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JAN-MAR, 1991

Capsule 20



INDIA A GLIMPSE OF SCIENCE



NCSM speaks

It can hardly be denied that over the last 5 years of its existence, Capsule has done its part. It has not only been a vital link amongst the science centres of India, but has also been a comprehensive representation of the initiatives, activities and constructive programmes that have gone a long way towards escalating science popularisation movement in its country. With one-fourth of its circulation comprising readership abroad, the newsletter is now recognised as a valuable resource by science museum professionals in the country and beyond.

When the exhibitions 'India: A Festival of Science' and 'Science in India' turned out to be a resounding success in the USA and USSR in the mid-eighties, requests for a similar exhibition poured in from the countries of Europe. It was in response to this overwhelming appreciation that 'India: A Glimpse of Science' was developed and sent to Europe for a tentative schedule of five years. Now playing host to

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thousands of French visitors, the exhibition was inaugurated on November 5, 1990 by Mr Hubert Curien, Minister of Research and Technology, Government of France. Ms Sunu Kochar, the Indian Ambassador to France spoke on behalf of Dr M G K Menon who, however could not attend the function due to preoccupations. The occasion was graced further by the presence of Mr Armand Fremont, Director of Programme and University Development, Ministry of National Education and Mr Etienne Guyon, former Director of Palais de la Decouverte. When the inaugural ceremony was over, eminent scientists and museologists of the country as well as Indian dignitaries were taken round the exhibits by Dr Saroj Ghose, Director General of the National Council of Science Museums.

It was not long before the exhibition generated questions, discussions and debates in the city. That part of Avenue Franklin de Roosevelt that leads to Palais de la Decouverte looks a bit different nowadays. Visitors gather in clusters as usual, and pile through the gates of the museum. However, they look unusually curious as they move towards the wide stretch of the verandah that runs along the concave front of the museum. Over there is laid out the exhibition from India, with the model of the rustless Iron Pillar which has withstood rain and sun 'over the last 1700 years'; the exquisite wheel - representing the sun dial - from



Konarak's famous temple devoted to Sun God; the architectural marvels of the Southern part of the country, and the stunningly beautiful Taj Mahal. All these, and many more exhibits unfold the varying vistas of India's 4500 year long history. So the exhibition has come off well. Greeted with applause in France, the exhibition is expected to fare forth soon, in a journey across Europe.



NCSM Speaks

(Continued from page 1)

Notwithstanding its utility and popularity, *Capsule* is facing a perennial problem we would like to draw your attention to. We require more substantial information expressive of the multi-prong activities of the science centres. Just a mention of a programme, or a sketchy report of an activity, which we often receive does by no means suit the growing need for greater interactive communication among all organisations engaged in the task of science popularisation in India and abroad. We are compelled to send for more details a second time, and this invariably results in unnecessary lapse of time and unwelcome delay in the publication of that particular news item. At this juncture, we request you to please send elaborate reports and materials (with supporting photographs and illustrations) pertaining to current trends and events in the science popularisation movement. That will make the newsletter more meaningful and the reading worthwhile. We also solicit your proposals and interactions that may add to the qualitative improvement of the later numbers.

How else can new vigour be imparted to the bulletin ?



INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SCIENCE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Come rain or shine, there are times when one just has to make the most of opportune moments. August 18 was one such day for the youngsters of Bombay and Yokohama, who rendezvoused at Nehru Science Centre, Bombay on the eve of the sister-city relationship between the two cities. A multitude of interesting and innovative programmes were in store for them. From morning to dusk, the Children's Science Exchange Programme continued with a whirl of activities geared to match the expectations of the participating youths.

The opening session started with the welcome address by Shri R.M.Chakraborty, Director of Nehru Science Centre. Mr. Isao Kusuhara, Manager, Yokohama Science Centre greeted the congregation, and exchange of flowers among the guest and host participants followed. Later on, the children from Yokohama were taken around the exhibits of the centre and the

local students elaborately explained the scientific principles involved. They interacted with exhibits on 'Science for Children', 'Light and Sight', 'Sound and Hearing', and the Discovery Hall. A special demonstration of Raman exhibits, and explanatory lectures on the basic philosophy behind the Science Park were also arranged. In the afternoon session, all the students worked together to fabricate five 'Hot Air Balloons' which were put to test by inflating them with hot air. A science demonstration programme on 'Properties of matter at low temperatures' was conducted and interesting experiments using liquid nitrogen were carried out. Souvenirs were presented to the Japanese children by their Indian counterparts. The programme ended with a vote of thanks to all the participants and their parents, the schools and the teachers and the media agencies.



