City scientist wins Bhatnagar award

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: Scientist Sanjeev Galande, head of the centre of excellence in epigenetics (CoEE) at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) here won the prestigious Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar award for his ongoing research on regulation of gene activity.

The award was announced on Sunday.

Galande said on Monday that they have reached a stage where he has found a link or the path of the signalling process of genes into a nucleus. Finding the link has proved important for the research."

The emphasis is on studying the epigenetic modifications — the heritable changes that influence gene function without changing the DNA sequence.

"We are particularly interested in studying the implications of these phenomena towards development and differentiation of cells. To accomplish this, we use a wide variety of model systems such as cells of the immune system and stem cells," Galande said. The outcome of these studies would be important in understanding the biology of infectious diseases and cancer, he added.

Galande, who was nominated while he was working with the National Centre for Cell Science, Pune, shifted to the IISER earlier this year to head the CoEE. A major part of the research began at the NCCS.

Galande studied at the Dnyana Prabodhini school and the Sir

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Parshurambhau College. He obtained his PhD in biochemistry from the Indian Institute of Science in 1996. As a post-doctoral fellow at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, US from 1996 to 2001, Galande studied the role of 'MAR binding proteins' (proteins that bind to the matrix attachment region of the DNA) in development of tumours. Galande joined the NCCS in 2001 as a senior scientist.

At CoEE, Galande has assembled a team of scientists to study the evolution of epigenetic mechanism using multiple model systems.