

Obituaries



SISIR KUMAR DUTTA

February 28th 1935 - January 20th 2000

काम्याना कर्मणान्यासं सन्यासकवयोविदः ।

सर्वकर्मफल त्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥

(श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता अध्याय 18, श्लोक 2)

“कितने ही विद्वान, जो काम्य कर्मों के त्याग को सन्यास समझते हैं तथा दूसरे विचारकुशल पुरुष सब कर्मों के फल के त्याग को सन्यास कहते हैं।”

The career of a learned man remains an enduring monument of human energy. The man dies and disappear, but his thoughts and acts survive and leave an indelible stamp upon his race.

Samuel Smiles

Sisir Kumar Dutta popular as Sisir Da among friends, was born at Golaghat, Assam on 28th February, 1935. He received his early education at Golaghat and completed his graduation and post graduation at Cotton College and Guwahati University, Guwahati. Later he joined as a Geologist in the Directorate of Geology and Mining, Govt. of Assam. During 1961-62, Drs R.N. Lakhanpal, M.N. Bose and S.C.D. Sah of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow visited Assam for collection of plant fossils, during field work, where Sisir accompanied them at Cherrapunji and adjoining areas. Impressed by the knowledge, sincerity and enthusiasm of young Sisir, they offered him a research career at BSIP, which he wilfully accepted. Sisir's interest in stratigraphy, tectonics and other aspects helped him in carrying his dissertation on Cenozoic palynostratigraphy under the guidance of Dr S.C.D. Sah, the then head of the Oil Palynology Department. He obtained the PhD degree at the University of Lucknow and was also awarded DSc degree from the same University few years later. Subsequently he was appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Applied Geology, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam, where he devoted his efforts to build an active centre for geological research in the north-eastern region. He continued his researches on various stratigraphical problems and maintained a very congenial relationship among students, scholars and teachers till he breathed his last.

During his tenure as a teacher in the Dibrugarh University, he took active part in geological field trips to Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura and Mizoram. He had sound knowledge of field geology and surveyed many stratigraphic sequences situated in remote areas of the north-eastern region. He was always ready to accompany any of his co-workers, who used to visit the north-eastern region for geological field excursions. He was a man full of energy and very generous in helping research students committed to the subject. He was also very active in organizing symposium/workshops related to Cenozoic stratigraphy of the northeast India.

In recognition of his valuable contributions to the palaeopalynology of the Cretaceous and Cenozoic sediments including coaliferous and petroliferous sequences he was offered Keshav Dev Malvia Chair by Oil India Limited to promote research at the Dibrugarh University, where he worked hard till his last.

His valuable contributions include establishment of several palynozones and recognition of reworked palynotaxa of older deposits in the Cenozoic sedimentary sequences of the northeast India. His work on the Cenozoic stratigraphy of Meghalaya and Assam has an important bearing on the understanding of stratigraphic successions, depositional environment, palynostratigraphy and age correlations. His studies on the comparative stratigraphic surface and subsurface sequences and reassessment of earlier views on the Cenozoic stratigraphy of the north-east region are widely referred.

Prof Dutta's role in the spreading geological knowledge and its application has been commendable. Many of his students have occupy key positions in various academic institutions, government organizations and other establishments viz., Oil India Limited, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Geological Survey of India, Directorate of Geology and Mining, Assam, Dibrugarh and other north-east Universities etc.

Prof Dutta was a man of character and commitment. He was methodical, meticulous and a motivated teacher. He was noble in thoughts and a man of progressive views. Being a teacher he popularized importance of Palaeobotany at graduate and post graduate levels.

He was polite and had a good command over many regional languages. He was a staunch nationalist, admirer of cultural heritage, natural resources and natural beauty of Assam. Besides scientific contributions, he wrote many popular articles on culture and socio-economic conditions of people of Assam.

His demise on January 20th, 2000 created a great void. He will be missed by his students, associates, colleagues and friends. In his loss palaeobotanical and palaeopalynological world has lost a committed worker.

He is survived by his wife Ratna and three sons.

Madhav Kumar
Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany,
53 University Road,
Lucknow 226 007,
India.



KABITA GOSWAMI

25th December 1952 - 6th March 2000

With the sad and sudden demise of Kabita Goswami, Ex-Head, Department of Applied Geology, Dibrugarh University, Assam, at Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow, U.P on 6th March 2000, the geoscience community of India lost a dear colleague. In a short span of life, she left an indelible mark on minds of all those who came into contact by her captivating personality, sincerity of purpose, indomitable spirit and dynamism.

Kabita Goswami was born at Mohkkhuti of Sibsagar District of Assam on 25th of December, 1952. She had her schooling at different places of Arunachal Pradesh, an eastern province of India, while being with her father, Sri Annada Prasad Borthakur who was honoured with the National Award for teachers by the President of India in 1977 for his dedicated services towards advancement of school education in Arunachal Pradesh.

All throughout a brilliant student Kabita Goswami stood first in Geology Honours examination, 1973 at the Cotton College, Gauhati University. Later she pursued Post Graduate studies at Gauhati University and was awarded gold medal by the Gauhati University for securing first class first position in the M. Sc. Final examination in Geology in the year 1975.

She also secured first class first position in the Post-Graduate Diploma Examination of Dibrugarh University in Petroleum Technology in 1976. Thereafter, she was awarded a research fellowship by the University Grants Commission of India which earned Ph. D. degree by the Dibrugarh University in 1984 for her research in the field of Petroleum Geochemistry.

