

Following in Raman's footsteps



Seen here is the prima vera (right) planted in 1973 on the lawns of Raman Research Institute (left) at the very spot C V Raman was cremated in 1970. It blossomed with a beautiful golden crown on National Science Day, 28 February 1988 | MIDHUN RAGH

The Raman Effect today

The city which holds a special place in Dr CV Raman's heart will join the celebrations. Scientists, engineers, teachers and students will commemorate the day by holding lectures, seminars, discussions and exhibitions on his research.

According to the scientific community in the city, his contributions have changed the way we live. Dr Kota Harinarayana, the father of LCA programme says, "He revolutionised the modern technology and a lot of equipment and diagnosis that we see today are as a result of Raman's effect. He has done a great service to mankind and on several occasions, he has demonstrated that he is an ideal teacher."

For former DRDO chief adviser, Dr KG Narayanan, the Raman effect has a deep impact on the progress of physics and also allowed room for a better understanding of quantum physics and the atomic phenomena in matter. "The Raman effect has been widely used in instrumentation as well as technology in turn having a wide impact on our lives. His lesser known works, especially the Raman-Nath effect has a significant impact on electronic warfare."

Dr Narayanan also feels that if Raman had his say, India would not be in the current position in terms of indigenous instrumentation. "He always believed that we should not be dependent on the west," he says.

To mark the 125th birth anniversary of scientist Sir C V Raman, Raman Research Institute (RRI) in Sadashivanagar is giving about 50 school students from Mysore a peek into its scientific inventions and research.

Despite November 7 being the Founder's Day for the faculty and staff here, there is no gala celebration that indicates it.

"We do not idolise Raman, nor do we only continue his work - in fact, we have no one working on the Raman effect here right now - and that's not what he would have wanted either," says S R Ram, spokesperson, RRI.

The scientist would often bring children onto the

campus here and take them around, show them all the labs and engage with them. So that's what has remained as a tradition.

"We have about 30 to 40 schoolchildren over for the Founder's Day as well as World Science Day on February 28, the day on which Raman announced his Raman effect for which he won the Nobel prize in 1930.

"Last year, some students from Kautilya Vidyalaya in Mysore had come over. When the teachers there learnt that we welcome student visitors especially on this day, they wrote to us again asking if they could bring along another batch studying in class X," says Ram.

RAMAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE:

■ Raman Research Institute was founded in 1948 by Sir C V Raman, where he served as director till his death in 1970

■ The institute continues to conduct research in the fields of astronomy and astrophysics, light and matter physics, soft condensed matter, theoretical physics chemistry, liquid crystals, physics in biology, and signal processing, imaging and instrumentation

■ It offers visiting students' programmes to students, where they can conduct research at the institute for about a year outside of their college curriculum as well as PhD programmes in chemistry and physics among others

The schedule for the day generally includes a few demonstrations, a tour of the campus - the chemistry, physics and electronic labs, the mineralogy museum which has collections of precious stones, most of them brought in by Raman, and a movie on the physicist.

"The movie we usually show was made by Doordarshan decades ago and is not of the best quality. So this year, we have some pictures and other visuals that we dug out of the archives and our other repositories, which will be a part of the introductory presentation," shares Ram.

This year, the interactions will happen after each presentation, so that students may clarify any doubts specific to the subject matter of the sessions. The members of the scientific community working here hope that some of the young visitors' curiosity is aroused. "Perhaps one per cent of the children who visit the institute will take to science. We need some good minds in the field - nowadays as pure science is not as much a preferred course as it was earlier. There's a lot of pressure for them to choose more lucrative careers like software instead," Ram says.

—Chetana Divya Vasudev