

An obituary



Academician Aleksandr Leonidovich YANSHIN
(28th March 1911-9th October 1999)

Academician A.L.Yanshin was born in Smolensk (Russia) on 28th March 1911. He obtained his master degree in 1932 from Moscow Geological - Exploration Institute. Subsequently after qualifying for his Ph.D. in 1937 he was awarded D.Sc. in 1953. In 1958 USSR Academy of Sciences elected him the full Academician - the highest Academic position in Russian Academic Society. During early days of career in prospecting and exploration of mineral deposits he switched over to regional - tectonic work and came out with brilliant publications on the principal problems of tectonics of Asia. In 1966 he headed a group of active tectonists and came out with the classical Tectonic Map of Eurasia on 1:50,00,000 scale. This is an unparallel compilation of data and geological reference work of Eurasian region and is still relevant. He worked at different capacities in well known institutions of Russian Academy of Sciences. During 1956-58 he headed the Regional Tectonic Laboratory of the Geological Institute, Moscow. During 1958-1982 he worked as Deputy Director of Institute of Geology and Geophysics, Siberian Branch of Academy of Sciences of USSR, Novosibirsk. From 1982-1988 he was the chief of Earth Science Sector or Vice-President of USSR Academy of Sciences at Moscow. During his tenure he organised the 27th International Geological Congress at 1984 in Moscow. He was also the Director of the newly formed Institute of Lithosphere, Moscow at this time. Since 1988 till his death he continued to work as Adviser to Russian Academy of Sciences Headquarter at Moscow. At the same time since 1993 he continued to be the President of Russian Ecological Academy and chaired the Professor's post in Ecological Faculty of Russian Friendship University, Moscow. He received many awards in Russia as well as other countries.

Academician Yanshin was the architect of Indo-Russian Cooperation in Earth Sciences under the Long Term Indo-Russian Projects and remained active Coordinator of DST, Government of India and Indian National Science Academy (INSA) New-Delhi projects. He was the Principal investigator in the projects involving Indian and Russian scientists dealing with the Comparative Geology and Tectonic Frame-work of Himalaya-Ural-Caucasus and Altai mountains. His last effort was to guide in formulation of Long Term Indo-Russian projects with Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow and Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow (Under Department of Science and Technology, Government of India). Just before his death he fondly invited the Director, Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow, to visit Moscow and give a final shape to the collaborative project. The fate turned to be too cruel. Instead the Director BSIP attended his official funeral on 14th October, 1999 at Russian Academy of Sciences Main Building at 14, Lininsky Prospect, Moscow. In his death geological world lost a great scientist, we lost a great Indophile and I lost a teacher, personal friend and visionary of Indo-Russian collaborative projects.

The great humanist, as he was, in the later part of his career was much more concerned for protection of environment on our good Earth for human survival and worked for this noble cause till he breathed his last.

He is survived by wife Mrs. Fidan Yanshina and son Alexei.

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