



Obituary

Prof. Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad (1930–2018)

On 18th January 2018, an eminent Pakistani scientist, Prof. Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad, Fellow and former President of Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS) and Fellow of Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS) passed away. He was 87. As a student of the prestigious Government College Lahore, he was awarded MSc (Physics) by University of the Punjab in 1951; in 1958 was awarded DSc (Physics) by University of Montreal, Canada. He had over 40 major publications to his credit, including a series of PUGWASH Conference proceedings which had been propagating the peaceful uses of Atomic Energy and against the nuclear proliferation.

Prof. Ishfaq Ahmad was born in Gurdaspur, British India on 3rd November, 1930. He served as Chairman of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) during 1991-2001. After serving as Member (Technical) of PAEC for 13 years, he served as Senior Member of PAEC, 1988-1991. Prof. Ishfaq Ahmad was Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan (2001-2007) with the status of Federal Minister. Thereafter, he served in Planning Commission with the status of Minister of State, 2007-2009; Advisor on Development and Global Climate Change in Planning Commission with the status of Minister of State, 2009-2012; and as Founding Chairman, Board of Governors, National Centre for Physics (NCP), till his demise. Prof. Ishfaq also established the only Centre of the Science of Climate Change as well as Earthquake Studies Centre (ESC) for forecasting earthquakes in the country.

In earlier phase of his career, Prof. Ishfaq Ahmad served as Director, Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH), Islamabad, 1971-1976; Director, Atomic Energy Center (AEC), Lahore, 1969-1971; Secretary, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, 1967-1969; Senior Scientific Officer, PAEC, 1960-1966; and Lecturer, Government College, Lahore, 1952-1960. He was Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Sorbonne, Paris (France), in 1969, and at Niels

Bohr Institute of Theoretical Physics, Copenhagen in 1961-1962. In 1963-1964, Prof. Ahmad was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at both University of Montreal and University of Ottawa, Canada.



Prof. Ishfaq Ahmad was instrumental in the creation of Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA). He also developed Pakistan's scientific cooperation with many reputed international scientific organizations, like European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN), International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Vienna, and Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ASICTP).

Main research interests of Prof. Ishfaq Ahmad were in Particle Detectors, Nuclear and High Energy Physics, and Nuclear Technology. He became Fellow of Pakistan Academy of Sciences in 1983 and its President in 2007. He was elected as Fellow of Islamic World Academy of Sciences in 2000. As President of PAS, he established MoUs with similar Academies of other countries, such as Academy of Sciences of Czech Republic and Royal Academy of Edinburgh (RSE).

Prof. Ishfaq Ahmad was one of the key scientists and engineers to make seminal contributions in the nuclear defence of Pakistan. He possessed a sense of accurate judgment of appropriately suited scientists and engineers, on high merit, and assigning them the jobs which were precisely supervised and successfully accomplished. Pakistan's nuclear weapons were successfully tested during his chairmanship of PAEC. During all his outstanding contributions to nuclear defence of the country, he remained a quiet scientist and avoided media publicity.

Prof. Ishfaq Ahmad is listed as one of the seven Notable Alumni of University of Montreal;

among them is a former Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Pierre Trudeau, who is father of the current Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Justin Trudeau. Prof. Ishfaq was awarded Honorary Doctorate by University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore in 2000. In the same year, he was elected as Fellow of International Nuclear Energy Academy. He was conferred the highest civil awards by Government of Pakistan, i.e., Nishan-i-Imtiaz, the Hilal-i-Imtiaz, and Sitara-i-Imtiaz.

Prof. Ishfaq Ahmad's services were befittingly recognized by the Government of Pakistan at his funeral ceremony as well – by according him full Military Honors; for the first time a civil servant was honored by the Armed Forces of Pakistan with full protocol.

In the death of Dr Ishfaq Ahmad the nation has lost a scientist of great eminence to be remembered for a long time. In my personal capacity, I have lost a longtime friend, a senior colleague and a boss for a journey which started in 1959 when we both were young lecturers at Government College Lahore and for many years of service under the umbrella of PAEC, which ended in grief of his leaving us in January this year.

May Allah Almighty bless his soul in peace in heavens; Aameen.

Professor Dr. N. M. Butt, S.I.
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