Moments well spent at Bombay



PROGRAMMES

**16th General Conference of the
International Council of Museums**
Venue : Quebec, Canada
Duration : September 19-27, 1992

**Meeting of the Governing Board of
ICOM Asia-Pacific Organisation**
Venue : National Council of Science
Museums, Calcutta
Duration : March 7-9, 1991

**Meeting of the Executive Council of
ICOM**
Venue : Delhi and Calcutta
Duration : March 4-6, 1991 (Delhi)
March 7-9, 1991 (Calcutta)

**Professional Enrichment Programme
for Middle Level Museum
Professionals of Asia and Pacific
Region**
Venue : National Council of Science
Museums, Calcutta
Duration : February 11-March 9, 1991



November was a fruitful month for District Science Centre, Gulbarga. A series of multifaceted, collaborative programmes were organised in quick succession, attracting popular participation each time. From November 6-8 was observed the 81st Anniversary of Sir C.V. Raman; in collaboration with State Bank of Mysore, Gulbarga, were organised an essay competition, a popular science lecture, an exhibition on 'Sir C.V. Raman's Life and Work', an open house quiz on 'Raman and Science' and a contact programme on Physics. On November 14, Children's Day was celebrated.

The election to the Executive Board (1991-1993) of the Indian National Committee for the International Council of Museums was held at Calcutta on December 19, 1990. Dr. S.S. Biswas, Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India was elected the new Chairman.

The first meeting of the newly elected Executive Board is scheduled to be held at Calcutta on February 12, 1991.



ICOM 1992-QUEBEC-CANADA

Besides, Career Guidance Week was observed during the third week of November by organising popular lectures on 'Career in Geological Science', 'Career in Microbiology', 'Civil Service Examination' and 'Career Opportunities in Biological Science'. A 10-day Career Masters' Training Programme was also conducted for secondary school teachers. An open house quiz on 'Ecology and Environment' was organised in the auditorium of the Centre so as to celebrate the 81st Anniversary of Dr. J.C. Bose on November 30. On the same day, the Centre organised a popular lecture on 'Health and Hygiene : Role of Women', in collaboration with Inner Wheel Club, Gulbarga; and a demonstration lecture on 'Candle and Chalkpiece Making' in collaboration with Small Industries Service Institute, Gulbarga.

A7 GULBARGA

VITM

VITM Reaches Out to Lakshadweep

Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum, Bangalore reached out as an unprecedented venture to the Lakshadweep Islands. A science festival of ten days' duration was organised there by a contingent of ten staff members of the Museum.

During the festival was held a special exhibition on the life and works of Srinivasa Ramanujan, prodigy in Mathematics; it comprised thirty photographic panels and 12 interesting kits including Magic Square as enumerated by Ramanujan. Besides, an Electronic Workshop for school children, a computer awareness programme for college students as well as sky observation programmes evoked tremendous response.

A very special attraction was the demonstration of the inflatable planetarium and the astronomy programmes which attracted more than 2000 visitors in about sixty shows. The programme received full financial support from Lakshadweep Administration through its Education Directorate.



Engineers' Day Observed

In order to commemorate the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr M Visvesvaraya, September 15 is celebrated every year as Engineers' Day. On this day ever since 1982, Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum, Bangalore has been paying tribute to the great engineer by organising the annual National Students Design Competition for engineers all over the country. The active interest of the Principals and the Heads of the Departments of the Engineering Colleges, and the enthusiasm and endeavour of the students have made the competition grow in stature every year.

The competition was held this year also, in the five Engineering disciplines- Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Electronics & Telecommunication, and Chemical. It was open to the final year and pre-final year students in the Engineering degree courses of the universities of the country, to the



students of Indian Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Science, as well as to the student members of the Institution of Engineers.



