

Focus on next generation of young scientists

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First Published : 20 Feb 2009 11:18:00 PM IST

Last Updated : 20 Feb 2009 11:10:53 AM IST

KOCHI: The Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF) is one of the most sought-after agencies in the country. Despite being a non-governmental body, it works in cohesion with two governments - India and the US. Established in 2000, the Forum has evolved a programme portfolio over the last three years that's largely conceived and driven by scientific communities.

IUSSTF extends support for symposia and conferences on topical and thematic areas of interest in both countries. But that's not all. The Forum has helped in setting up advanced training schools, public-private networked centres and knowledge R & D networked units as well.

"Our focus is on the next generation of young scientists.



We have been convening stimulating flagship events like the Frontiers of Science and Frontiers of Engineering symposia through the US national academies where the best is identified," says Arabind Mitra, executive director, IUSSTF, Delhi.

He has a counterpart in Washington who handles activities at the other end of the Forum. The third edition of the Frontiers of Science will take place in Agra in which a select young group of 27 Americans and 35 Indians (Bhatnagar awardees) will meet and discuss subjects and listen to talks beyond their field of specialisation.

"Our Stanford Indian Bio-design is a programme with five fellowships. Those selected will get an opportunity to work at AIIMS, IIT and Stanford. A couple of winners will be selected to work together for two years and come out with a product that has a commercial value." Some of the major initiatives of the IUSSTF include the Chandrayaan mission which led to the NASA-ISRO agreement on payloads, the IndoFlux network to monitor climatic change and the Airborne Cyclone Warning Programme to monitor cyclones. "Our Forum's major advantage is that we are a nongovernmental body supported by departments of science and technology (DST) and bio-technology (DBT). We help bring in experts from the two countries to a common platform. Most often we are not even sponsoring, just facilitating," explains Arabind.

The Forum has several programmes including the India Innovation Pioneers Challenge, DST Lockheed Martin India Innovation Growth Programme and the IBM-IUSSTF fellowship in nanotechnology.

Arabind Mitra was in the city to participate in the 'Nano Bio 2009' at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences.

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