

DR. VASANTRAO GOWARIKAR

- An Educationalist

Dr. Vasant Gowariker obtained his M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Birmingham, England; worked for 5 years with the U.K. Atomic Energy Authority and Summerfield Research Station, Kidderminster, Worcestershire as Senior Technical Officer; joined the space centre at Thumba (Kerala, India) in 1967 as Head of Propellant Engineering Division; became the Director of the Chemicals and Materials Group and finally rose to head the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) largest establishment entrusted with the responsibility of development of advanced rockets and launch vehicles for India's space programme. The SLV-3 project, which was India's first rocket to orbit a scientific satellite, was successfully completed during Dr. Gowariker's leadership of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. He represented India for five years on the Solid Rocket Technical Committee of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

Dr. Gowariker was a Visiting Professor at Stanford University, California, USA during 1985-86 when he was invited to join as the Science and Technology Secretary to the Government of India. During 1986-91 his major responsibilities included, inter-alia, science and technology (S&T) policy formulation, promotion of new S&T areas, international S&T affairs, S&T entrepreneurship development, science popularisation and other measures needed for the promotion of S&T applications for national development. The new, Monsoon model, which for the last five years has been able to accurately forecast the season's total rainfall along with

its major characteristics for the country as a whole, was developed and operationalised under Dr. Gowariker's leadership. This work has received worldwide recognition and accepted as a major contribution to the understanding of the monsoon processes and long range weather forecasting capability.

Dr. Gowariker is recipient of the Institution of Engineer's National Design Award; the M. S. University's Dr. K. G. Naik Gold Medal; the FIE Foundation Award; honorary doctorates of the Universities of Jabalpur, Indore, Roorkee and the Shivaji University; National Citizens Award 1991 and the Padma Shri. He is fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences (Bangalore), of the National Academy of Sciences (Allahabad) and of the Indian National Academy of Engineering (New Delhi), and was on the outside panel of examiners of the Oxford and Cambridge Examination Board.

Dr. Gowariker, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Science and Technology during 1991-93, was the General President of the 79th Science Congress. He is engaged in the Indo-French Book Project on Strategies for the 21st Century : A North-South Dialogue being edited by him along with Prof Ignacy Sachs.

With a research career of about 35 years, many of Dr. Gowariker's scientific papers are referred to in books and journals.

On 18th April 1995, he took charge of the post of Vice Chancellor of the Pune University. We congratulate Dr. Gowariker and wish him all success in his new assignment.

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