

PERSONAL NEWS

S. P. Nautiyal – An obituary

On the afternoon of 5 April 2000, India lost a great institution-builder, a visionary technocrat, an innovative earth scientist. Establishing the Mineral Exploration Corporation of India as its Chairman and Managing Director (1972–1975), Nautiyal launched a massive programme of prospecting for commercial utilization of economic mineral deposits of India. As Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh (UP) State Hill Development Corporation (1975–1977) and the UP State Mineral Development Corporation (1975–1977), he set out the agenda for economic development of Uttaranchal. Under his vibrant stewardship (1977–1980) Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology graduated from a small centre with tenured life to a national institution of excellence. When he was at the helm of affairs (1988–1991), the Garhwal University found a new campus and a new thrust in development initiatives.

Nautiyal changed the tenor and tempo of whichever organization he headed. As the representative of the Geological Survey of India (GSI) – and building strong teams of devoted and earnest earth scientists – he laid the foundation of systematic mapping and mineral exploration in Nepal and Bhutan. He is among the pio-

neers – the founding members of the team – which launched the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (now a giant oil corporation). He carried out exploration for potash in Ethiopia; in Iran he investigated the salt deposits; and in Iraq he looked for rock phosphate. In the GSI



under the leadership of J. B. Auden, he was instrumental in laying the firm foundation of the division of engineering geology for geotechnical investigations of water-resource development projects, in the Himalaya and elsewhere. In the earlier years of his service in the

GSI – which he joined in 1941 – he carried out brilliant petrogenetic studies, and embarked on a regional survey for economic mineral deposits in Uttaranchal.

Satyeshwar Prasad Nautiyal was born on 16 June 1914 in a remote hamlet in the Alaknanda Valley in the Garhwal Himalaya. He had early schooling in his village and at Roorkee where his father was in service in the army. Passing his intermediate examination from Ewing Christian College at Allahabad, he did his graduate and post-graduate studies in the Banaras Hindu University at Varanasi. Before he joined the GSI, Nautiyal held a teaching position for a short while (1939–1941) at his alma mater. His business has always been to go forward.

A very warm-hearted and compassionate person whose generosity was boundless, whose candidness unsettling, and whose attitude towards life very buoyant, Nautiyal has left behind several generations of intensely loving admirers.

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