

Bhan, VijayRaghavan get Padma Awards

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Two key biotech decisions makers have been chosen for the nation's prestigious civilian awards announced on the eve of India's Republic Day on Friday.

The nation has chosen to honor the former Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Dr M K Bhan and his successor, Prof K VijayRaghavan, who will take charge on January 28, 2013, with Padma Awards. Another geneticist, Dr Jayaraman Gowrishankar, from Hyderabad too gets the Padma Shri awards for 2013.

"It is a great recognition as the government is honouring many scientists (Prof Yashpal, Prof Ajay Sood and Prof Roddam Narasimha among others) this year. Personally, I am very happy about the award as it is a recognition to the great work being done by my colleagues at the National Centre for Biological Sciences(NCBS), " Dr VijayRaghavan told BioSpectrum in an exclusive comments after the awards list was announced.

Dr Bhan will get the Padma Bhushan award while Prof VijayRaghavan will be conferred the Padma Shri awards. Dr Gowrishankar is currently the director of Hyderabad-based Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Development. Their names figure in the list of 108 awardee names announced by the government on January 25, on the eve of Republic Day.

Dr Bhan, a pediatric surgeon and researcher, had relinquished office as Secretary, DBT, on November 30, 2012 after an 8-year stint during which he piloted the formation of India's national biotech policy, revamped the regulatory systems to approve biotech products and initiated several path-breaking steps to promote the growth of biotechnology industry and also launched new biotech translational research centres across the country.

Prof VijayRaghavan is an internationally known geneticists and molecular biologists and is currently the director of Bangalore-based National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS). He will move to Delhi as Secretary, DBT next week.

Dr Gowrishankar studied medicine at the Vellore Medical College and later took up full time research and has played a key role in the development of DNA Fingerprinting technology during his tenure at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology(CCMB), Hyderabad. Later he moved to the newly set up CDFD to promote applications of the technology.

The Padma awards will be conferred on the recipients by the President of India in March-April, 2013.