OBITUARY

Ravi Shanker
(1941-2017)

Ravi Shanker, was born on 13th November 1941. He proved the adage, 'coming events cast their shadows before' by excelling in studies even in school and college days. After passing Intermediate, he continued his studies at the Lucknow University. After post-graduation (M.Sc.) in 1962, he joined the Oil & Natural Commission (now Oil & Natural Gas Corporation) as a Senior Technical Assistant. In ONGC he investigated the Tertiary sequences of the Himachal Sub-Himalaya.

In 1964, Ravi Shanker joined the Geological Survey of India after securing third position in the Geologists' Examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission. He continued to serve the Geological Survey of India till he finally retired in 2001 as the Director General.

During his service in the GSI he made significant contributions to the Indian Geology. Mapping of the Mussoorie Syncline along with investigation for the phosphorite was his first important contribution. His mapping and carefully planned drill holes resulted in discovery of minable phosphorite deposit at Maldeota. He coordinated the phosphorite investigation carried out by different parties deployed in various parts of the Mussoorie Syncline. Later he took up basin analysis of the Krol Belt and co-authored an important paper on the discovery of Ediacaran fauna in the Krol Group.

The Northern Region of the Geological Survey of India established Geothermal Unit with Ravi Shanker as its head. He supervised a team to conduct geothermal investigation at Puga and Chumathang in Ladakh district. The investigation culminated in drilling in Puga. He also organised geothermal investigations in the Parvati and Beas valleys in Kullu district, Jeori in Shimla district and Sumdo in the Spiti Valley of Lahul and Spiti district.

Later he was posted as a Commodity Officer at the CHQ, Kolkata to oversee the geothermal investigations in various parts of the country. On being promoted as director, Ravi Shanker was transferred to Central Region, Nagpur, where he gave an impetus to geothermal investigations in the Central Region. He conceived and prepared the Geothermal Atlas of India, which became an all-time reference book. After

completing the assignment he was transferred to Lucknow (Northern Region) as Director of the Himalayan Geology Division. He was subsequently promoted to the rank of Deputy Director General, Northern Region. Finally, he landed at Kolkata as the Director General in 2001.

During his illustrious career, Ravi Shanker, served in several committees of national importance with great distinction, attended numerous conferences in India and abroad and in each one of them left a mark. He was a rare geologist who had a sound knowledge of all the branches of geology, including geophysics and drilling operations. He has more than 100 publications, most outstanding is the Geothermal Atlas. For his singular contribution to the geoscience he was conferred with the National Mineral Award. He also served as Vice President of the Geological Society of India.

Besides being a geologist of great zeal, Ravi Shanker was an efficient administrator and inspiring boss. He could persuade his officers to excel in their respective fields, and if necessary, could ruthlessly bulldoze the inept ones into action.

Post-retirement, he was nominated by the Ministry of Mines to the Verma Committee to suggest improvements in the working of the Geological Survey of India.

For last one month he developed ailments requiring hospitalization. He was discharged from the hospital and as his wife told me that he continued to show improvement. But alas in the wee hours of February 3, 2017, he suddenly passed away peacefully.

Such was Ravi Shanker, who is no more. In his death the country has lost a brilliant geoscientist, an able administrator and a dependable friend to so many of us. He shall be missed not only by his wife Manju, daughters Kavita and Vasudha and son Rohit but also by host of friends and admirers. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

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