

IISER scientist receives international honour

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: Ramana Athreya, a scientist from the city-based Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), has received international acclaim for his efforts to protect the wildlife and cultural diversity of Arunachal Pradesh.

Athreya received the Whitley award—the world's top honour for grassroots nature conservation — at a ceremony in London last week.

The award recognises Athreya's efforts in uniting Arunachal Pradesh's culturally diverse communities, forestry staff and government officials in conservation alliances to work together to safeguard the state's scenic beauty and wildlife riches, as well as in creating new and sustainable economic opportunities for local people.

Athreya received his prize during a ceremony at the Royal

The Whitley awards scheme is an annual competition, first held in 1994. The award recognises Athreya's efforts to protect the wildlife and cultural diversity of Arunachal Pradesh

Geographical Society, London, hosted by the Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) on May 11. The prize includes a project grant of £30,000, a trophy and membership of the influential network and professional development training.

“The aim of the Whitley Awards is to identify and applaud inspirational conservation leaders, and give them new funds and skills to enable them to make even greater use of their scientific ex-

pertise and local knowledge to deliver real and lasting benefits for people and wildlife and the places both share,” Georgina Domberger, director, WFN said.

In Ramana's case, the judges were particularly impressed by his commitment to involve Arunachal Pradesh tribes-people in safeguarding and celebrating the glorious abundance of rare and special wildlife on their doorstep, and ensure that they have a share in the substantial yet sustainable economic benefits such an approach to nature conservation makes possible.

The Whitley awards scheme is an annual competition, first held in 1994. In the 18 years since the scheme began, it has given grants worth more than £6 million to support the work of inspirational conservation leaders in 70 countries, and built a network of more than 120 Whitley alumni.