

Scientists need the oxygen of free speech

PREMIUM

Scientific research institutes are part of the broader society and their members have the same constitutional right as others to participate in social discussions

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'A key value in science is to challenge the arbitrary use of authority' | Photo Credit: Getty Images

Last week, more than 500 scientists and academics wrote to the Indian institute of Science (IISc) criticising its administration for prohibiting a discussion on the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act. In response, the director of a different research institute, the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER) at Mohali, Punjab, issued a

show cause notice to two faculty members at his institute who had signed the letter to the IISc.

As a signatory of the letter, this writer would like to explain why it is important for scientific research institutions to encourage social and political discussions, rather than seeking to shut them down like the IISc and IISER administrations have done.



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