S. Rajaraman
(1930-2016)

Shri S. Rajaraman, a legend in diamond exploration passed away on 12th September 2016 at his residence in Hyderabad after prolonged illness.

Shri Rajaraman was born on 22nd February 1930 at Kodavasal, Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu. He was the eldest of three children. His father, S. Srinivasan, was a renowned teacher and a few well-known political leaders in Andhra Pradesh such as late K. Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy, former Chief Minister and P. Thimma Reddy, ex-Minister were his students.

Shri Rajaraman had his early childhood at his maternal grandfather's place Srirangam, Tiruchirapalli district, TN. He attended school at Madanapalle, Chittoor district in AP where his father was a Prof. of English, History and Economics at the Besant Theosophical College. After completion of high school studies and pre-university course at Madanapalle and graduation at Karaikudi University, Karaikudi, he obtained AISM degree in Applied Geology from the the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad.

After completion of studies, he joined Biju Patnaik Group of mines in 1955 as a geologist. He subsequently joined ACC Ltd. as a mining geologist where he worked till 1959. Shri Rajaraman joined the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) at Nagpur on 04/01/1960. On the merger of IBM with the Geological Survey of India (GSI), he was retained at Nagpur for some time before being transferred to Hyderabad in May 1967.

During his career, Shri Rajaraman associated with many mineral investigations in Bihar, Orissa, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. As Geologist (Sr.), he worked in several divisions of GSI Southern Region, such as Mineral Exploration Division, DORIS, Map Printing Division and AP Circle (South) before becoming Director, Environmental Geology Division. Subsequently, he was transferred to Operations: Bihar, Patna and later on as Director-in-charge of the Operations: Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad. He superannuated on 28th February, 1988. After retirement he was active for some time as a mineral consultant.

Shri Rajaraman was well known to the earth science community because of his significant contributions in diamond exploration. To state a few – proving the diamondiferous nature of the Banganapalle conglomerates in Kurnool district by picking up a small diamond from one of the old processed dumps; recovering first diamonds from the Wajrakarur Pipe-1 in Anantapur district, thus putting an end to the mystery of the source of the diamonds in the area; discovery of magnetite tuffs at Chandavaram in Prakasam district along with Shri N.K. Sood which led to assigning the volcanogenic-sedimentary origin of the Cumbum Formation in the Cuddapah basin which resulted in conducting a symposium by late Shri Ch. Narasimha Rao of GSI;

discovery of first olivine lamproites along with Shri S.S. Nayak at Ramannapeta village, close to the left bank of the Krishna river in Krishna district, AP and initiation of diamond exploration in Koel-Sankh basin area near Simdega in Jharkhand (then Bihar) to establish the source of occurrence of diamonds reported in the past.

The credit of establishing the Wajrakarur Camp in 1967 goes to Shri Rajaraman and it remains the only GSI camp which has been very active even after five decades of its starting. The Camp since then has become a hub for conducting exploration activities and for imparting training to earth scientists. He remained as one of the geologists who had worked in the three geological environments of diamonds i.e. kimberlites, conglomerates and river gravels making notable contributions and guiding youngsters. In recognition of his vast experience in diamonds, the Government of India selected him as a member of Indian Trade Delegation that went to Tanzania in 1978 to negotiate diamond imports from that country.

I have known him closely since 1978 along with a few of my former colleagues in the then Diamond Project of AP. Prior to that sometime in 1968, as a student from Rajahmundry Arts and Science College, I vaguely remember to have seen him at Wajrakarur camp manually processing the kimberlite material for recovery of diamonds. More than the official association, he was an elderly friend and guide to me as well as many sharing his experiences of service, and personal and social life.

Shri Rajaraman was simple in habits, self-contented and never attached importance to materialistic life. From the words of Shri V. Natarajan, former senior officer of GSI, who knew him from his childhood at Madanapalle one can assume the personality of Shri Rajaraman: "he (Rajaraman) was a man of impeccable qualities, soft but stern, disciplined, dignified, most honest in his profession and ethics, highly knowledgeable in exploration techniques for minerals and a legend in diamond exploration. None to beat him in his dedicated and practical approach in Wajrakarur diamond exploration. His equanimity and unassuming nature won him a large number of friends in various fields.....none can dispute that."

He was a multifaceted personality, humorous and companionable. He was a connoisseur of Carnatic music and was fond of good food and cooking.

Shri S. Rajaraman leaves behind his wife Mrs. Amrita, son Ranganathan, and four daughters. In his death, the diamond community lost a 'legend'.

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