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# National Chemical Lab's mentor programme for children till August

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

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THE National Chemical Laboratory will extend its mentoring programme for children as part of its National Science and Technology fair (called IRIS), till August. Scientists at the NCL, who are associated with the programme which started in February, said the programme is receiving good participation.

"I have been a judge at the Intel/DST/CII-funded IRIS for the last few years, and I have been dismayed at the dismal number of projects submitted by students in Pune. I have also noticed that the projects that win awards are often by students who have had the ad-

vantage of excellent mentors. Therefore, we have initiated a programme to help students from Pune put together exciting projects for IRIS," said scientist Guruswamy Kumaraswamy, at the NCL.

His colleagues Dr Chetan Gadgil and Dr B L V Prasad, a chemical engineer and a chemist by training, have volunteered to talk to students and help them develop project ideas.

"These projects are fun, and we feel that doing science and independent research is the best way for students to feel the excitement of science and technology and for them to get connected to this. Also, we hope that we will be able to help Pune put in a good perfor-

mance at the IRIS this year," said Kumaraswamy.

Several other institutions have been working to make science more fun for students. This summer, the inter-university centre for astronomy and astrophysics will bring in a lot of students from rural areas to attend lectures on its campus as part of its summer programme.

Around 80 students, several of whom will be from rural schools, will undergo special training at the IUCAA.

"We will interact with students from rural areas. From mid April, these students will attend specialised training, lectures and seminars on several topics," said Arvind Paranjape, an officer with

IUCAA.

"We interacted with many students from Ambegaon taluka during our science day celebrations, many of these students will attend our summer programme," Paranjape said.

The National Centre for Radio Astrophysics is also conducting summer special programmes for students interested in science. There will be talks related to astronomy and astrophysics," said an NCRA officer.

It is also accepting applications from PhD and Mphil students interested in attending a one-month advanced programme at the NCRA till April 5. Students can contact [serc2010@ncra.tifr.res.in](mailto:serc2010@ncra.tifr.res.in) or call 2571 9111/2571 9000.