

Science in the spotlight

On Wednesday National Science Day was observed and Raman Research Institute marked the occasion with interactive experiments and exhibitions

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EXACTLY 96 years ago yesterday, the world was made aware of a discovery by an Indian physicist that forever changed the way humans understood the way light interacts with matter. The Raman effect, as it was dubbed later, was a scientific breakthrough with reverberations felt far beyond the world of physics, with applications in chemistry, medicine, and mineral extraction. For his contributions, Sir CV Raman was awarded the coveted Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930, becoming the second Indian till then to receive the honour and the first Asian to do so in a scientific field.

Commemorating the occasion, Feb 28 is celebrated as the National Science Day, to spread



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awareness on the importance of science in daily life. Bengaluru's Raman Research Institute (RRI), conceived by Raman and established in 1948, marked the occasion with a science extravaganza. "The Raman Research Institute is the legacy of a great man. The National Science Day is held as an open day so that the public can see the frontier research in contemporary

physics being done at the Institute. For instance, we recently launched a satellite called Expose into space which was designed, conceived, and built entirely at the Institute. The idea is to give the public, especially students, a glimpse into the beauty of science so that they will be inspired by this and pursue fundamental sciences as they grow up," says Dr V G Subramanian, assistant to the director, Raman Research Institute.

The open day hosted varied activities designed to only to inspire scientific temperament, but also educate visitors about Raman's career and the Institute's history. Pavilions erected across various locations on campus, including the CV Raman Lawn, hosted interactive sessions, various science experiments, as well DIY experiments to engage students. "The Raman lawn has special significance because Raman was cremated there. A tree was planted as a living memorial to him," shares Subramanian. Visitors also got to view sunspots through a telescope, and witness radio astronomy experiments.

Raman's discovery was pivotal in Indian history, demonstrating to the world its capabilities on the global scientific stage in a time still overshadowed by colonialism. RRI's open day celebrations also captured that history through photographs and articles from that period. "The

Raman Museum, and archives house Raman's personal collection and many other rare books. For instance, clippings of important events, like the first newspaper announcement of Raman's discovery, published on Feb 29, 1928," Subramanian adds.

