

## Infosys award for NIIST scientist

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Scientist A Ajayaghosh has bagged the Infosys Prize 2012 for physical sciences in recognition of his pioneering research in the construction of supra molecular functional materials, which can be employed as components in organic electronic devices and in selective optical sensing and imaging. He is the second Malayali chosen for the award, after Prof Thanu Padmanabhan in 2009.

Prof Ajayaghosh, the CSIR outstanding scientist at the National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) here, is among seven scientists chosen for the Infosys award this year. The prize carries a gold medal, a citation and a purse of Rs 50 lakh in all categories.

"I am humbled to know that science is respected. Infosys chairman [Kris Gopalakrishnan](#) called me this morning to say that I am selected for the award. It speaks of their vision to promote science popularisation," he told TOI on Friday.

Explaining the complex supra-molecular chemistry, he said, "Molecules communicate through weak interactions and when thousands of molecules try to understand that communication they form different types of structures. This special class of molecules, called pi-systems, has inherent electronic properties and have great potential for photonic and electronic applications."

"The molecules can be used as chemical markers in diagnosing diseases, including [cancer](#), at an early stage. It can also be used to detect explosives such as trinitrotoluene (TNT) and landmines left in fields for a long time before it pollutes and harms the environment," he said.

The other awardees include Dr. Ashish Lele, scientist at National Chemical Laboratories, Pune in Engineering and Computer Science, Prof Sanjay Subrahmanyam, distinguished professor of history with an endowed chair in pre-modern Indian history at [University of California](#), Los Angeles for Humanities, Prof [Amit Chaudhuri](#), professor of contemporary literature, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK for literary studies, Dr Satyajit Mayor, professor of cellular organization and signaling at the National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bangalore for Life Sciences, Prof Manjul Bhargava, professor of mathematics, [Princeton University](#), US, for mathematical sciences and Prof Arunava Sen, professor, Indian Statistical Institute in New Delhi, for social sciences.