

OBITUARY



Prof. Prahlad Kishore Seth

(Founder ISEB Fellow, Advisor ISEB and Chairman ISEB Fellowship Affairs Committee)

A dynamic scientist and science manager, Prof. Prahlad Kishore Seth breathed his last on December 22nd morning at AIIMS, New Delhi *with his boots on* as he was on his way to attend a scientific meeting at Jabalpur and in transit in Gurgaon where he fell sick and was admitted to AIIMS. Always on the move, this dynamic personality far exceeded any person's imagination of his capabilities as a scientist, policy maker, a family man and his agility even at an age of 80 years.

Prof. Seth was born at Lakhimpur-Kheri, Uttar Pradesh on June 15, 1943. He had his early education from Lucknow, obtaining his Bachelors and Masters degree in Biochemistry from Lucknow University. He then pursued his research in the field of 'biochemical pharmacology' at King George's Medical College (KGMC), Lucknow and earned his PhD in 1967. Professor Seth got married to Ms Manju Kapoor from Kanpur in 1967. He has three children, a son (Pankaj) and two daughters (Ritu and Nidhi), who are taking forward his legacy by pursuing a career in science.

After the award of Ph.D. he moved to Chicago Medical School, Chicago, USA as a Faculty Research Associate (1967-1970) and later served in the same institution as Assistant Professor (1970-71). He joined Industrial Toxicology Research Centre (now Institute of Toxicology Research or CSIR-IITR), Lucknow as Senior Scientist (1971) and served as its Director (1997-2003), and later as Director-Grade Scientist till 2005. During his tenure at CSIR-IITR, he served as Visiting Scientist and Faculty in various International Universities and Labs.

Prof. Seth was instrumental in the planning and building of a state-of-the-art Biotech Park in the city and was its first CEO (2003-2015). Later, he was Senior Advisor, Biotech Park from 2015-2016. He was also an Adjunct Professor, Department of Elementology and Toxicology, Jamia Hamdard University, New Delhi; and Honorary Professor of Biochemistry, Department of Biochemistry, Lucknow University.

Prof. PK Seth is known for his notable contributions to neurotoxicology, molecular biology and biotechnology related to health sciences, in particular, to the understanding of the effect of chemicals and drugs on the nervous system. His later work dealt with expression of cytochrome P450 isoenzymes in mammalian lymphocytes and opened up new avenues for identifying individuals susceptible to chemicals. Under the National Drinking Water Mission, Professor Seth was instrumental in developing the Water Analysis Kit, Bact-o-Kill which is an electronic device to disinfect bacteria and a Mobile Laboratory Van for Water Quality Analysis.

Prof. Seth has published over 250 research papers, in reputed journals including Nature and Science, over 50 review articles/book chapters and reports and also has many patents to his credit. He guided more than 35 students for their Ph.D. and M.D. degrees. Several of his students served as Directors or are successful leaders in their fields in research organizations and industries in India and abroad. Professor Seth encouraged hundreds of school children, students, scientists, and technologists, to pursue a career with the objective to serve the society.

He was a member of several committees of ICMR, DRDO, DST, DBT, MOEF, etc. and also of High Power Committee for Management of Hazardous Waste constituted by Supreme Court, International Brain Research Organization, and General Secretary and Council Member of the National Academy of Sciences (India), Prayagraj. He chaired the first Task Force on Toxicogenomics set up by CSIR.

He has been bestowed with many prestigious honours which include RK Dutt Memorial Lecture Award of Indian Science Congress (2002); Vigyan Gaurav Samman (2004) of Government of Uttar Pradesh; Professor BK Bachhawat Life Time Achievement Award of Indian Academy of Neurosciences, Lucknow (2006); Oration Award of Association of Clinical Biochemists of India (2006); Norman Dill Award of Society of Biosciences; and PC Ray Memorial Award of Indian Science Congress (2007). He was awarded the NASI Senior Scientist, Platinum Jubilee Fellow in 2016. Prof. Seth was elected Fellow of The National Academy of Sciences (India), Prayagraj; Indian National Science Academy; National Academy of Medical Sciences, India; Indian Academy of Neurosciences (Founder Fellow and Past President) and Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum. He had been President of the Indian Academy of Neurosciences, the Society of Toxicology (India), Environmental Mutagen Society of India, and was also President of Indian Network for Soil Contamination Research and Uttar Pradesh Association for Science and Technology Advancement (now UP Academy of Sciences).

Prof. Seth will always be remembered as a prolific and accomplished scientist, teacher, mentor, administrator, policy maker, motivator and above all very fine gentleman liked for his affable demeanour. He shall live on in the legacy that he is leaving behind and he shall be always in our hearts. His legacy will surely continue to inspire future generations of scientists.

The International Society of Environmental Botanist, mourns his demise and stands together with his family in this hour of grief.

**Compiled by Dr. R.D. Tripathi and
Dr. Nandita Singh with inputs from Dr. Pankaj Seth**

