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INDIA

OCSI DIALOGUES

The Oxford & Cambridge Society of India (OCSI) Executive Committee invites you to a panel discussion on ***“The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in India’s Covid Response”*** on Saturday, November 7, 2020 at 5 pm IST

CHAIR



Dr. Arabinda Mitra
Scientific Secretary
Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to
Government of India

PANELISTS



Prof. L S Shashidhara

Distinguished
Professor at Ashoka
University



Dr. Umesh Shaligram

Director R&D
Serum Institute of
India Private Limited



Rahul Nayar

CEO of AGNii
Invest India



Dr. Arabinda Mitra

Scientific Secretary, Office of Principal Scientific Advisor to Government of India

After completing a Master's in Geology from Patna University, Arabinda Mitra started his professional career in 1985 as a research scholar in the Department of Geology, Delhi University. In 1987 he joined the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India as a Scientific Officer and was involved in survey and exploration geology of the Himalayas.

In 1988 he was awarded the Cambridge Nehru Fellowship to pursue a PhD in Earth Sciences at the University of Cambridge, UK. His project work which was in collaboration with MIT was on "Rare Earth Element geochemistry of mid-ocean ridge hydrothermal systems".

In 1993, he was appointed as Senior Scientific Officer in the Indian Antarctic Program of the Department of Ocean Development. He has to his credit the planning and launching of several multi-disciplinary experiments in Antarctica. He was nominated as Indian representative to international Antarctic Treaty bodies like SCAR & COMNAP. In 1998, Dr. Mitra moved to the National Centre for Polar & Ocean Research at Goa, as Program Manager, Science. He played a seminal role in formulating the long-term science strategy of the Antarctic mission and established the ice core study laboratory.

In the course of the above assignments, he has won several academic awards like the ORS Award of UK; Bursary Award of St. Edmund's College, Cambridge; JSPS Award of Japan and was also elected as a Fellow of the Geological Society, London. He has been a member of the Indian Antarctic expedition and has undertaken scientific cruises to the Indian, Atlantic, Southern Oceans and the East Sea.

In 2001, he joined as Director in the Department of Science & Technology, where he proficiently enriched the scope and contents of the DST-NSF cooperation. In Nov 2004, Dr. Mitra was confirmed as the founding Executive Director of the bi-national Indo-US Science and Technology Forum where he was able to bring a paradigm shift in strengthening the Indo-American cooperation in science, technology and innovation.

In 2011, Dr. Arabinda Mitra took over the responsibilities of Adviser & Head of International Bilateral Cooperation of the Department of Science & Technology. This job involved overseeing India's international science, technology and innovation engagements with 44 countries across the globe and with Africa.

In June 2018, Dr. Mitra was appointed as Scientific Secretary at the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, with the mandate to develop national missions in S&T, provide synergistic policy interventions, and render periodic advice to the Prime Minister's office.



Prof. L S Shashidhara
Distinguished Professor at Ashoka University

Prof. Shashidhara specialises in Genetics, Molecular Biology and Evolutionary biology. His group has identified key mechanisms that specify organ development and regulate growth control in *Drosophila*. They have also expanded their study to examine the status of these evolutionarily conserved mechanisms in epithelial cancers in human.

Prof. Shashidhara did his undergraduate and post-graduate studies at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, India and holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge, UK. He started his independent research career at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad as a Scientist and Group Leader, where he built a strong developmental biology group. Following that, he moved to IISER Pune and contributed to its growth since its inception.

Prof. Shashidhara has served in the past as Vice-President of Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and Secretary General of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS). He is currently the President of IUBS (first Indian to be elected in its 100 years of glorious history). He has represented India in several delegations and international platforms. He is steering an international project on Climate Change Education. Recently, he was invited to speak about Climate Change Education at the High-Level Political Forum 2019 (HLPF 2019) at the United Nations.

For his contribution to basic and applied biology, Prof. Shashidhara has been recognised with the CSIR Technology and SS Bhatnagar Prizes and the JC Bose National Research Fellowship. He is a Fellow of Indian National Science Academy; National Academy of Sciences, India; and Indian Academy of Sciences. In 2018, Prof. Shashidhara was elected as Associate Member of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO), an international recognition for excellence in research in life sciences.

Prof. Shashidhara has served/is serving as Chair/Co-Chair/Member of various apex committees of the Government of India and S&T organisations, particularly those dealing with education, basic/applied/translational research funding, innovation, policy, international relations and outreach. He has developed and implemented several teachers' training programs under PMMMMNMMTT scheme of the MHRD. He has facilitated training of more than 10,000 school and undergraduate teachers in adopting inquiry-based teaching methods. In addition, he has organised several alternate career workshops for scientists, particularly women scientists, in science journalism, science policy, administration and management that have benefited more than 300 scientists from across the country.



Dr. Umesh Shaligram

Director, R&D, Serum Institute of India Private Limited

Dr. Umesh Shaligram (PhD), Director – Research & Development, leads the development and manufacturing of several products at SIIPL. These products are recombinant vaccines, proteins, polysaccharides and also newer technologies like polysialylation, biosimilars and biobetters. He is also involved in new unique strategies for TB eradication with novel products, HIV prevention and therapy as well as involved in several new products development at SIIPL.

He has experience of various technologies involved in the field of biologics, biosimilars, biobetters and has led several collaborations, tech-transfers and business relations with many companies and research organisations. He has also been involved in regulatory interaction with several leading regulatory agencies in the world.



Mr. Rahul Nayar
CEO, AGNI, Invest India

Rahul Nayar leads the AGNI Mission: an emerging technology commercialisation programme from the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India (PSA), as Vice President at Invest India.

AGNI converges Indian innovators' emerging technologies to enterprise, government, and non-profits: upgrading capability and competitiveness. The Mission Team determines industry and government priorities and pain-points; engages world-class technologies across Indian startup and R&D innovation networks; and unites these, for economic and social impact.

Rahul previously developed national digital strategy at the Office of the Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology; antifragile governance innovation platforms at the Ministry of Rural Development; rural digital service models at Bharat Broadband; and social innovation and digital empowerment initiatives at the Office of the Adviser to the Prime Minister.

In the private sector, Rahul worked in emerging technology consulting and early-stage venture capital; and on startup-public collaboration in the non-profit sector.

Rahul holds a Master's in Public Policy with Distinction from Oxford University, where he was Weidenfeld Scholar; an MPhil in Technology Policy from Cambridge

University, where he was Cambridge Commonwealth Trust Scholar; and a Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering, First Class, from Madras University.

Rahul was appointed Member of the Expert Group on Information Technology and Cyber Security at the Ministry of Rural Development, and Member-Convener to the National Innovation Council's Media Innovation Group.