

Five young scientists chosen for Infosys Prize

The Infosys Science Foundation, promoted by IT services major Infosys Ltd., announced the winners of prizes in five categories for 2011. Kalyanmoy Deb, won the prize for Engineering and Computer Sciences. The prize for Life Sciences was awarded to Imran Siddiqi. Kannan Soundararajan, won the prize for Mathematical Sciences for his “path-breaking work” on number theory. Sriram Ramaswamy, won the prize for research on various aspects of the collective behaviour of living systems ranging from bacteria to schools of fish in the ocean. Raghuram G. Rajan, won one of the two prizes awarded for the Social Sciences. Pratap Bhanu Mehta, won the other prize awarded for the Social Sciences (International Relations). The Infosys Prize was instituted in 2009. The former president A.P.J. Kalam will present the medals on January 9, 2012.

Now, cancer vaccine awaits human clinical trial

The vaccine, developed by scientists at the National Institute of Immunology (NII) in New Delhi, may prove to be a boon to those suffering from breast, ovarian, cervical, thyroid and blood cancer. Anil Suri, who heads the team that has developed the vaccine, said it would be put to clinical trials at the Cancer Institute at Adyar in Chennai and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre in the U.S. The trial at Sloan-Kettering would be conducted under an agreement signed between the NII and the National Cancer Institute under the U.S. government's National Institutes of Health, then be primed with an antigen called SPAG-9, discovered by the NII scientists and given back to the patients in the form of a vaccine.

Agni-V to be tested by February

A day after the successful test of ballistic missile Agni-IV, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) said that it would be ready to test 5,000-kilometre range Agni-V by February, putting the country in league with three other countries. Aimed at boosting the country's strategic defense capability, the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) is now undergoing integration. “Our aim is to test-fire by February 2012” DRDO Director-General V.K. Saraswat said. The DRDO sees the successful launch of Agni-IV as a building block towards future missile development programmes. Besides the United States, Russia and China, no other country had the capacity while France is working on a similar capacity in delivering it underwater.

BEL receives Raksha Mantri's Awards in five categories

Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) received the prestigious Raksha Mantri's Awards in five categories for the year 2009-10 at a ceremony held at the DRDO Bhavan in New Delhi on November 14. Chairman and Managing Director, BEL, Anil Kumar, along with General Manager of BEL's Panchkula unit, Suresh N., received the Raksha Mantri's Award for the Best Performing Division of DPSUs (Defence Public Sector Undertakings) for BEL's Panchkula unit from Defence Minister A.K. Antony. Established in October 1985 the Panchkula unit was engaged in the design, development and manufacture of communication radios, crypto products and airborne equipment such as Head up Display (HUD).

Haryana “pro-investment” : Israel

Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda has sought technological assistance from Israel for setting up more centers of excellence and saline water technology and sewage water treatment projects in the State. Israeli Ambassador Alon Ushpiz and Mr. Hooda also asked for Israel's assistance in setting up a Centre of Excellence for Fruits-Mango and Persimmon in Ladwa, a Centre of Excellence for Bee-keeping in Mewat, a Centre of Excellence for Floriculture Crops, and a Centre of Excellence for Organic Farming in Fruits and Vegetables. The Centre of Excellence for Fruits in Sirsa and the Centre of Excellence for Vegetables in Karnal have already been set up. Mr. Ushpiz said Israeli companies wanted to invest in Haryana because of the “pro-investment environment”.

Kannada author Bhyrappa awarded Saraswati Samman

Eminent Kannada author S. L. Bhyrappa was honoured with Saraswati Samman in literature for his epic novel "Mandra", his musical take on the question of art against morality and other philosophies of life. The Saraswati Samman is awarded by the K. K. Birla Foundation to a work published in the last 10 years, selected from among works published in 25 Indian languages. Mr. Bhyrappa, 77, a veteran of 22 novels, many of which have been translated into other languages, published "Mandra", or "The Lower Musical Note", in 2002.

Ties on equal footing, Karzai tells U.S.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai outlined conditions for a long-term U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan at a major gathering of elders debating the future after NATO combat forces leave. Mr. Karzai told that he wanted Afghan-U.S. relations to be those of "two independent countries" and assured neighbours like China and Russia that a long-term deal would not affect ties with them. The U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership, which diplomats hoped would be concluded by now, will govern ties between the two after 2014.

U.S.-Australia deal ruffles China

China has expressed concern over a security agreement signed by the United States and Australia, saying the military alliance "may not be in the interest" of the region. In Canberra, U.S. President Barack Obama and Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard has announced a security arrangement under which 250 U.S. Marines would be stationed, on rotation, in Australian bases in Darwin and northern parts. They said the agreement would help maintain security in the Asia-Pacific region. The number of personnel would subsequently be expanded to 2,500.

MPs protest London Olympics deal with Dow Chemical Company

A group of British MPs, backed by rights activists and a number of former Olympians, have asked the London Olympics 2012 Organizers (Locog) to scrap a £7 million sponsorship deal with Dow Chemical Company because of its link to the 1984 Union Carbide Bhopal gas tragedy or face a possible boycott by Indian athletes. This follows protests that Dow, which bought Union Carbide in 2001, owes compensation to the victims of the gas tragedy.

Siemens plans to invest 250 m euro in India

Global energy, healthcare, technological and industrial products giant Siemens AG announced that it planned to pump in around 250 million euro (about Rs.1,700 crore) worth of investments in India to develop nearly 60 new baseline products, especially for the Indian urban and rural markets in various sectors, as part of its new global strategy. Siemens spokesman Bernd Eitel announced that Siemens had also launched the world's first 1,200 kV SF6 circuit breaker from its manufacturing facility at Aurangabad in Maharashtra.

Airtel hikes tariffs on international calls

In the face of financial pressure, Airtel has increased the international call rate tariffs by up to 10 per cent for some destinations for all customers and reduced certain benefits on add-on services for its pre-paid subscribers.

Favre Leuba comes under Titan fold

Titan Industries, manufacturer of lifestyle products such as watches, eye ware and gold jewellery, has acquired Swiss watch brand Favre Leuba for over Rs.13 crore as a part of its strategic business to expand product portfolio.

Doping list released to Sunita Godara

A 10-year-old list containing names of athletes reported to have tested positive in dope tests conducted at a non-accredited laboratory was ordered to be released to marathoner Sunita Godara by a National Anti-Doping Disciplinary panel. The panel had taken up the petition of Godara, following a 2009 Delhi High Court order. The petition seeks to re-open old cases, numbering more than 500 (according to Godara's calculations), to determine whether there was institutionalized doping and if cases were rightly handled by the authorities.

Sangvekar clocks best Indian time

On a day when four National records were sunk, the most celebrated mark was achieved by Saurabh Sangvekar of Karnataka in the men's 800m freestyle. The tall 17-year-old Thane-born lad produced the day's first mark of 8:12.57s that turned out to be the best Indian time. In 65th National aquatic meet at the Veer Budhu Bhagat Aquatic Stadium in Ranchi. The National meet record stood in Divese's favour at 8:23.08s.

Olympic qualifier draw favours India

Former champion India was handed a favourable draw for the Olympic men's field hockey qualifiers, even as South Korea and Spain faced a tough journey to London. India will play lower-ranked teams on home soil in the first of three qualifying tournaments, according to the draw released by the International Hockey Federation (FIH). The eight-time Olympic gold medallist, which failed to qualify for the Beijing Games, was drawn with Canada, France, Poland, Egypt and the United States in the New Delhi tournament from February 15 to 26. The teams that have already qualified are Germany, host Britain, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan and South Africa.