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Harvard professor receives SASTRA-Ramanujan Award

Special Correspondent

Ramanujan is an inspiration for mathematicians worldwide: Wei Zhang



R. Lakshmi Narayanan, Senior Professor, Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, presents the SASTRA-Ramanujan Award to Professor Wei Zhang of Harvard University at the SASTRA University at Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday. With them are Krishnaswami Alladi, from the University of Florida, and S. Swaminathan, Dean, SASTRA University.

KUMBAKONAM: Srinivasa Ramanujan has been the source of inspiration for all mathematicians in the world, Wei Zhang, professor of Harvard University, said here on Wednesday.

Professor Wei Zhang, a Benjamin Pierce Instructor at the Department of Mathematics, Harvard University, received the SASTRA-Ramanujan Award, instituted by the Shanmugha Arts Science Technology and Research Academy (SASTRA) University to encourage path-breaking research in Ramanujan Mathematics for 2010.

Lakshmi Narayanan, Senior Professor, Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, presented the award, carrying a prize of \$10,000 and a citation, at the International Conference on Number Theory and Automorphic Forms at SASTRA's Srinivasa Ramanujan Centre.

Prof. Wei Zhang said he was delighted to visit Ramanujan's house here.

According to the citation, Prof. Wei Zhang was honoured for far-reaching contributions, by himself and in collaboration with others, to a broad range of areas, including number theory, automorphic forms, L-functions, trace formulas, representation theory and algebraic geometry. The award also recognises the profound influence he has wielded in the past few years on number theory and related areas by introducing several deep ideas and techniques.

Reading out the citation, Krishnaswami Alladi, chairman of the panel of experts of the award committee, said that by receiving the award, Prof. Wei Zhang, the unanimous choice of the panel, emerged as the worldwide leader in mathematics.

Delivering a lecture, Lakshmi Narayanan said mathematics, the basis for all sciences, was being relegated to the background now. This, he said, was unfortunate, and efforts of universities such as the SASTRA should be appreciated as they gave importance to mathematics and fundamental sciences.

Describing Ramanujan and scientist Sir C.V. Raman as two icons of India, Mr. Lakshmi Narayanan said both had many commonalities: they were born on the banks of the Cauvery, Ramanujan at Erode and Raman at Thiruvanaikaval. They were not students of any institution, but were driven by a passion for mathematics and science. "Raman was a young genius, and Ramanujan was a real prodigy."

S. Swaminathan, Dean, Sponsored Research, SASTRA University, said mathematics teachers handling Plus-One and Plus-Two classes in 35 schools in Thanjavur district attended the conference. The aim was to give them an opportunity to interact with world famous mathematicians. They were also provided with Rs. 5,000 each to buy books for their school libraries.

Eminent mathematicians such as Dependra Prasad, Shouwu Zhang, Ritabrata Munshi and Arvind Nair spoke on vital mathematical topics.

K. Kannan, Dean (Humanities and Sciences), proposed a vote of thanks.

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