

All about X Why Z

As a new science forum is launched,
Meher Marfatia explores some fab labs

Sundays need never be the same again. The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research will collaborate with Prithvi Theatre to treat science buffs to *Chai* and Why on the first Sunday morning of each month.

Kicking off on January 4, this loosely follows the format of the popular Café Scientifique in Europe and the Science Cafes of the US.

Chai and Why will welcome anyone to discuss science-related issues — be it global warming or stem cell research. The idea is to create a meeting point for science, shorn of jargon and its 'difficult' mystique.

Helping hands

Cut to 'Discover it', the snappy motto of *Navnirmiti*, a resource centre and activity hub with a library of over 500 science books. On display and sale are innovative puzzles and games, besides tools like telescopes and microscopes.

An after-school programme, Zero Gravity, allows kids to apply academic concepts in practical life. Young minds are fired by modules on the human body, air and water, and principles of energy and simple machines.



Do-it-yourself

Comet Media Foundation (formed in 1985, the year before Comet Halley last streaked the skies) is devoted to finding novel ways to 'learn how to learn' about science and the environment.

Comet director **Chandita Mukherjee** says, "Science and technology shape civilisations and attitudes. It's crucial to expose children to these worlds. All of us should question

everything with the classic question..why is it so?"

Mad Science is another attempt at do-it-yourself dynamics, hoping to groom junior **Einsteins**. It also encourages ingenuous thinking through kits on space, special effects and optical illusions, made by children.

The belief behind each of these ventures is essentially the same: hands-on experiences are better remembered than reading textbooks or taking down notes.

Science Day

Because he changed the way we understand light and sound, **C V Raman** is remembered on February 28 — the anniversary of his radical radiation discovery, the famed Raman Effect,

which earned him the 1930 physics Nobel Prize.

Now designated National Science Day, February 28 is celebrated by both Nehru Science Centre and the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education. A walk-in Open House is hosted, 'Meet the Scientist' sessions and botanical tours in their gardens round off the day's fun with interactive exhibits.

The man in whose memory one of the premier centres was instituted, would approve. It was **Homi Bhabha's** lifelong contention — that it's never too early to teach science.



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•Navnirmiti: 2577 3215 •Mad Science: 2285 0381