

## Obituary



Prof. V.L. Chopra  
Geneticist, Agriculturalist and former-Director-General (ICAR)  
(1936-2020)

Padma Bhushan Professor Virender Lal Chopra, one of Indian's finest academicians, passed away in New Delhi on April 18, 2020. Born on 9th August 1936 at Adhwal (now in Pakistan), he did his schooling in Delhi, Graduation from Central College of Agriculture, Delhi University, Associateship from Indian Agricultural Research Institute and Ph.D. from Institute of Genetics, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh (UK). He worked in several capacities at IARI and served in the prestigious position of Director General, Indian Council of Agriculture Research. Thereafter, he served as BP Pal National Professor of Plant Biotechnology, Member of the Planning Commission of India, Chancellor of the Central Agricultural University of Imphal and Chancellor of Central University of Kerala. He had served Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in various capacities and successfully accomplished several international assignments of FAO and IFAD. He had been elected fellow of several academies viz., Indian Academy of Sciences, Indian National Science Academy, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, National Academy of Sciences, India, European Academy of Sciences and Arts and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). Various prestigious national and international awards and honours conferred on Prof. Chopra include Padma Bhushan, Borlaug Award, FICCI Award, Honor Summus Medal of the Watumull Foundation (USA), O.P. Bhasin Award, FAO/IAAS World Food Day Award, ISCA Birbal Sahni Birth Centenary Award, INSA Silver Jubilee Commemoration Medal, INSA Aryabhat Medal etc.

Chopra was the author of many books including, Plant Breeding: Theory and Practice, Breeding Field Crops and Search for New Genes some of the notable contributions. He was one among the Indian scientists featured in the list of role model scientists in Reference Curve for Indian Role Model Scientists, a scientific study published in 2001 on the scientists and their work. Wheat breeding was a subject close to his heart. Indian wheat fraternity and particularly the Society for Advancement of Wheat and Barley Research, Karnal will remain indebted to Prof. Chopra for his role as an Advisory Board member for the Journal of Cereal Research (formerly Journal of Wheat Research). The association with Prof. V.L. Chopra has played a key role in shaping the research journal and has motivated us to work for the betterment of the wheat research in the country. His sudden demise on 18 April 2020 has left a big void in Indian Science. The society will always cherish its association with Prof. V.L. Chopra and remain indebted to him for his advisory role