

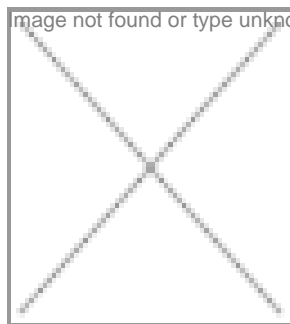
Four biotechnologists get Padma Awards

12 February 2004 | News



It is awards galore for biotechnologists in the Padma Awards announced by the President prior to the Republic Day. Leading biotechnologist G Padmanabhan is among the 19 recipients of Padma Bhushan. Three other scientists—Prof M Vijayan (associate director, IISc, Bangalore), Dr Lalji Singh, director, CCMB, Hyderabad and Dr V Prakash, director, CFTRI, Mysore, have been given the Padma Shri awards for their contribution to life sciences.

Prof. G Padmanabhan (Padma Bhushan)



He is presently Honorary Professor in IISc and is Emeritus Scientist (1998). In a career spanning nearly four decades, his major areas of interest have been in transcriptional regulation of drug metabolizing genes in liver, mechanism of chloroquine action and basis for its resistance in the malarial parasite, new drug targets in the parasite, modern vaccines and biotechnology.

Prof. Padmanabhan is chairman/member of several research committees of DBT, CSIR, DST, ICMR and chairman of RC (CCMB, Hyderabad; IICB, Calcutta). He is on the Editorial Board of Current Science, JI. of Biosciences, Proceedings of National Academy of Science-India, JI. of Biochemical Molecular Biology (Korea) and Biomedical Journal (USA).

He is personally involved in helping and motivating entrepreneurs to set up biotech industries, especially in modern vaccine manufacture. He is interested in Indian philosophy and Carnatic music.

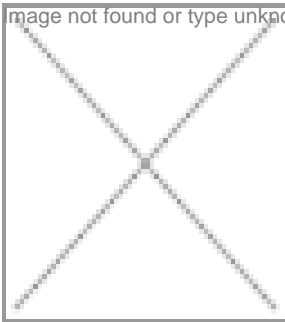
Dr Lalji Singh (Padma Shri)



Popularly known as Lalji, he has been the director of the Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad. He is a recognized guide for PhD of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi and University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad. He has published more than 80 research papers in reputed national and international journals. At CCMB, his research interest involves molecular basis of sex determination, DNA fingerprinting, wildlife conservation, silkworm genome analysis, human genome and ancient DNA studies.

Dr Lalji Singh and his colleagues developed a probe called Bkm-derived probe for DNA fingerprinting which brought CCMB to limelight. Since then this probe is being extensively used for forensic investigation, paternity determination and seed stock verification.

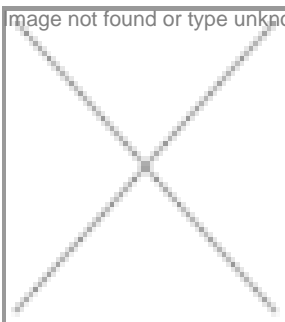
Dr V Prakash (Padma Shri)



Dr Vishweshwariah Prakash, Director, Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore has been steering CFTRI over the last 8 years to higher levels of performance both nationally and internationally and today the word CFTRI has bench marked itself as an internationally reputed institute, the only one of its kind in terms of the large number of projects that it is handling from the societal angle, from the industrial angle and from the scientific angle, to understand the various aspects of agricultural produce for value addition. He has worked over the last 32 years in the area of Life Sciences and Biotechnology with special reference to enzymes and proteins from the point of view of its fundamental understanding and application to industry.

He is currently the Honorary Chairman of the Karnataka Biotechnology Development Council and a leading member of Karnataka's Vision Group on Biotechnology.

Prof. M Vijayan (Padma Shri)



Prof. Mamannaman Vijayan has been the Associate Director of the prestigious Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore since 2000. Prof. Vijayan also heads the Molecular Biophysics Unit of IISc and he is currently working on developing a better understanding of the bacteria causing tuberculosis.

A highly acclaimed teacher and researcher, he has published 208 research papers and has guided 24 PhD students. Seven more students are working for their PhDs with Prof. Vijayan's guidance.

