

## Researchers teach school students about isolation of bacterial DNA

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Pune:** Students from six schools in the city learned about gene sequencing and the technique of isolating and investigating bacteria during a workshop on Sunday.

Sutirth Dey, an associate professor at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, along with other research students from his lab, told the participating students about the actual gene sequencing techniques.

"About 40 infectious diseases have been discovered in the last 50 years alone — including SARS, MERS, Ebola, chikungunya, avian flu, swine flu and most recently, Zika



Students at a workshop at the IISER Pune's Science Activity Centre

and Nipah. Are these diseases being caused by completely new organisms? Or by organisms that have evolved from known pathogens? We

taught the students the actual techniques that are used to answer such questions," said Sutirth Dey.

Neelesh Dahanukar of IISER Pune also spoke on how to sequence genes.

The workshop involved isolation of bacterial DNA and gel electrophoresis by each student. The advanced techniques were meant to give the students an idea of how evolutionary research is performed in the labs.

Exciting Science Group (ESG), a volunteer group of scientists from the National Chemical Laboratory (NCL) and IISER-Pune, had organised this one-day intensive hands-on workshop on 'Evolving Genes: Isolating and Investigating Bacterial DNA'. About 12 Class X students participated in the workshop held at the IISER Pune's Science Activity Centre.