



Dr. Harsh Vardhan is with Rajeev Guglani and Hemant Pande. ***

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Visited Indian Institute of Astronomy, IIA in Bengaluru on Sunday (March 18). Took a tour of the library & archives, showcasing books authored by IIA scientists and the history of IIA from the time of Madras Observatory in 1792. Also seen instruments and maps related to survey undertaken during British rule. The archives at IIA also contain a pictographical memorabilia of its founding director Prof Vainu Bapu and documents related to research, interaction with Nobel Laureates S. Chandrasekhar & Sir CV Raman. Suggested to open up the IIA archives to students and asked the institute of evolve an appropriate plan at the earliest

Also discussed development of the proposed Large National Solar Telescope project. The Large National Solar Telescope project is to be completed by 2022, keeping in mind Prime Minister Modi's call for major developments to be dedicated to the nation, by the time India attains 75 years of Independence.

Also seen the laboratories, where IIA is developing experimental capability and prototyping critical technologies required to develop a fully indigenous 10m class National Large Optical Telescope in Ladakh. These included the indigenous development of improved mechanical actuators that can respond to few nanometeric (nearly 1000 times smaller than the thickness of hair) precision and mirror segment gap separation sensors (edge sensors).

Visited the Solar laboratory to see how a steady solar beam (corrects for Sun's motion on the sky) is brought into a controlled experimental environment for detailed spectroscopic studies.

Also had a chance to see the amateur 4-inch telescopes developed by IIA as part of the Year of Astronomy (in 2009), nearly 900 of which have been distributed to schools and colleges around the country, mostly in rural areas to stimulate interest in science and astronomy among the children. Wanted IIA to have such an Outreach program in Delhi in the next two months.

