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**BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY**  
VARANASI-221005 (INDIA)

**This issue is dedicated to (Late) Padma Shri Dr. Lalji Singh  
(Ex. Vice Chancellor, B.H.U.)**



**(5<sup>th</sup> July, 1947-10<sup>th</sup> December, 2017)**

Padma Shri Dr. Lalji Singh was born on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1947 in a middle-class family at Kalwari village of Jaunpur district, Uttar Pradesh, India. He obtained his Ph. D. degree (sex chromosomes in snakes) under the supervision of Prof. S. P. Ray-Chaudhuri at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. Then he moved to the laboratory of Prof. K. W. Jones at the Institute of Animal Genetics, University of Edinburgh, UK on a Commonwealth Fellowship to work on his own research problem of sex determination in snakes. For the first time, he demonstrated the predominant existence of highly conserved sex chromosome-specific satellite DNA (Banded krait minor-satellite or Bkm) in the female krait, a highly poisonous snake. Dr. Singh also demonstrated that this satellite DNA is widely distributed in all vertebrates, including humans. Upon invitation from Dr. P. M. Bhargava, founder Director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, Dr. Singh returned to India, and joined CCMB (1987) as a senior scientist. His Bkm studies further resulted into the development of a DNA probe, which led to the establishment of the first indigenously developed

multilocus probe for DNA fingerprinting. India was the only country in the erstwhile world (after UK and USA), to develop this multilocus DNA fingerprinting technology due to pioneering efforts of Dr. Singh. Besides developing this technique, he also took all the pains to make it available for common use, particularly in the field of forensics as evidence in the court of law. Since then, this indigenous technique has been in continuous use in solving a no. of criminal cases, including the assassination of one of the former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, the Tandoor murder/Naina Sahni case, the assassination of Shri Beant Singh the erstwhile chief minister of Punjab, and the cases of Swami Shraddhananda from Bengaluru and Swami Premananda from Pudukottai, Tamil Nadu etc.

After assuming the office of Director of CCMB in 1998, he transformed the centre into excellent state-of-the-art with highly sophisticated scientific infrastructural facilities. Dr. Singh got established two excellent centres within CCMB – the Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES) and the Clinical Research Facility (CRF). In recognition of Dr. Singh's overall contribution to science and technology, Government of India honoured him with one of the prestigious civilian award 'Padma Shri' in 2004. After getting superannuated in 2009, Dr. Singh continued his research at CCMB as a CSIR-Bhatnagar Fellow till December 2014, when he got the opportunity of becoming the 25<sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor of BHU. He made extraordinary efforts towards making BHU as a world-class university. Dr. Singh took keen interest in establishing several centres of higher studies in BHU including a Bone Marrow Transplant and Stem Cell Research Centre, a Central Discovery Centre (a centralized facility for high-end sophisticated equipment), and a cyber-library to help BHU students to connect with other international universities and institutes. Dr. Singh succumbed to a massive cardiac arrest on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at Varanasi airport and took his last breath at BHU on the same day. Our Nation lost an eminent scientist, great visionary, an able administrator as well as an institution-builder, who encouraged and inspired all those around him to excel.

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