

PERSONAL NEWS

tions, comment and suggestions. He made it a point to visit each poster presentation with great zeal and interact with young researchers giving them advice, appreciating their work and motivating them. During an endocrinology conference in Delhi, power failed soon after the inauguration. The scheduled speaker could not present his lecture without the slide projector. To my great surprise, Guraya spontaneously volunteered to deliver his next day's talk if organizers and participants had no objection. All agreed. And, Guraya delivered a brilliant talk using chalk piece and black board! His message was that in India power failure being very common one should be prepared to face such eventualities.

Guraya served as Assistant Professor at Gorakhpur University (1960–62), as

Reader at University of Udaipur (1966–71) and as Professor and Head, Department of Zoology at Punjab Agricultural University (1971–1990), Ludhiana, from where he retired. He served on many high power committees, funding agencies and apex bodies. He used these opportunities to promote teaching and research in animal sciences in the country. He was a Fellow of Indian National Science Academy (New Delhi), National Academy of Sciences of India (Allahabad) and National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, New Delhi. He was a recipient of the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize (1973), UGC National Lectureship (1976–77), M.S. Randhava Award (1985) and Basanti Devi-Amar Chand Prize (1990).

Guraya was a man of great conviction and commitment. He was an inspiring

teacher and a researcher. His was a strong personality with a compassionate heart filled with love and affection towards family and friends. In his demise the community of zoologists, farm and veterinary biologists, those working in the area of animal reproduction and all those who knew him will greatly miss him. The country has lost a doyen, an acknowledged expert on vertebrate reproduction and a classical zoologist par excellence.

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P. S. Rao (1939–2012)

P. S. Rao, one of the most eminent plant biotechnologists of India, passed away in Bangalore on 26 July 2012. He was a brilliant researcher, dexterous experimenter, inspiring orator, teacher and an efficient administrator. He was born on 3 August 1939 at Mysore. He did extremely well from the beginning in his academic career. After his postgraduation from University of Mysore, he joined the Department of Botany, University of Delhi, for his doctoral degree under the supervision of N. S. Rangaswamy. The thesis work of Rao was on sandalwood tissue cultures and *in vitro* fertilization of tobacco. After receiving his PhD degree in 1966, he joined the Biology Division at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai, as a scientist. After an illustrious career at BARC, he retired as Head, Nuclear Agriculture and Biotechnology Division in 1999. Subsequently, he worked as a senior executive in Reliance Industries, Mumbai and Indo American Hybrid Seeds, Bangalore. Later on he joined as Director, PES Institute, Bangalore and afterwards Biotechnology Department in Dayanand Sagar Institutes, Bangalore.

During the period of his energetic and motivated leadership, the plant biotechnology group at BARC carried out wide-ranging studies on plant morphogenesis,



micropropagation, anther and protoplast culture, somatic embryogenesis and synthetic seeds, secondary biosynthesis and mutations. His main interest was on the development of viable technologies for high-valued crops. As a visiting scientist, Rao had conducted advanced research in plant morphogenesis during 1971–1973 at CNRS laboratories in Gif-sur-Yvette, France and in protoplast culture during 1981–1982 at the Max Planck Institute, Germany. Among his various research contributions, the work on sandalwood biotechnology has received tremendous appreciation and recognition.

Rao has guided several students for their M Sc, M Tech and Ph D degrees and has more than 200 research publications to his credit. Many of his students are working as senior scientists, professors and executives in private companies in India and abroad.

Rao was elected as a Fellow of National Academy of Sciences, Allahabad and National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Delhi. He was a member of several professional societies in India and abroad and was serving on the editorial board of three scientific journals.

Rao welcomed innovative ideas and a wonderful modest person always listened patiently to his colleagues. He encouraged all and never failed to appreciate when his colleagues or students did well. He had the rare ability to identify and draw on the strengths of his subordinates so that they could achieve excellence in their work. Rao is survived by his wife, son, and a very large extended family of friends, colleagues and students.

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