

4-day space workshop to focus on co-operation

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BANGALORE: In today's global era, it makes no sense to work in isolation anymore. Scientists know this best.

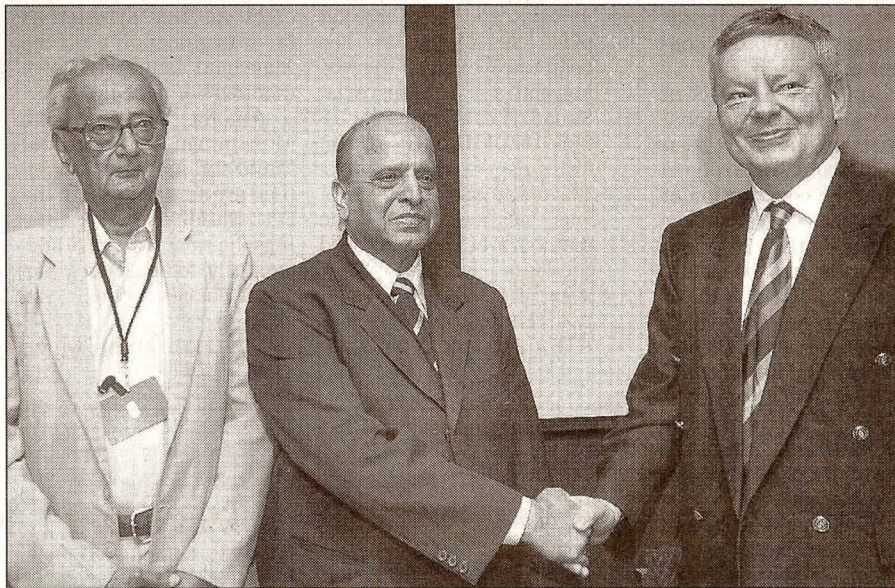
The second UN/Nasa workshop on International Heliophysical Year (IHY) and Basic Space Science inaugurated at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics today, reiterated this need to work together and help each other with available expertise.

The workshop spread over the next four days will see some 130 scientists from 31 nations discuss work being done in this area of study, that looks at the coupling of the earth's atmosphere with the sun. They will be looking at possible areas of collaboration, said Prof S S Hasan, director, IIA.

Co-operation

Hans Haubold, of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, told presspersons that the timing of the IHY coinciding with the 50 years of the UN committee on peaceful uses of outer space, was yet another affirmation of its commitment to space science and the spirit of international co-operation.

Joseph M Davila of Nasa Goddard Centre pointed out that the atmosphere of the Sun extends through interplanetary space and the IHY was a global outreach programme to understand this space terrestrial interaction, as well as to explain space science to the public.



NIAS Director Kasturirangan shaking hands with H Haubold of the United Nations office for Outer Space Affairs, during the UN/Nasa workshop on International Heliophysical Year (IHY) and Basic Space Science on Monday at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) in Bangalore on Monday. IIA Governing Council Chairman B V Sreekantan is also seen.

It was also an opportunity for the developed countries to help the developing ones with instrumentation, added his colleague Nat Gopalswamy.

For instance, the ionosphere above Africa is a relatively less known area, so helping the nations of the continent with necessary instruments, IHY would facilitate such transfer between the donor and the recipient countries.

During the course of the next three years, it is hoped that a new crop of observatories would be set up across the globe.

Heliospheric studies assumes importance considering the steady increase of

satellites put up in space and the impact of the sun's atmosphere has on these. In its three-pronged approach, the IHY would address scientific research, instrumentation and educating the public, he said.

Forum

Space science has been an area where co-operation has been increasingly yielding fruits, he noted touching upon programmes like the 'International Living with a star' that is a forum of 27 nations.

Earlier, Dr Kasturirangan who addressed the inaugural session, noted how it was important for the sci-

entists to first define the areas of co-operation.

Prof Hasan noted that India was doing quite well in the area of heliosphere studies with many telescopes and observatories equipped to study the sun.

On the cards is also a 2 metre solar telescope which will enable scientists to study tiny structures on the sun with a resolution of 50 km on the sun.

At an estimated cost of Rs 100 crore, the project, once approved, would be completed in five years' time.

At present, there are two such telescopes under construction in the US and Germany, he said.