He is a Fellow of leading scientific academies like the Indian Academy of Sciences, Third World Academy of Sciences. He has been the recipient of numerous prestigious awards like the GN Ramachandran 60th Birthday Commemorative Medal of the Indian National Science Academy (1994), SS Bhatnagar Award and the Om Prakash Bhasin Award

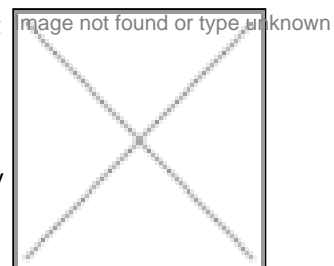
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With the DBT secretary Dr (Mrs) Manju Sharma all set to retire on Feb 29, the government has announced her successor. Highly acclaimed scientist, Prof. M K Bhan will take over as Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, on March 1, 2004.

Prof. Bhan is currently a Professor of Pediatrics and Chief, Pediatric Gastro-enterology and Nutrition at the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. He started his distinguished career after completing MD in Pediatrics as Assistant Professor at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh.

His contributions in the development of various vaccines against diseases in children have been widely acknowledged by the scientific community. Prof. Bhan is a fellow (FNA) of the Indian National Science Academy, and the Academy of Medical Sciences. He was given the prestigious Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award in 1990 for Medical Sciences. During last two decades he has been propagating oral



rehydration therapies in Indian villages and districts and the guidelines prepared by him for oral rehydration and treatment of persistent diarrhea have reached physicians all over India and help reduce child mortality. He is the Chairman and Member of several Advisory Committees in Pediatrics related programmes and research of several organizations both in India and abroad. He has published over 150 research papers, most of them in prestigious international medical journals.

Dr Phiruz Parikh quits Reliance Bio

High Profile Dr Phiruz R Parikh, founder director of Reliance Life Sciences (RLS) has left the company. " I have resigned from the company," she told BioSpectrum.

A family friend of Reliance chairman Mukesh Ambani and his wife Nita, Dr Parikh, a leading gynecologist of Mumbai, was closely associated with the setting up of Reliance Life Sciences in 2000. Reliance Bio is now on a major growth path with the company planning to invest of \$25 million on cutting edge research in stem cells. Industry circles believe that Dr Parikh has moved out to make way for senior professionals to take Reliance Bio on a blistering growth path in the coming years.

Dr Parikh was instrumental in Reliance Bio getting a major research grant from the US government's National Institute of Health for stem cell research. Her work has been featured in the national and international media in recent years. Married to well known neuropsychiatrist Dr Rajesh Parikh, she has three children. Now Dr Parikh will devote full attention to her position as the head of assisted reproduction and genetics division at Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai. Under her leadership the department has many firsts to its credit such as creating the first baby in South-East Asia by ICSI (Intra Cytoplamic Sperm Injection), the first baby in India by mechanical Assisted Hatching, the first pregnancy in India using testicular sperm and ICSI and the first pregnancy in South-East Asia with the technique of Laser Assisted Hatching

Jagdeep Singh is S& T secretary in Gujarat

Jagdeep N Singh has taken over as the secretary, department of science and technology, government of Gujarat from Rajesh Kishore, who got transferred to land reforms department. Biotechnology is part of the S&T department.

A post-graduate in International Studies from JNU, Delhi, Singh continued his education to pursue management degree from AIM, Manila. He worked in various capacities in Gujarat Alkalies, Gujarat, Industries Power Co. Ltd., Gujarat Electricity Board, Gujarat Industrial Development Board etc. before taking up the assignment as secretary, department of science and technology.

Kishore had played a key role in drafting the biotechnology policy of the government of Gujarat, which is still waiting for cabinet approval. He has also taken lot of initiatives in developing the biotechnology sector in Gujarat by organizing programs like 'Vibrant Gujarat' and also bringing awareness about the sector in the local community

News Just In

Dr Swaminathan Subramaniam, COO of Aurigene, Bangalore has quit the company and joined Chennai-based Sanmar Speciality Chemicals as its CEO. Sanmar had recently acquired Bangalore Genei.

Dr Srinivasan Seshadri, COO, Strand Genomics, Bangalore too has quit.

Kameswara Rao

Prof. C Kameswara Rao, executive secretary of the Foundation for Biotechnology Awareness and Education, Bangalore, has been appointed as member of a project titled "Advances in Technology and the Prevention of their Application to Next Generation Biowarfare Agents" under the National Academy of Sciences, USA. Dr Rao is an eminent botanist and was a professor of botany and the chairman of the department of botany, and the department of sericulture at the Bangalore University. The first meeting of the committee will be held in the last week of February 2004.

In a career spanning 35 years, Prof. Rao has worked at the Natural History Museum, London and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK on computer applications in plant systematics.
