

## Dr K VijayRaghavan inducted into prestigious US NAS

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Professor K VijayRaghavan, secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT) was formally inducted as a foreign associate of the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS) at a ceremony at Washington on April 28, 2015. He had been elected as a foreign associate of NAS last year for his distinguished and continuing achievements in original research.

NAS's membership is a widely accepted mark of excellence in science and is considered one of the highest honours that a scientist can receive. The NAS membership totals approximately 2,250 members and nearly 440 foreign associates, of whom approximately 200 have received Nobel prizes.

Professor Vijay Raghavan who was appointed as the secretary of DBT in January 2013, had been the director of the National Centre for Biological Sciences before that. He is a fellow of The Indian Science Academies, an Associate Member of the European Molecular Biology Organization and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was awarded the 'Padma-Shri' in 2013, by the Government of India. He is A.J.C. Bose Fellow of the Department of Science and Technology. He gave the J.C. Bose Memorial Lecture at the Royal Society in 2010. He was awarded the inaugural Infosys Prize in Life Sciences 2009, The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize in 1998.

Professor VijayRaghavan who was appointed as the Secretary, DBT, Government of India in January 2013, had been the director of the National Centre for Biological Sciences before that. He is a fellow of The Indian Science Academies, an Associate Member of the European Molecular Biology Organization and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was awarded the 'Padma-Shri' in 2013, by the Government of India. He is A. J.C. Bose Fellow of the Department of Science and Technology. He gave the J.C. Bose Memorial Lecture at the Royal Society in 2010. He was awarded the inaugural Infosys Prize in Life Sciences 2009, The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize in 1998. Professor VijayRaghavan is on the Board of Governors of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology, on the Scientific Advisory Board of IFOM, Milan and of the Janelia Farm Research Campus of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. He is a Senior Editor of eLife.

His significant scientific contributions include study of neuronal circuits in the brain and motor system and in the development of muscles. He, along with his group used molecular markers to chart the development of muscles in the fruit fly *Drosophila*. They also dissected the specification of segment-identity through the action of Hox genes in the epidermis, the nervous system and in the muscles themselves, each in distinct steps of development. These and other studies have provided a

comprehensive picture of the mechanisms of flight muscle development. They have also identified a stem-cell population that makes flight muscles. His team has contributed to the understanding of how stem cell lineages contribute to the development of the olfactory circuits in the antennal lobe of the fly and of the walking motor-circuit. They work on the motor system and muscles have now allowed the study of how the ability for coordinated locomotion emerges during development.

NAS's prestigious membership is achieved by election; there is no membership application process. Although many names are suggested informally, only Academy members may submit formal nominations. Consideration of a candidate begins with his or her nomination, followed by an extensive and careful vetting process that results in a final ballot at the Academy's annual meeting in April each year. Currently, a maximum of 84 members may be elected annually. Members must be U.S. citizens; non-citizens are elected as foreign associates, with a maximum of 21 elected annually.