

Obituary

Dr R Chidambaram



(November 11, 1936 - January 4, 2025)

Dr R Chidambaram, FNAE born on November 11, 1936 passed away on January 4, 2025. He was elected to INAE Fellowship in the year 1998 and affiliated to Engineering Section IX (Energy Engineering).

Dr R Chidambaram, FNAE, Chairman (Honorary), School for Advanced Studies in Nuclear Science & Technology, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai and Formerly Director, BARC; Formerly Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy and Formerly Principal Scientific Adviser to the Govt. of India & DAE Homi Bhabha Professor, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai was an eminent physicist who is known for his integral role in India's nuclear weapons program. He was a part of the team conducting the first Indian nuclear test (Smiling Buddha) at Pokhran Test Range in 1974. He also led and represented the team of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) while observing and leading efforts to conduct the second nuclear tests in May 1998.

Some of Dr Chidambaram's initiatives as Principal Scientific Adviser to the Govt. of India including the setting up of the Core Advisory Group for R&D in the Automotive Sector (CAR) to increase academia-industry interaction, the creation of RuTAGs (Rural Technology Action Groups) for effective need based technology delivery in rural areas and the establishment of SETS (Society for Electronic Transactions and Security) are making significant impact. He jointly with the National Informatics Center helped conceptualise and supervise the setting up of the high-speed 'National Knowledge Network' to connect about 1,500 educational and research institutions in India. He also had emphasized the need for 'Coherent Synergy' (a phrase he had coined) in India's Science & Technology (S&T) efforts to take India on a sustained fast-growth path. He had also focused on the importance of 'Directed Basic Research' as an addition to self-directed basic research. As Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet, he championed advancements in energy security, materials science, supercomputing, and nanotechnology.

Dr Chidambaram also held the esteemed position of Chairman, Board of Governors for IIT Madras, IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, and IIT Jodhpur, contributing significantly to the growth of higher education in India. He was conferred with several distinguished awards and honours including the Padma Shri in 1975 and the Padma Vibushan in 1999 by President of India. Dr Chidambaram was conferred the INAE Life Time Contribution Award in Engineering during the year 2009.

May God bless his soul to rest in peace