She was appointed lecturer in the Department of Applied Geology, Dibrugarh University in 1984 where she rose to the position of Professor and Head of Department of Applied Geology, Dibrugarh University in 1996. She had guided doctoral research and successfully conducted investigations funded by organisations like ONGC. She has several papers to her credit published in national and international journals.

Prof Goswami was an excellent, courteous, helpful and generous and popular teacher who was always very friendly, cheerful and helped all those who approached her. She had ability to enthuse her colleagues to put in their best for which she will be gratefully remembered.

Kabita Goswami was awarded Commonwealth Fellowship to carry out post doctoral research in Petroleum Geochemistry in the University of Newcastle, Upon Tyne England. She presented a research paper in the International Geological Congress held in Moscow, Russia (then USSR) in 1984. She had the distinction of chairing two technical sessions of International Geoscience Conferences held in Karachi, Pakistan (1996) and Colombo, Sri Lanka (1995). She was made Fellow and Member of several professional bodies including the Geological Society of India, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the Association of Geoscientists for International Development and the Indian Geological Congress. She brought the Department of Applied Geology, Dibrugarh University into limelight by successfully organising a national workshop, on Geodynamics and Natural Resources of North East India in December, 1998.

Several organisations and institutions of the North-East area mourn the death of Dr Goswami and praise the great sense of commitment, responsibility, expertise and knowledge with which she dispensed her duties.

She is survived by her husband Prof Sushil K. Goswami and a son.

A. K. Srivastava
Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany,
53 University Road,
Lucknow 226 007,
India.



S.P. NAUTIYAL

16th June 1916 - 5th April 2000

Prof Satyeshwar Prasad Nautiyal was born on 16th June 1916 in the village Sidoli in Garhwal Himalaya. He graduated from the Benaras Hindu University (BHU) Varanasi and obtained his MSc degree in Geology in the year 1939. Initially he started his career as a teacher at BHU and later joined the Geological Survey of India (GSI) in 1941 and rose to the rank of the Director General. He was one of the earliest geologists to work on the granites of Almora as part of his M.Sc. thesis during 1938-39. After joining GSI, Prof. Nautiyal enthusiastically took his work on the Almora & Tharali granites, Kumaun Himalaya. This earned him a place into the Himalayan Geology Wing of the Geological Survey of India, where in his early career (1941-46), he carried out mapping and economic studies on the Almora-Naini Tal Himalaya.

In 1946, Dr J.B. Auden, GSI established Engineering Geology Division and Mr Nautiyal had the privilege to carry out intensive geotechnical studies on the proposed Marora Dam, Rihand Project, Bhakhra Dam, India and Kosi in Nepal. GSI deputed him to establish the Geological Survey wings in Nepal and Bhutan. During his tenure in Bhutan, his team was responsible for preparation of first geological map of Bhutan and this map was presented at International Geological Congress, New Delhi session in 1964.

Prof Nautiyal was the recipient of the coveted Eisenhower Exchange Fellowship for studying the Petroleum Exploration and Production in the USA which enabled him to advise the Government in all the aspects of exploration during the formative stage of the oil and gas industry in India.

Recognising his organisational capacities Prof Nautiyal was charged by the Government of India with the responsibility of setting up a corporation to carry out mineral exploration in the country. Since then, the Mineral Exploration Corporation of India flourished and

has achieved a significant position amongst the corporate sector in India. He was the Chairman and the Managing Director of the corporation from 1972 to 1975.

He also served as the Chairman of the Hill Development Corporation and Mineral Development Corporation to the Uttar Pradesh Government.

He was nominated by the Government of India to honour the Chair of President of Governing Body of Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehra Dun in 1977. During his three years tenure as President till 1980 he gave a new guidelines for the research planning of WIHG on a long term basis. In 1979 along with Dr S.C.D. Sah, Director and Dr Anshu K. Sinha, he was invited by the USSR Academy of Sciences; Austrian Geological Survey, Vienna; Geological Institute Erlangen University, West Germany; and ETH – Zurich University, Switzerland, to establish a research interaction with the WIHG research plan. During 1981-82 two volumes of contemporary Geoscientists Researches in Himalaya were published in his honour to commemorate his lifetime achievements by the undersigned.

He was also the Chairman of the 3rd Review Committee of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany in 1979-80.

Prof Nautiyal has been closely associated with the numerous Govt. of India organisations as a Director on their boards, such as Hindustan Zinc Limited, Hindustan Salts Limited, Pyrite and Phosphate and Chemicals Limited. He was a life member of numerous scientific organizations including Indian Science Congress Association; Geological Mining, Metallurgical Society of India; Palaeontological Society of India and Geological Society of India.

He led the Government of India Team to Ethiopia for assessing the potential of potash deposit in Dankil Basin. He also attended Geological Conference of ECAFE at Bandung, Indonesia and visited Iran in connection with Solar Salt Manufacture.

Prof Nautiyal was the Visiting Professor of Geology in the Garhwal University and actively conducted teaching and research work on the Himalaya. Later on he was given the chair of Vice-Chancellorship to steer the newly started Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Srinagar. He successfully completed the tenure (1983-1991).

On the 5th April, 2000 he breathed his last at his Dehra Dun residence. In his death, the scientific community has lost not only a dedicated and knowledgeable earth scientist and dynamic administrator, but also an amicable individual with kind heart to help everybody whosoever approached him for advice.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

A.K. Sinha
Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany,
53 University Road,
Lucknow 226 007,
India.