

Dr Mashelkar presented Stars of Asia Award

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Dr RA Mashelkar, Director General, CSIR, was presented the Stars of Asia Award by George Bush Sr., former US President at a function in Beijing on November 16, 2005. The prestigious American journal Business Week had voted Dr Mashelkar amongst the top 25 Stars of Asia. This is the first time that Business Week has honored any scientist from Asia in its Asian Star category. The journal had applauded Dr Mashelkar's role as a pre-eminent leader in Indian science and technology. His role in transforming CSIR, leading India's intellectual property movement and also redirecting science and technology suited to the developing world conditions were specially highlighted in the journal.

Dr Mashelkar bags Asutosh Mookerjee Memorial Award

The prestigious Asutosh Mookerjee Memorial Award has been bestowed on Dr RA Mashelkar, DG, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research for the year 2005-06.

The award will be presented during the inaugural function of the Annual Session of the Indian Science Congress Association on January 3, 2006 at Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University, Hyderabad.

The award, consisting of a General Certificate, perpetuates the memory of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the first General President of the Association of Agricultural Scientists of the country. George Bush Sr., former US President.

The Indian Science Congress Association instituted this award during its Platinum Jubilee Celebration in 1988 to honor a distinguished scientist of the country every year.

Indian scientists elected to ICSU

Professor Goverdhan Mehta, former president of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and CSIR Bhatnagar Fellow, was elected president, ICSU at the last general assembly held at Suzhou, China. Professor Mehta is the second Indian scientist to have reached this coveted position.

Professor Mehta, former director, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and vice chancellor, University of Hyderabad is a recognized expert in the chemistry of complex natural and non-natural products, the design of new reactions and reagents, and the use of photodynamic therapy for cancer treatment.

He has published more than 300 research papers in leading international journals and has contributed to several monographs in the area of contemporary interest in organic chemistry.

In addition, he has developed innovative processes and new technology for industrial applications.

Prof. Goverdhan Mehta

Professor Anupam Varma, vice-president, INSA and senior scientist at the Advanced Centre for Plant Virology, Division of Plant Pathology, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, has taken over as the chairman of ICSU Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific. Professor Varma has earlier worked with FAO (UN) to develop horticultural Research Institute at Ibadan, Nigeria. He has made important contributions to fundamental and applied aspects of plant virology and developed technologies for sensitive diagnosis of the virus and virus like diseases of crop plants. He initiated work on molecular biology in India which has provided lead to our understanding of the diseases caused by Begomo, Liar, Nano, Poty and Tospo-viruses which cause more damaging diseases of plants in India. Recently he has developed transgenic cucumber, papaya, potato, and tomato for resistance to viruses affecting these crops.

The International Council for Science (ICSU) was created in 1931. The Paris-based ICSU is the leading global non-governmental organization concerned with promotion of International Scientific activity in different branches of science and their applications of the benefit of humanity. As many as 101 countries of the world are affiliated to ICSU and its scientific unions. The INSA is the adhering organization in India on behalf of Government of India to ICSU.

Former research head of AstraZeneca, UK joins Avesthagen Board

Avestha Gengraine Technologies Pvt. Ltd. (Avesthagen), India's leading healthcare technology group focused on the convergence between pharmaceuticals, food and preventive personalized medicine has globalized its Board of Directors and Scientific Advisory Committee with the addition of Dr Barry J Furr, former chief scientific officer and head of research at AstraZeneca (UK) and Dr Simon Best, founder and chairman of Ardana Plc. (UK).

Prof Barry Furr was chief scientist and head of project evaluation at AstraZeneca and a member of the senior R&D management team. He has a successful track record both in endocrinology and discovering and bringing anti-cancer drugs to the market. He has sat on committees for the MRC, BBSRC and Wellcome Trust and advises an international venture capital fund on scientific investments.

While the other new board member Dr Simon Best is the founder and chairman of Ardana Plc, UK, he is also chairman-elect of the UK BioIndustry Association (BIA), chairman of the Edinburgh University Technology Fund, non-executive chairman of Neuro3D, director of the Doyle Foundation and the Hebrides Ensemble. Dr Best served as a governor of the Food and Agriculture Section of the World Economic Forum (WEF) from 1994-98. Dr Best has previously served as a member of Special Advisory Groups on Intellectual Property and Biotechnology for the World Bank. He is an Industry Adviser to BIO Ventures for Global Health (BVGH), spun out of the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates and Rockefeller Foundations.

Jai Nagarkatti to head Sigma-Aldrich Corp

The Sigma-Aldrich Corporation's Board of Directors announced the appointment of Jai Nagarkatti (president and chief operating officer) as president and chief executive officer effective January 1, 2006. He will succeed David Harvey, chairman and CEO, who will continue to serve as chairman of the company's Board of Directors. Jai Nagarkatti was also elected as a member of the Board of Directors.

Jai Nagarkatti's career at Sigma-Aldrich has spanned R&D, production, operations and sales and marketing. Since August 2004, he has been chief operating officer and president. Previously he served as the president of the largest research division and the fine chemicals business. Jai Nagarkatti, a US citizen, was born in Hyderabad, India. He obtained his Master's degree in Chemistry from Osmania University in Hyderabad and subsequently a PhD in Organic Chemistry at Texas A&M University.

David Harvey said, "Jai Nagarkatti is a very seasoned and knowledgeable leader who has had a major impact on the success and growth of Sigma-Aldrich. His experience and insight into our business will serve the company well as we continue our focus on life science and high technology."

Jai Nagarkatti noted, "I am pleased by the vote of confidence that the Board of Directors and David Harvey have given me and I look forward to the challenge of accelerating the performance of Sigma-Aldrich and strengthening the company's position as a worldwide leader in our research and fine chemical businesses."

Prof. Vijay Chandru injured in terror attack on IISc

Prof. Vijay Chandru, chairman, co-founder and CEO Strand Lifesciences sustained grievous injuries on his arm on December 28, 2005, when an unidentified intruder opened fire outside Tata Auditorium in IISc, Bangalore. One person was killed and five others were injured in indiscriminate firing by the intruder outside the JN Tata Auditorium on the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) campus. The attacker, who reportedly came in an Ambassador car, opened fire at the faculty members when they were coming out of the auditorium after attending an international conference at around 7:30 pm. The attacker, who escaped after the incident, used an automatic firearm, reportedly an AK-47, for the attack. Bangalore police commissioner Ajai Kumar Singh confirmed that this was a terrorist attack. This is the first such attack in Bangalore and at IISc. Thiru P Reddy, director-business development, Strand Lifesciences told CyberMedia News that Prof. Vijay Chandru is stable. "He is stable and recovering. But he is still in the ICU," he said. He has been advised a month's rest, according to sources at Mallige Hospital in Bangalore where he is undergoing treatment.

Prof Vijay Chandru, PhD MIT, is an academic entrepreneur. As a Professor of Computer Science, Vijay and three colleagues from the Indian Institute of Science founded Strand Genomics, India's first life sciences informatics company in October 2000. He currently serves as chairman and chief executive officer of the company. Prof. Vijay Chandru also holds the position of general secretary of the Association of Biotech Led Enterprises (ABLE). He serves on the board of directors of PicoPeta Simputers Pvt Ltd and MosChip Semiconductors. Prof. Chandru was part of the team that founded the hand-held, Linux-based Simputer.

The entire biotech fraternity and BioSpectrum wish Prof. Chandru a speedy recovery.