing through Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, U.P., Bihar, Sikkim, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Four Master resource persons' training programmes on Total Solar Eclipse were organized in June-July 2009 in collaboration with Vigyan Prasar to create massive awareness throughout the country on observing the event. This comprised lectures/demonstrations, film shows, power point presentations, discussions, radio talks, face to face with the scientists, quiz, competitions, etc.

Lakhs of people came out of their houses to view the longest astronomical phenomena on the morning of 22nd July 2009. Manthan, Ahmedabad developed solar kit for RVSP that was disseminated in the belt of totality. This included one pair solar filter.

RVSP organized three camps at Bhopal by Science Centre, Madhya Pradesh; at Allahabad by Voluntary Institute of Community Applied Sciences; and at Patna by Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samity. Over 750 selected students, teachers, science communicators and thousands of local people gathered at each of these places to observe the event. Interesting activities, video film shows, quiz programmes, etc. to raise awareness on the phenomenon were organized for these participants. A large number of people saw the partial eclipse i.e. 80% and 90% covered Sun from their places. Print and electronic media helped develop awareness also – although some displayed poor decisions with regard to promoting myths & superstitions.

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