

Celestial smile lights up the night sky

Staff Reporter

BANGALORE: It was a celestial phenomenon that quite literally drew a smile on the night sky on Monday night. The two brightest planets in our night sky — Venus and Jupiter — aligned themselves atop the cradle of a crescent moon to form a sparkling smiley-face that couldn't help but draw our attention to it.

"It is not a common occurrence and we are lucky that the sky was relatively clear," said R.C. Kapoor, professor at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics here.

The conjunction of these planetary objects took place on Monday morning but the phenomenon was visible by 6.30 p.m., changing slowly in configuration as the night drew.

Not all parts of the world saw the phenomenon the same way, he pointed out. "The moon is four lakh km away, Venus is 150 million km away and Jupiter 700 million



SPECTACULAR: *Venus and Jupiter align themselves atop the cradle of a crescent moon.*

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km away from the Earth's surface. However with this alignment they do all appear to be on the same direction," he explained. "It is not a rare sight; but it is infrequent

enough and it is one of the most spectacular sights I have ever seen."

It will be another four years before the event happens again, Prof. Kapoor said.