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## IIT Kanpur Prof wins Birla science award

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The 2009 G.D. Birla Award for Scientific Research is being conferred upon 43-year-old IIT professor Manindra Agrawal, the G.D. Birla Foundation said in a statement on Tuesday.

Agrawal, who is N. Rama Rao chair professor at IIT Kanpur's department of computer science and engineering, is credited with pioneering research work in theories of computation and algorithm.

The G.D. Birla Award for Scientific Research, instituted in 1991, honours high-calibre scientific accomplishments of Indian scientists, preferably below the age of 50. It carries a cash prize of Rs 1.50 lakh.

Agrawal is credited with designing a "deterministic polynomial time algorithm", a problem that was probed and unsolved for nearly 200 years.

Three previous winners — R.A. Mashelkar, Ashoke Sen and Govardhan Mitra — were subsequently elected to the Fellow of the Royal Society, London.

The selection criteria involves scrutiny and evaluation of a nominee's work by a board headed by the chief of the Indian National Science Academy. The board comprises eminent Indian scientists, including Prof M.M. Sharma, former director of the Institute of Chemical Technology, Prof. Asis Dutta of the National Centre for Plant Genome Research Centre and Anupam Varma national professor at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, among others.