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Indian-Origin Climate Scientist Wins Prestigious Crafoord Prize In US

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Veerabhadran Ramanathan, an Indian-origin climate scientist, has won the Crafoord Prize in Geosciences, 2026.

The prize was awarded by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

The Crafoord Prize is often called the “**Nobel of Geo-sciences**” because of its prestige.

Why He Was Awarded

Ramanathan received the award for decades of research on climate change.

His work focused on super-pollutants and atmospheric brown clouds, which have changed scientific understanding of global warming.

In 1975, while working at NASA, he discovered that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) trap heat up to 10,000 times more than carbon dioxide.

Impact of His Work

His research transformed climate science and highlighted the role of pollutants beyond CO₂.

The findings helped form key international agreements like the Montreal Protocol, which reduced harmful emissions.

Background and Education

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Ramanathan was born in Madurai and grew up in Chennai, India.

He started his career as an engineer and later studied at Annamalai University and the Indian Institute of Science.

He is now Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego.

Work Beyond Science

Ramanathan also worked on the Indian Ocean Experiment (INDOEX), which documented atmospheric brown clouds over South Asia.

His studies linked air pollution to weakening of the Indian monsoon and faster melting of Himalayan glaciers.

He has advised global leaders and even the Vatican on climate ethics.

About the Crafoord Prize

The award includes a gold medal and about 8 million Swedish kronor (around USD 900,000).

It will be presented during Crafoord Days in Stockholm and Lund in May 2026.

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