

Professor Palle Rama Rao

(1937-2026)



Professor P. Rama Rao inaugurating the NMR facility at IISER Mohali

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Mohali mourns the loss of its Founding Chairman, Board of Governors. Professor Rama Rao, born on June 30, 1937, breathed his last on October 3, 2026, in Hyderabad.

After completing his early education in Kurnool and St. Joseph College, Bangalore, Rama Rao received his BSc (Hons) and MA degrees from Madras University, MSc from Andhra University, Waltair, and PhD from Banaras Hindu University (BHU) under the supervision of Professor T. R. Anantharaman. He was Lecturer, Reader and Professor at BHU for two decades (1962-1982) before taking charge as the Director and Distinguished Scientist at the Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory, Hyderabad. He was appointed Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi. He was also, Secretary, Department of Ocean Development. He was the Vice-Chancellor, The Central University Hyderabad (1999-2002) and Chairman, Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. He held various other distinguished positions in the country guiding several academic and research and development organizations in the country.

Known for his landmark contributions in the areas of X-ray diffraction study of structural imperfections in metallic material, correlation of mechanical behaviour with the microstructure of metals and alloys and development of advanced engineering alloys, Rama Rao received several honours and distinctions from the country. In addition to receiving the S. S. Bhatnagar Prize (1979) from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi and Homi Bhabha Award (1985) from the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, he was Fellow, Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, the National Academy of Sciences (India), Allahabad and Fellow, The World Academy of Sciences, Trieste, Italy. He was the President, Indian Academy of Sciences (1995-1997). During his tenure as the President

of the Academy, the Science Education Panel was constituted, which led to the starting of *Resonance – journal of science education*. The Government of India honoured him with the title of Padma Vibhushan.

An academician to the core, Rama Rao was a great administrator. He was soft spoken, but clear in his views. As the first Chairman, Board of Governors, he was instrumental in shaping IISER Mohali in its formative years. When the founding Director, N. Sathyamurthy apologized to him about the delay in construction, he seems to have remarked, “Dr. Sathyamurthy, the institute will last for long; a slight delay in its building does not matter; better to get it right”. He agreed to be the Chief Guest of IISER Mohali for its second convocation on May 25, 2013.

IISER Mohali misses him. May he rest in peace.

