Dr. Subrata Ganguly, former Chairman of Research Council of CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory, Pune passed away in Kolkata on October 31, 2015 at the age of 82.

Dr Ganguly held many distinguished positions in public and private sector chemical industry. He was the Managing Director of ICI, India and was responsible for setting up the Alchemie Research Center at Navi Mumbai. He was also the Director of Research for ICI, India. He then moved to Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Limited (IPCL), Vadodara as Chairman and Managing Director and became the second person from private sector appointed to head IPCL. He served as the CMD of IPCL from 1983 to 1988. Thereafter, he became the Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Associated Cements Limited (ACC), Mumbai from where he retired in 2000 and settled down in Kolkata.

Dr. Ganguly was recognized as one of the leading technical managers of his time. He obtained his PhD in Applied Chemistry from Calcutta University and began his career as a scientist in the ICI Coatings Research facility at Rishra, West Bengal. He rose through the ranks to the highest position at ICI, India. He was a great champion of research in industry and played a stellar role in strengthening the research facility at IPCL. He also boldly ventured and risked loading a zeolite catalyst (Encilite) developed by CSIR-NCL in the commercial reforming reactor at IPCL`s aromatics plant in the mid-eighties. This catalyst was used for manufacturing p-xylene till RIL shut down the aromatics facility at Vadodara in the

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early 2000s. Upon loading the catalyst from NCL, IPCL was served a legal notice by Mobil, USA for infringing on its ZSM-5 catalyst patents. IPCL, under Dr Ganguly’s leadership, warded off the litigation and enabled India’s first indigenously developed catalyst from a National laboratory to be successfully validated at a major petrochemical manufacturing facility. This IPCL-NCL joint effort enhanced the confidence of NCL in development of commercial catalysts and led to several new commercial opportunities for NCL. To enable commercial production of the catalyst, Dr Ganguly acquired the Catalyst Manufacturing Facility of ACC Ltd and converted it into a captive catalyst manufacturing facility for IPCL. Subsequently, several catalysts developed by IPCL R&D were manufactured for commercial use in this facility.

Dr Ganguly also negotiated and successfully launched the first joint venture with GE Plastics, USA and set up a compounding facility for engineering plastics (Lexan and Noryl) at Vadodara,. His dream of setting up a manufacturing facility for polycarbonate in India was sadly not realized. He also enthusiastically supported the setting up of a major Polyolefins R&D Pilot Plant facility at IPCL, R&D, which is being successfully operated to this day by RIL. He also sponsored a major research programme at NCL for developing a process for poly(carbonate)s in 1988. This programme laid the foundation for the decade long collaboration with GE Plastics, USA with NCL beginning 1993.

Dr Ganguly was a great champion of research and interaction with academia. During his tenure as CMD of IPCL, he initiated major collaborative research of IPCL R&D with IITs, UDCT and National Laboratories. He was also an astute manager of, both, men and resources. He initiated the first ever bottoms up strategic planning exercise in IPCL. Coming from a blue blooded English company he was focussed on systems and processes, something alien to a public sector company. He focussed on human resource development and set up a dedicated training programme with Tata Management Training Center, Pune for all senior staff of the company in areas, such as, corporate road mapping, interpersonal communication, cross functional team building and creative thinking. He lived by high principles with compassion and care for his colleagues as the hall mark of his leadership. He was shorn of all pretences of wealth, vanity or power. He used to often say that “in the end what matters is simply how you treated people during your stay in this world for them to care to remember when you are gone” How true are his words!

Dr. Ganguly served as the Chairman of Research Council of CSIR-NCL during 1994 to 1997. CSIR-NCL as a family is deeply saddened by the demise of Dr. Ganguly. CSIR-NCL acknowledges his significant contributions to the Laboratory and pays homage to the
departed soul. Dr. Ganguly is survived by his wife Mrs. Shubhra Ganguly, two sons and a daughter.

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