

Up above the world

INDUS VALLEY WORLD
SCHOOL



■ A lift full of parents and students excitedly discussed rovers, satellites and rockets. It was no ordinary day for them. The bunch was headed from the seventh-floor auditorium of Indus Valley World School to the erstwhile art room that had been turned into a space laboratory. The school inaugurated its first astronomy and space laboratory on March 23, as part of Isro's space tutor programme.

"I am obsessed with space science. Now I have a chance to explore various models and even make some myself," said Prisha Moitra of Class IX.

The 900sqft room had on display scaled-down models of Rohini and Geostationary Earth Orbit satellites, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle and the Chandrayaan rover and lander, among others.

Students from Classes III to IX will now have a new period, as part of the curriculum, where they will learn about space science.

"The curriculum is part of the CBSE's skill programme," said Debashis Das, a representative of Navars Space Tech that has been installing the space labs at various schools in Calcutta and beyond, including Indus Valley World School.

The lab has four sections: satellite, rocketry, ancient and modern astronomy. It will also encourage students to create models and take part in exhibitions and contests.

The chief guest at the inauguration was T.K. Sundaramurthy, former mission director of Isro. He interacted with students. While the chief guest encouraged children to ask questions, he advised the attending parents not to impose their ideas on the children. "We should not let go of our traditions in the name of modern technology," he advised the audience.

Principal Reshma Bhattacharya addressed the students as "young explorers". "One of our earliest memories is looking up at the stars. The new laboratory is a bridge between imagination and reality," she said.

"The lab will facilitate hands-on learning, thus setting the tone for innovation and exploration. We are extremely excited about it," added vice-principal and administrator Madhumita Seal.

The programme ended with a hydro rocket (a model run on water and air pressure) launch on the school's football ground.