

PRESENTATION OF THE PROF. L. RAMA RAO GOLD MEDAL
TO
PROF. ASHOK SAHNI, CHANDIGARH



Dr. Kurien Jacob, President of the Geological Society of India in presenting the Prof. L. Rama Rao Gold Medal to Prof. Ashok Sahni said :

I have great pleasure in announcing the award of L. Rama Rao Medal to Prof. Ashok Sahni of the Centre of Advanced Studies in Geology, the University of Panjab, Chandigarh.

Prof. Ashok Sahni took his M.Sc. degree in Geology from the University of Lucknow in 1963, and won two gold medals, standing first in the University. He gained the Ph.D. degree in Geology, from the University of Minnesota, U.S.A., in 1968. He has been deeply involved in stratigraphic and palaeontologic research for the past 26 years, and has contributed over 100 original contributions and seven monographs based on his active research in these fields.

Prof. Sahni is the recipient of the Alexander von Humboldt senior fellowship of W. Germany. He received special training in Japan in the operation of scanning microscope. Prof. Sahni has been an invitee to several international conferences. Prof. Sahni initially worked as a research assistant and later as a Teaching Associate, and Laboratory Instructor between 1963 and 1969. He has later occupied the position of Lecturer, and Reader in the University of Lucknow. Since 1979 he has been occupying the chair of Professor in the Panjab University.

Prof. Sahni was elected fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore in 1987. He is a member, Society of Vertebrate Palaeontology, U.S.A., Regional Coordinator for India, for the Geological Correlation Programme 245, and co-convenor of Indian National Committee for IGCP 216. Prof. Sahni has been a member of several National and International advisory committees.

Prof. Sahni's contribution to Indian stratigraphy and palaeontology focusses attention on the Cretaceous and Tertiary vertebrate biostratigraphy, in a framework of global tectonics, the India-Asia collision and palaeo geography. His research,

commendably, is multidisciplinary in approach, and includes aspects of bio-mineralisation and the taphonomy and palaeoecology of the Mesozoic and Tertiary micro-vertebrates of the Himalayan and Peninsular regions.

Prof. Sahni has been able to demonstrate that the Lameta and the Intertrappean beds are Maestrichtian in age. These have an important focus on the age of initiation and duration of the Deccan flood basalt flows, which are now considered as a major Cretaceous-Cenozoic boundary event.

The major discoveries for which he is to be given credit, include the documentation of the first Cretaceous mammals from the Naskal Intertrappeans near Hyderabad, and the Dinosaur eggs and nesting sites at Kheda in Gujarat. His report of these eggs-shell fragments from the Intertrappeans of Nagpur and Asifabad, has an important bearing on intercontinental correlation, in terms of terminal Cretaceous deposits in southern France and Spain.

In view of Prof. Sahni's outstanding contributions to Stratigraphy and Palaeontology, the Council of the Geological Society of India unanimously decided to award the L. Rama Rao Medal to Prof. Ashok Sahni.

On behalf of the Fellows of the Society, and on my own behalf, I warmly congratulate Prof. Sahni, and express our expectations of further valuable contributions from him in future years. I have now great pleasure in presenting the 'L. Rama Rao Medal' to Prof. Ashok Sahni.

Reply by Professor A. Sahni

Dr. Jacob, distinguished members of the Geological Society and friends,

I deem it a great honour to be a recipient of the Prof. L. Rama Rao Medal, an honour which in fairness belongs equally to my co-workers, students and eminent teachers with whom I have had the good fortune of being associated over the years. It is indeed a further privilege to receive an award named after a towering personality of Indian palaeontology and stratigraphy—Professor L. Rama Rao—who virtually alone chartered a path leading to the better understanding of the marine Cretaceous of peninsular India, a topic which still exercises the attention of present-day geologists. Above all, the award is in a way a recognition given to the study of Indian fossil vertebrates which has one of the oldest scientific traditions in Indian geology extending to over one and a half centuries.

Vertebrate palaeontology has a tremendous potential in India, a fact that was clearly established by pioneering workers of the pre-Independence era. The works of Falconer, Cautley, Pilgrim and Colbert in the Siwaliks laid the foundation of Neogene inter-continental biostratigraphic correlation, while the research of Matley, Lydekker and Von Huene stressed the palaeogeographical implications of a fragmenting Gondwanaland. Today, the number of Indian institutions involved in vertebrate palaeontological research has steadily grown and the results are most encouraging: Indian fossil vertebrates have a lot to offer in a global perspective: the Pranhita-Godavari Gondwana assemblages must rank as one of the best known; the mysteries connected with our own origins whether they deal with Mesozoic mammals or the last few million years of earth history can now be resolved; the nesting habits of dinosaurs and their mass extinction can be ideally studied in the

sedimentary basins associated with the Deccan volcanics and, furthermore, the geodynamics of colliding plates can be constrained by vertebrate dispersal events.

In the coming years, I perceive an increasing need towards collaborative ventures involving vertebrate palaeontology, a subject that is strongly multidisciplinary and interactive. In fact, without support from sedimentology, palaeomagnetic stratigraphy and geochronology, no meaningful research can be undertaken.

Once again with a deep sense of gratitude, I thank the Geological Society of India for bestowing this honour on me and, on my part, I would strive to uphold the high ideals established by my far worthier predecessors.

**PRESENTATION OF THE PROF. M. R. SRINIVASA RAO AWARD
TO
PROF. V. RAJAMANI**



Dr. Kurien Jacob, President, Geological Society of India in presenting the Prof. M. R. Srinivasa Rao Award to Prof. V. Rajamani said:

I have great pleasure in announcing the M. R. Srinivasa Rao Award, for the year 1989, to Prof. Vedharaman Rajamani, Professor of Geochemistry, School of Environmental Sciences of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Prof. Rajamani took his B.Sc. degree from the Madras University, and M.Sc. (Applied Geology) from the I.I.T., Bombay. In 1972, he was awarded the M.S. degree by the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the Ph.D. degree in 1974 of the same university.

In 1977 he joined the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, as Asst. Professor and later served as Associate Professor from 1979-86. Since 1986 he has been a Professor of Geochemistry at the JNU.

For the past ten years the research interests of Prof. Rajamani are on the problems of petrogenesis and ore genesis in Archaean greenstone-granite terrains. The basic assumptions in his endeavour are: (1) the earth's interior is the ultimate source for everything that is ever accessible to us on the earth; (2) magmatic processes are the major mode of transport of matter from the mantle to the crustal