

CSIR lab bars scientists from taking part in science march

Notice issued as part of a safety measure, says IGIB director

Even as scientists across the country participated in a 'March for Science' to demand greater budgets for research and curbs on "pseudo science," researchers from a prominent CSIR lab here were explicitly warned by its director from participating in it.

Multiple scientists at the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), a prominent CSIR lab here, told The Hindu that they were keen on going but didn't join because of a gag order. The Hindu saw an email sent out by IGIB director Sanjay Kumar to all scientists. Mr. Kumar told The Hindu that the scientists were barred from going because participation posed a potential security risk. "We don't know the size of the mob involved...when government scientists are part of such a demonstration it could lead to problems. This notice was issued as part of a safety measure," he added.

The CSIR, a chain of 39 laboratories across the country and government-funded, is grappling with a severe fund crunch. This has led to several programmes, including at IGIB, being scrapped.

The CSIR, as a whole, didn't issue instructions desisting scientists from participating in the march.

Event held in Delhi

The India March for Science, according to Vinay Kumar, a mathematics professor at Delhi University, saw about "400 scientists" participate in Delhi on Wednesday. It was organised by a group called Break-Through India.