

activist and writer) showed slides of his magazine *Santury Asia* and urged the youth to be curious and courageous to save mother nature. Overall, the conference encompassed discussions on conservation in various disciplines of biodiversity. Several awards were presented for posters and talks.

Biodiversity Asia 2012

The Second Asian Regional Conference of the Society of the Conservation Biology – Asia (SCB-Asia) section was held at J. N. Tata Auditorium in Bangalore during 7–10 August 2012. The conference was co-organized by the SCB-Asia sections, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment and IISc. The conference emphasized on reversing the biodiversity decline in the world. Biodiversity Asia 2012 highlighted the advances in research and conservation of Asia's rich biodiversity. The conference included poster sessions, plenary lectures, workshops and public lectures by students and leading scientists working in the field of biodiversity. Each day ended with a public talk to make the conservation message reach a wider public.

Conference themes included conservation governance, conservation biology, conservation management and policy making in biodiversity, freshwater systems, evolutionary biology and genetics. Among various plenary sessions, Mahesh Rangarajan spoke on nature, nation and science in times of change; Madhav Gadgil discussed about improving the governance of environment in India and Uma Ramakrishnan (National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore) spoke about assessing population connectivity for mammalian carnivores using landscape genetics, etc. In addition, various workshops were organized on topics such as understanding the impact of illegal animal trade in Asia on wildlife conservation, conservation genetics, Bayesian models in conservation science, etc. An award ceremony marked the end of the conference.

Home-coming event

The field of Raman spectroscopy is the result of the work of C. V. Raman, based on his discovery of the Raman effect for

which he received the Nobel Prize in 1928. Once in two years, an International Conference on Raman Spectroscopy is organized in different venues worldwide. The last time in India it was organized in 1978. The event of 2012 known as the 'Home-coming event', was held in Bangalore, during 12–17 August 2012. The conference brought together over 350 leading international Raman spectroscopists from 46 countries. C. N. R. Rao in his inaugural address emphasized the importance of the Raman effect in the recent past and recalled his first meeting with Raman. He added that Raman greatly encouraged large numbers of students through his lectures and that Raman was an 'architect of science in India'. The opening plenary lecture by Robin Clark (University College, London) focused on the contributions of four scientists – Rayleigh, Ramsay, Rutherford and Raman. This was followed by a plenary lecture by Hiro-o Hamaguchi (University of Tokyo) on the landmarks of Raman spectroscopy and its importance in scientific research. Various topics covered in the event included resonance Raman spectroscopy, biological and biomedical applications, nanomaterials, graphene and solid state, forensic art, archeological detection of materials, terrestrial and planetary applications, surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy, coherent Raman microscopy, instrumentation techniques and new developments, X-ray Raman, theoretical development and computation and Raman optical activity. An exhibition of books and journals, including 'C. V. Raman – A Pictorial Biography' was displayed by the Indian Academy of Sciences, which was founded by Raman. Besides this, the life and science of Raman were highlighted through various posters.

Hardik Panchal

Sarabhai Research Awards and PRL Award

Five scientists from around the country were awarded the Hari Om Ashram Pre-rit Dr Vikram Sarabhai Research Awards and PRL Awards for the year 2012. Each award carries a medal and a cash prize of Rs 50,000

The recipients of the Vikram Sarabhai Research Awards in different fields are

as follows: Space Science: **Tarun Souradeep** (Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune) for his contributions in the field of observational cosmology by developing new analytical approaches for studying anisotropy in cosmic microwave background data obtained by the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe and the recent Planck mission. The award under the Space Science category was shared by **Biswajit Paul** (Raman Research Institute, Bangalore) for his contributions to our understanding of X-ray sources based on studies of their spectral characteristics and development of new generation X-ray experiments to be flown in ASTROSAT and future Indian space missions. Space Application: **N. R. Patel** (Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun) for his contributions in the field of agro-meteorology and in particular for retrieving of crop biophysical parameters using remote sensing data to quantify primary production. Electronics, Informatics, Telematics and Automation: **Ashwin Gumaste** (Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai) for introducing novel concepts of light trail and omnipresent Ethernet and effective transfer of technology to industry. The recipient of the PRL Award was **Vineet K. Gahalaut** (National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad) for his outstanding work using GPS system to understand the processes of crustal deformation and occurrence of earthquakes.

NASI Awards

The National Academy of Sciences, India has announced the winners of its NASI-Young Scientist Platinum Jubilee Awards for 2012. Each award carries a citation, a bronze medal and Rs 25,000 in cash as a recognition to promise, creativity and excellence in young scientists. The award is given to recognize the notable contributions made by researchers in any branch of science and technology on the basis of their work carried out in India. The award is given to scientists below 35 years.

The recipients of the awards are as follows. Computer Science and Engineering: Ansuman Banerjee (Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata), V. Seena (Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Rajasthan); Chemical Sciences: Sujit Kumar Ghosh (Indian Institute of Science Education

and Research, Pune), Earth Science, Mathematics and Physics: Rajesh V. Nair (Bhaba Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai), Kirti Chandra Sahu (IIT, Hyderabad), Biomedical, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology: Neha Sehgal (National Brain Research Institute, Gurgaon), Rubina Tabassum (CSIR–Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, Delhi), Amit Awasthi (Translational Health Science Technology Institute, Gurgaon), Arun Kumar Trivedi (CSIR–

Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow); Plant Sciences, Agriculture and Environment: Santosh Kumar Upadhyay (CSIR–National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow), Rakesh Kumar Shukhla (Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Lucknow), Charu Lata (National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology, New Delhi).

NASI also announced NASI–Reliance Industries Platinum Jubilee Awards for innovation covering physical and bio-

logical sciences. The recipients of the awards are – Physical Sciences: Abhay Karandikar (IIT Bombay), Avinash Kumar Agarwal (IIT Kanpur), Biological Sciences: Manika Pal Bhadra (Indian Institute of Chemical Technology), Deepa Ghosh nee Thaloor (Wound Management and Tissue Engineering, Reliance Life Sciences Pvt Ltd, Navi Mumbai).

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