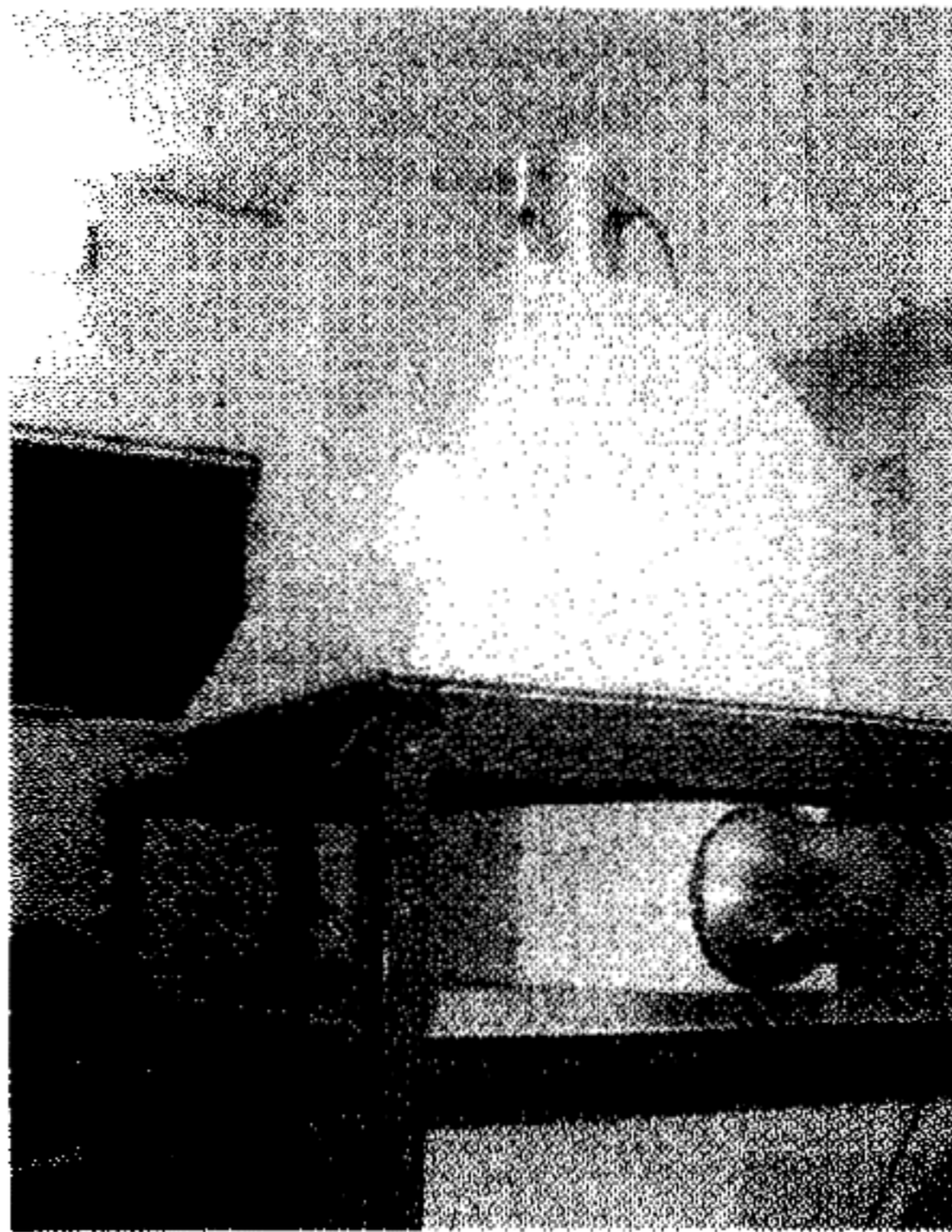


# Nasa project to monitor weather patterns at JNU

SANA SHAKIL ■ NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal University campus in the Capital has been chosen by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) as the site for installation of a 'cosmic ray detector device' (CRDD). The prestigious project is part of Nasa's plans for monitoring the weather patterns of the space and movements of earth's crust, following predictions made by ancient Mayans of Latin America that earth would face great calamities by 2012. While graphic predictions of world coming to an end have been depicted by some Hollywood films as *2012* and *The day after tomorrow*, Nasa is not taking things lightly. Fourteen data collection instruments are to be placed in 14 different countries to lead real time measurements of the Sun's activities and also tectonic movements deep below the earth's crust by the year 2012, but so far these devices have been set up in only three countries which include Croatia, Bulgaria and the JNU in India.

CRDD has been installed in the remote sensing applications laboratory of the school of environmental



Cosmic ray detector device

sciences. Professor Saumitra Mukherjee from the Department of Zoology and remote sciences at JNU said, "This is a part of space of environment viewing and analysis network developed by a consortium of scientists across the world in collaboration with NASA." Cosmic ray division Armenia has developed the CRDD for India.

Mukherjee told *The Pioneer* that this is the only detector available in

India to identify different species of cosmic rays and in all 14 such detectors are likely to be installed in the world by Nasa by 2012. Notably, sun is one of the sources of cosmic rays but there are some other sources from the outer space which generate cosmic rays too. The professor said, "CRDD started functioning successfully from December on our campus and is capable of differentiating between different types of cosmic rays. From the existing sources, it has been found that the rate of cosmic shower on earth has increased dramatically especially from 2009 onwards." Mukherjee explained that increased cosmic showers can be the reasons behind phenomenon such as 'global warming' and 'climate change' and said that the readings of this instrument will definitely help in understanding such phenomenon.

The detection of cosmic rays will help in predicting the resulting changes in the environment. The amount of cosmic rays usually increases before the occurrence of rains and before the onset of winters whereas the amount of cosmic rays usually decreases before the occurrence of an earthquake.