

Obituary



Dr V S Arunachalam (1935-2023)

With great sadness and sense of immense loss, we would like to convey the demise of Dr V S Arunachalam. He passed away peacefully in his sleep surrounded by close family in California. He is survived by his wife Meena, children Raghu, Malavika, and Ramu, and six grandchildren. He served as the president of The Indian Institute of Metals in 1987-88.

His distinguished career spanned across Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, National Aeronautical Laboratory, and the Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory. Dr Arunachalam was the Secretary, Department of Defence Research and Development (Ministry of Defence, Government of India, the Director General of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Scientific Adviser to Raksha Mantri, Government of India, from 1982 to 1992. It was under his guidance that the Light Combat Aircraft program (TEJAS) and the Integrated Guided Missile Program of the DRDO were initiated, amongst many others. He was conferred the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan for his contributions to engineering science and technology. He has been conferred with The Lifetime Achievement Award of The Indian Institute of Metals in 2007. In 2011 INAE recognised his contributions with its Lifetime Achievement Award in Engineering. He was awarded DRDO's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015.

From 1990-2005 he served as the Distinguished Service Professor (Engineering and Public Policy) at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh. On his return to India, he founded the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), a not-for-profit think-tank, with a mission to enrich policymaking with innovative approaches using science and technology for a sustainable, secure, and inclusive society.

He was a Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy, the Indian Academy of Sciences and the Indian National Academy of Engineering, along with being the first Indian Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering (UK). He served on INAE's first ad hoc council after it was founded.

He championed the notion of "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" throughout his life. He will be missed dearly by his family, friends, and the scientific community at large, and the nation