

OBITUARY

Professor Samiran Chakrabarti, Emeritus Fellow (UGC) and former Professor of Zoology at the University of Kalyani, West Bengal, left for his heavenly abode on July 18th 2025, at the age of 79. He was brought up with affection and discipline in Bira, the North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal by his school teacher father. He completed his schooling at Gobardanga Khantura High School, and earned B.Sc. (Hons.) from Bangabasi College, Kolkata and M.Sc. in Zoology from the University of Calcutta in 1966 and 1968, respectively. In 1973, he obtained his Ph.D. under the mentorship of Professor D. N. Raychaudhuri, on aphid (Hemiptera: Sternorrhyncha: Aphidoidea) taxonomy.

He joined the University of Kalyani as a faculty member in 1972, before completing his Ph. D., and served with distinction for over 38 years, retiring on 31st January, 2011 at the age of 65 years. In recognition of his academic excellence, he was awarded the prestigious UGC Emeritus Fellowship in 2011 and received a research grant through it until 2021.

As Principal Investigator, he led 16 major research projects funded by UGC, CSIR, DST, INSA, ICAR, and MoEFCC and supervised 34 Ph.D. students.

Professor Chakrabarti made significant contributions to the biosystematics of mites and aphids. His primary research focused on gall mites (Eriophyoidea) in northeastern India and aphids in the northwestern and western Himalayas. His work also explored the ecology of various insect groups, including those associated with the Sal tree (*Shorea robusta* Roth), mulberry whiteflies and



Professor Samiran Chakrabarti

January 5, 1946 – July 18, 2025

their parasitoids, aphid natural enemies, elaterid and scolytid beetles, oribatid mites, and anopheline mosquitoes. He conducted biochemical studies on insect-induced plant galls and their effects on aphids and eriophyid mites biology.

A meticulous taxonomist, Professor Chakrabarti described 255 new species, erected 18 new genera, and recorded 117 species new to India. Notably, he discovered 70 gall-inducing aphids from the Himalayas, many of which he studied extensively at the Joshimath field station, which he established and maintained from 1981 to 2007.

He was a Fellow of five academic societies and held leadership roles in the Zoological Society, Kolkata, and the Aphidological Society of India. He served on numerous scientific committees, editorial boards, and traveled widely for academic purposes across Asia, Europe, Australia, and North America.

His national and international reputation was affirmed by numerous honors, including:

- S.P. Basu Medal (1975), Zoological Society, Kolkata
- UNESCO Fellowship (1978–79) at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences
- Visiting Young Scientist, Wilhelm-Pieck University, Rostock (1979)
- INSA delegate to the Aphid Symposium in Poland (1981)
- Indo-Czech Cultural Exchange Program member (1985)
- British Council visitor (1985, 1990), University of East Anglia and Natural History Museum, London
- Visiting Scientist, USDA, Maryland, USA (1990)
- Aphidological Society of India Award of Honor (1994)
- Plaque for ongoing eriophyid research from *International Journal of Acarology* and Taylor & Francis (2010)
- Visiting Professor, Nanjing and Nanning Agricultural Universities, China (2013)
- Biodiversity Excellence Award, North Bengal University (2015)
- Lifetime Achievement Award (2019) and

T.V. Ramakrishna Ayyar Award (2020), B.V. David Foundation

- Honored as “Eminent Aphidologist” at the 11th International Aphid Symposium, Poland (2022)
- Honored with ‘Life Time Achievement Award’ by Zoological Society of India, Kolkata (2024)

A man of quiet routines and deep cultural roots, he began each morning with a cup of Darjeeling tea and the soulful strains of Rabindra Sangeet. An avid reader of *Desh*, the Bengali magazine known for its literary and political commentary, he enjoyed thoughtful conversation as much as he did the comfort of a simple fish curry or a bowl of rice pudding. His love for the films of Satyajit Ray reflected his enduring appreciation for subtlety, intellect, and art.

In his personal life, he was a generous and respectful partner to his wife, Dr Sibani Chakrabarti, whom he first met during their days at Ballygunge Campus, Calcutta University. Their disciplines—Zoology and Botany—though distinct, intertwined in conversations that blurred the lines between science and life, bringing them closer until marriage felt like a natural extension of their companionship. Over the decades, their relationship remained a partnership of equals, marked by quiet support and a deep respect for each other’s intellectual space. Now a retired professor of Botany, Dr Sibani’s name appeared in the acknowledgments of several of his papers. His belief in intellectual freedom was not confined to the academic sphere, but it was a principle he lived by at home. With their son, Saurav, he was an encouraging and non-imposing guide, offering counsel but never dictating choices, allowing him to chart his own course in studies and career. In this way, his home became a place where



Where Botany meets Zoology, and love meets a lifetime-
Mughal Garden, 2023

minds could grow without constraint, nourished by trust and mutual respect.

