

IUCAA scientist among 2021 Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar winners

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CITY-BASED astrophysicist Kanak Saha was among the 11 recipients of the 2021 Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) prize, given by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on Sunday.

Every year, CSIR presents this award to scientists below 45 years of age for their contributions in biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, medicine, engineering and earth, atmosphere, ocean and planetary sciences. The award comprises a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh.

The 2021 SSB winner list did not feature any woman scientist.

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu presided over the CSIR's 80th foundation day celebrations in New Delhi on Sunday. Naidu urged CSIR to turn futuristic and focus on agriculture research. He also listed climate change, pollution, epidemic and pandemic outbreaks among the growing challenges that the scientific community will have to focus on.

Saha currently works at the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) in Pune and leads stud-



Kanak Saha

ies on galaxies, their formation and evolution. Specialising in ultraviolet astronomy, he is the principal investigator in the AstroSat UV Deep Field (AUDF) project. AstroSat, launched by ISRO in 2015, was India's maiden space-based observatory that continues to be operational.

Anish Ghosh, a member of the Indian Academy of Sciences and recipient of the award under mathematics, works on Lie groups and number theory. He is presently a faculty at the School of Mathematics, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai. Another award winner in the same category is Saket Saurabh from the Indian Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai. His work focuses on algorithmic game theory and exact exponential algorithms, among others.

The awardee from the engineering sciences category is Debdeep Mukhopadhyay, a faculty at IIT-Kharagpur. He works on developing next generation hardware technology with emphasis on cryptography, infor-

mation security and cyber physical systems security.

The awardees of biological sciences are Amit Singh from Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, and Arun Kumar Shukla of IIT-Kanpur. Singh's work focuses on infectious diseases with focus on HIV and tuberculosis. Shukla's research involves the use of protein biochemistry, receptor pharmacology and structural biology to understand select non-canonical G-Protein Coupled Receptor.

Working at the Chemistry division of CSIR North East Institute of Science and Technology, Jorhat, Binay Kumar Saikia has bagged the award under the earth, atmosphere, ocean and planetary sciences category. His areas of research cover aerosol chemistry and low-grade coal beneficiation, among others.

For medicine, the winners are Jeemon Panniyammal from Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram and Rohini Srivastava of IIT-Bombay. Srivastava works on photothermal therapy for breast cancer and in developing nano-engineered sensors where Panniyammal is a professor of chronic disease epidemiology.

