

Astronomy Day in Rasht*, Iran

Thaqib Astronomy Association organized a festival to celebrate the Astronomy Day. The festival was held on 30th of April to 2nd of May 2009 in Mellat park of Rasht where the Association's building is situated. Two days before the festival, papers including the introduction of the Astronomy Year & what Galileo Galilei did 400 years ago, and also some information about Kushyar Guilani - an eminent Iranian astronomer who was born in the second half of the 10th century in Guilan- etc., which was published by the Association were distributed among people, through daily newspapers.

During three days, people who came into the festival were given a brochure that guided them about different sections such as astronomical photography, telescopes & binoculars, solar system, the moon, sundials, traditional astronomical instruments, ancient astronomy, constellations, space, observatories all over the world, astrophysics & stars' life, astronomy shopping, etc.

In sundial section, people could make a sundial by paper and learn how to use it. There was an exhibition of sundial photos from all over the world that M. Bagheri- Chief Editor of *Tarikh-e Elm* (Iranian Journal for the History of Science)- has collected them. In astronomy photography section, A.Purrasul-a member of the Association- exhibited his own photos of different objects in the sky.

Since Rasht is near the Caspian coast, lots of people from different cities of Iran come usually there in their holidays, so there was a section that provided information about astronomical groups and societies in Iran to help people from other cities who are interested in astronomy, to find an institute in their own city.

The most crowded section was for children, where they were painting about astronomical subjects, and some kids from the Association were explaining different things about astronomy for children who came into the kid's section. Thaqib also has held a painting competition in one primary school of Rasht during astronomy week(25th of April to 2nd of May 2009). Another program was showing movies as a public astronomical cinema in the Association's building that lots of people enjoyed it.

Thaqib also arranged the Astronomy Day's exam with cooperation of Iranian Astronomy Society and other astronomical communities in Iran as a competition between the people who are interested in astronomy. Another special program was a conference in which teachers of different schools and some authorities of the city also participated. At first M. Bagheri spoke about history of astronomy; then the head of the city council gave a speech. There were three other presentations from the members of the Association. One was about Iran's observatories, the other was about astronomical news, and the last was sky events of the next month.

Thaqib has planned programs to promote astronomy among the people of the other cities in our province Guilan, during the Astronomy Year 2009. One of these programs was held in astronomy week in Rezvanshahr. The program included some presentations and a public look at sky.

We informed people about the third Sundial Festival in Iran on 21st Jun 2009 (the summer solstice); hopefully the Association will have a public program for that and will inaugurate a new sundial to be constructed in Mellat park.

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* *Rasht* is the center of Guilan province in the north of Iran, the southern of Caspian sea.