I remember our first meeting in 2001, graphically, at the canteen of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru. I was asked by my guide Dr C. A. Viraktamath, to meet him there and interact with him. I was impressed by his tall figure, well-defined facial features, strong bone structure, and prominent Adam's apple, which would move to the rhythm of his words pronounced in a flat baritone. He listened to me cautiously, looking at me through his narrow, bright but kind eyes, as if peering through a microscope. With concern, he enquired about my work and, on examining my

aphid slides, he said, 'Your slides are okay, but your aphid collection is poor. Forget Ph.D., this much collection is not enough for awarding M.Sc.' This motivated me to add several additional aphids to my collection. It was this rare combination of honesty, precision, and deep engagement with students that made him not just a rigorous educator but also a counsellor whose words would stay with the students longer than they expected. Aphids from South India often elicited his curiosity; he would call them "intriguing." He had repeatedly retrieved specimens of the species *Paoliella* (*Paoliella*) *nirmalae* (David, 1969) from me, which he was particularly affectionate to. He held Dr. Kanakaraj David, the noted aphidologist from South India, in high regard and would often speak about his work. His kindness and generosity often shone through in quiet yet thoughtful ways. Once, he went to the trouble of having two enormous volumes of *Catalogue des Aphididae* by Remaudière & Remaudière painstakingly photocopied, bound, and sent to me from Kalyani, through his son, who was then studying at the Ramaiah Institute of Technology in Bengaluru. It was a gesture that spoke not only of his helpful nature but also of the deep value he placed on sharing knowledge. We remained in touch ever since our first acquaintance,



Photo: J. Poorani

Where others saw a pest, he saw beauty -
Paoliella (*Paoliella*) *nirmalae* (David)

474	Huang Xiaolei; Chakrabarti Samiran Li Junjie Hawkins Bradford A Qiao Gexia	Biogeographical affinities and evolution of terrestrial fauna in the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas: a case study of Aphidomorpha	Zoological Systematics	2023	48(2): 126-139	Full paper (Published April 2023)
				DOI: 10.11865/25.2023203		
475	Das Bidhan and Chakrabarti Samiran	Aphidinae (Homoptera) Parasitoids in India with examples of their biological successes	Proceedings of the Zoological Society, Kolkata	DOI: 10.1007/978-93-00486-1 (Published: 26 May, 2023)	Print Issue 2023: 409-76(4): 355-372	Full Paper
476	Hassan, Mahmud Asghar; Asif, Mahmud; Chakrabarti, Samiran Amin, Mahmud; Abbas, Zahair; Maryam, Zerskhina, Iqbal, Zafar; Ali, Mahmud; Qasim, Mahmud; Baskir, Hawaz Haider; Ali, Mahmud & Xing, Jichun	A comprehensive checklist and host plants of Aphididae (Aphidomorpha: Homoptera) from Pakistan	European Journal of Taxonomy	2024	945: 1-114	Monograph
				DOI https://doi.org/10.5852/ejt.2024.945.2613 Published on: July 25, 2024		
477	Chakrabarti, Samiran	Endemic aphid species (Aphididae: Aphidomorpha: Insecta) of the Himalaya: Present status, synonyms, distribution and host plants	In: Hartmann, M. & J. Weipert (Eds): Biodiversität und Naturausstattung im Himalaya VIII	2024	171-227	Published on:

A scholar's journey, handwritten in ink - A page from the register maintained by Dr Chakrabarti since his college days.

though our exchanges were always very formal and focused only on sharing our research findings. Most of our conversations revolved around enquiring about ongoing work, requesting research literature, or arranging the loan of slides. Whenever I published a new species or report on aphids (something that became less frequent after 2010), he would promptly request the slides for re-examination. I am certain those slides now rest safely in his collection, preserved with the same care he gave to all his scientific materials. After 2020, our interactions became rarer, yet he never failed to send me his warm Durgotsava greetings

each year. His last email, dated 15 April 2025, was to inquire about a copy of my paper on *Tuberaphis xinglongensis* (Zhang). Along with his request, he had attached his own published work, *Endemic aphid species (Insecta: Aphidomorpha: Aphididae) of the Himalaya: Present status, synonyms, distribution and host-plants*, which had appeared in *Biodiversität und Naturausstattung im Himalaya VIII*. It was a final gesture that perfectly reflected him—ever the meticulous researcher, ever the generous colleague.

I met him in person for the last time on 21st February 2024, at the University of Agricultural

Sciences, during the Entomology Student Conclave. He greeted me with that familiar sweet smile, dressed in a navy-blue safari suit—simple, dignified, and unmistakably him. That image is etched in my memory like a still frame. Now, whenever I think of him, the same picture comes to my mind.

Throughout his career, Dr Chakrabarti published 477 research articles (which include 15 books, several monographs, and numerous book chapters), each a testament to his methodical mind and commitment to his field. His 478th manuscript, sadly left incomplete, was in progress at the time of his passing. True to his lifelong habits, he maintained a handwritten, tabular record of each of his publications in a ruled register- a practice he began in his college days and continued faithfully until the end.

His legacy lives on not only through his students and work but also in the two genera named after him: *Chakrabartiaphis* Remaudière, 1997 (Aphididae) and *Chakrabartiella* Amrine & Stasny, 1994 (Eriophyidae), as well as several species named in his honor by scientists in India and abroad.

Professor Chakrabarti was not only an outstanding researcher but also a deeply respected teacher and mentor. His passing leaves an irreparable void in the fields of zoology and

entomology. For his former students—spread across India and far beyond—his name will always evoke memories of patient guidance, generous sharing of knowledge, and his unfailing willingness to assist in species identification and scientific pursuits. His influence will continue to live on in the researchers whose careers he helped shape. His name, Samiran (breeze) remained a fitting metaphor for his demeanor. He moved through life with calm grace, bringing comfort, encouragement, and clarity to those around him, leaving behind a refreshing touch of wisdom.

He is survived by his wife and son, daughter-in-law, grandson and granddaughter, who, along with his many students, colleagues, and friends, will cherish his memory, the legacy of scholarship and generosity he leaves behind.

Acknowledgements

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