Creativity Unbound

Western India Science Camp

Camping with friends and new acquaintances is an all-time favourite among students and youths - especially when it involves working together on innovative ideas. The third Western India Science Camp was a welcome event this year also with 142 (82 students and 60 teachers) participants assembling from nearly all the states and union territories of the Western Zone. The Camp was organised from October 24-28, 1990, jointly by Nehru Science Centre, Bombay; the Education Departments of the Governments of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Daman, Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli; and the Department of Science and Technology, Government of Rajasthan. The theme this year was 'The Wonderful World of Science'. Educational activities included science demonstration lectures on 'Computers', 'Snakes', and 'Matter at Low Temperature'; popular science lecture on 'Computer Graphics and Animation'; Taramandal shows; skilled workshop for teachers; silk screen printing workshop; HAM demonstration; sky observation programme; and special film shows.



Computer Fair

Young computer enthusiasts had a grand time this winter with Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, Calcutta launching the third Computer Fair during the last week of December. As in the previous years, the annual event brought the students and youths a golden opportunity to display their talent. This time the Fair drew participation not only from West Bengal, but from Bihar and Orissa as well.

The participants took part in computer-based activities like software development, audio-visual quiz, extempore essay writing competition. Around 263 students from 51 schools and 9 science clubs worked on a large number of computers - both BBC Micro and IBM PC - with the aim of developing interactive educational packages. Awards and scholarships were there for outstanding achievements.



Even those who did not win prizes went away rich, with the rewarding experience they had in the Fair.



Science Centre News

BITM, Calcutta



BITM's new Electronics Gallery was inaugurated on October 13, 1990 by Dr A P Mitra, Director General, CSIR. Dr T Pradhan, Vice Chancellor, Utkal University presided over the inaugural function. The gallery occupying a floor area of approximately 4000 Sq.ft. contains about 90 exhibits most of which are participatory. These have been planned and designed with the aim of making Electronics intelligible to the common people. A brilliant blend of entertaining and educational contents, this new work-room for young Electronics enthusiasts is already showing promises of popular appeal.

NSC, Bombay



As a part of Anniversary Week Celebration of the Main Exhibition Complex of Nehru Science Centre, Bombay two overnight Astronomy Camps were organised in the premises of the Centre on November 10 and 11, 1990 and November 17 and 18, 1990. About 500 participants participated in the programme which included lecture-cum-demonstrations, slide shows, portable planetarium shows, sky observation programme.

RSC, Bhubaneswar



'I am a mammal, so are you' - was the caption of a temporary exhibition held on the occasion of the first anniversary of Regional Science Centre, Bhubaneswar. The week long programme included demonstration lectures and competitions also. Inaugurated on September 18, 1989, the science centre is the first of its kind in the state of Orissa. The centre, in its short span of a year has already struck up a friendship with the local people. Flocks of visitors - young and old - hunt for answers to their innumerable questions pertaining to the stars and planets, and the creation of the universe.

NSC, Delhi



The 58" long John Walker, London made clock of the last century has been salvaged from a railway store with a 'condemned' slip attached to it. Now it is being ready for a period room setting of an old railway station at the forthcoming gallery on 'Information Revolution' in the National Science Centre, Delhi. The clock has been activated from a near-scrap state by the Exhibits Development Cell of the Centre.

National Science Seminar at BITM

The National Science Seminar, which was originally scheduled to be held at National Science Centre, Delhi on October 10, 1990, finally took place due to unavoidable circumstances at Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, Calcutta on December 14, 1990.

All the states and union territories were represented in this annual event which was the culmination of the successive stages of block, district and state level contests. The final competition was held among 32 students. B.P. Divya from Women's Peace League, Bangalore and Rituparno Goswami from Michael's High School, Dighaghat, Bihar were adjudged the two best speakers. They, and ten other participants will receive monthly scholarships for two consecutive years. The best two were invited to the Indian Science Congress at Indore on January 5, 1991.

Teachers' Training Programme

District Science Centre, Tirunelveli conducted from 5-7 November, 1990 a teachers' training programme in which teachers from the local schools were trained in fabricating and handling various basic tools and teaching aids related to magnetism, heat, mechanics and mathematics. Around seventy teaching aids were fabricated by the participants.



We Need...

CAPSULE is looking forward to your sending by February 28, 1991 publication materials for the 21st issue. Please send short notes, photographs, problems, suggestions, cartoons and puzzles.



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CAPSULE
WISHES YOU
A HAPPY & PROSPEROUS
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