

CSIR and DST to remain headless for now?

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The retirement of Dr T Ramasami on May 05, 2014, has left the department of science and technology (DST) without a leader at the moment. Keeping that in view, the secretary of department of biotechnology (DBT), Dr K Vijay Raghavan has been given additional responsibility of DST by the government. The appointment of new secretary is likely to happen weeks after May 16, 2014 when the new government takes over at the centre.

While it can be understood that the present government avoided making direct appointment at this juncture but what can't be is that it could have been done few months back. Dr Ramasami who is known as an efficient administrator and advocate of science, would surely have stepped aside to pave the way for it.

Since Dr Ramasami was also handling the additional charge of director general, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), this key scientific agency too shall remain headless for the next couple of few weeks. While the ministry of science and technology might make some interim arrangement or perhaps it would exist by default, but the question is whether that is acceptable in a democratic country like India. The reasons behind the delay in appointments has been a key headache for the UPA government, now facing tough times in the current elections.

Earlier, as per sources, Dr Suresh Das who is currently serving as the director of National Institute for Inter-disciplinary Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, was recommended to head the CSIR by the expert committee that found his credentials right enough. However, the S&T ministry higher ups (minister ignored the committee suggestions twice) chose to put that on hold.

Politics and science surely don't share an easy relationship.