भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान कानपुर
Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

Greater than US

CELEBRATING

67

YEARS

OF EXCELLENCE

संस्थान स्थापना दिवस

THE INSTITUTE FOUNDATION DAY

MONDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2026

Institute Fellow | Distinguished Alumni Award
Satyendra K. Dubey Memorial Award | Young Alumni Award



Director's Message



Prof. Manindra Agrawal

Director, IIT Kanpur

With immense pride in our legacy and faith in our future, I extend warm greetings to you all on the 67th Foundation Day of IIT Kanpur.

Established on 2 November 1959, IIT Kanpur is among the first generation of Indian Institutes of Technology. Over the decades, the Institute has nurtured generations of engineers, scientists, and entrepreneurs whose contributions transcend national boundaries and continue to make a lasting impact globally.

As we celebrate this occasion, I would like to begin by congratulating all the recipients of the Institute Fellow recognition, the Distinguished Alumni Award, the Young Alumni Award, and the Satyendra K. Dubey Memorial Award. Their achievements reflect the spirit of excellence and service that defines our Institute.

IIT Kanpur has evolved through the dedication and contributions of its faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Building on this legacy, our focus is on strengthening four key priorities: advancing technology development, delivering world-class fundamental research, creating a forward-looking academic ecosystem, and developing a future-ready campus.

I would like to share some of the major initiatives undertaken over the past year in pursuit of these priorities.

The Institute has a strong intellectual pool and ongoing laboratory research. Yet much of our R&D remains at TRL 3–4, where technology is validated in the laboratory but struggles to reach commercial deployment. This is the lab-to-market translation gap. To bridge it, the Institute has taken several steps:

Dhanavritti Ventures, an IIT Kanpur-supported initiative, invests in high-potential deep-tech startups emerging from research institutions and the wider innovation ecosystem. It has recently received SEBI registration as a Category I Alternative Investment Fund, making it among the first SEBI-registered venture funds in India sponsored directly by an IIT.

The Uttar Pradesh Startup Policy 2026 has established U-Hub, the state's flagship Deep-Tech Hub, with IIT Kanpur as the lead institute to strengthen deep-tech entrepreneurship.

We have launched SCALE (Strategic Capital & Advisory for Launch and Expansion), a flagship venture development program that supports deep-tech innovators across two stages, from research translation to venture acceleration. First step of the program, SCALE-Transcend, has commenced with the inaugural cohort.

The Board of Governors has also approved a new position, the Dean of Innovation and Technology Transfer (DoIT), to coordinate all translational research activities within a unified framework.

Further, in a significant initiative, we have signed an MoU with our distinguished alumnus Shri Rahul Gautam (BT/ChE/1975), who is generously contributing INR 180 crore to establish the Gautam School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship (G-SINE), India's first deep-tech innovation and entrepreneurship school.

While translating research into practical applications is important, fundamental research remains central to IIT Kanpur's mission. It expands the boundaries of knowledge, creates the basis for future technologies, and enables us to address challenges that may not yet have clear solutions. To strengthen our research capabilities, the Institute has established the Central Research Facility (CRF). The facility will provide a shared ecosystem for access to high-end research equipment, promoting efficient management, broader accessibility, and optimal resource utilization. It will also support collaboration across disciplines and strengthen fundamental research at the Institute.

Rapidly evolving technology, especially AI and automation, is outpacing traditional higher education curricula, and rote, siloed instruction is increasingly obsolete. Academia must therefore revamp its curricula so that graduates remain adaptable and employable in a fast-changing world. The Institute is working toward this through the Academic Reforms Committee.

Realizing these ambitions requires sustained investment in research, academic programs, infrastructure, and institutional capacity.

In October 2024, we set ourselves a target of raising ₹5,000 crore over five years. I am pleased to share that 77% of this target has already been committed and the target is expected to be met by early 2027. This progress reflects the confidence of our alumni, donors, and partners in the Institute's vision and their commitment to its continued growth. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this effort. Your support enables us to pursue new opportunities, strengthen existing capabilities, and invest in the generations that will shape our future.

As IIT Kanpur enters its next chapter, our ambition is to build on our strong foundations in academics, fundamental research, and innovation, while expanding our ability to translate knowledge into technologies and solutions that address real-world challenges. This requires an academic and research environment that encourages intellectual curiosity, supports outstanding students and faculty, and fosters collaboration across disciplines. It also calls for the infrastructure, institutional capabilities, and partnerships.

To bring these priorities together, we have launched IIT Kanpur's collective campaign, Greater Than Us, with a goal of mobilizing US$1 billion. It brings the resource mobilization to support the key priorities to strengthen IIT Kanpur for the decades ahead.

I humbly invite our alumni, donors, industry partners, and the wider IIT Kanpur community to join us in this endeavor to strengthen IIT Kanpur's contribution to the nation and the world.

Our responsibility is not merely to preserve what has been built, but to carry it forward with purpose and vision.

Let us continue to build for the future, rooted in our legacy.

Happy 67th Foundation Day to you all!

Jai Hind!

- Manindra Agrawal



CHIEF GUEST

PROF. PARTHA P. CHAKRABARTI

Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering
Chief Mentor (Academics & Research) & Former Director
Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

Prof. Partha Pratim Chakrabarti completed his B.Tech in 1985 and his PhD in 1988 from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur. He joined the same department as a faculty member in 1988 and is currently a Senior Professor. He served as Director of IIT Kharagpur from July 2013 to July 1, 2019. He was the Professor-in-Charge of the state-of-the-art VLSI Design Laboratory, which he helped set up, and has served as Dean of Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy at IIT Kharagpur. He set up the Incubation Programme at IIT Kharagpur and was Head of the Advanced Technology Development Centre. He was also Co-Director of the strategic General Motors–IIT Kharagpur Collaborative Research Laboratory on Electronics, Controls and Software. In addition, he held additional charge as Director of IIT Patna and IIIT Kalyani.

His areas of interest include Artificial Intelligence (AI), Algorithms, Formal Methods, CAD for VLSI and Embedded Systems, and Fault Tolerance. Prof. Chakrabarti has made fundamental scientific contributions in the areas of Artificial Intelligence and Automated Reasoning, and has applied these techniques to solve important synthesis, optimization and verification problems, especially in VLSI Design and Embedded Systems. He has published two research monographs and more than 320 papers in international journals and conferences, and has supervised more than thirty PhD students.

He has worked closely with industry and government, and has successfully completed projects worth several hundred crores with organisations such as MHRD, DST, CSIR-NMITLI, MeitY, DHI, INSA, Volkswagen Foundation, Intel, Synopsys, Google, National Semiconductor, General Motors and ONGC. He was the founding architect and overall coordinator of national initiatives such as the National Digital Library of India, the NDLI-Fermi AI Tutor, the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN), SPARC, IMPRINT and the PAN-IIT ONGC Initiative, which are emerging as game changers in India's education and research landscape. He is an Advisor to Ashoka University and TCG CREST.

Dr. Chakrabarti has received the President of India Gold Medal (1985), the INSA Young Scientist Award (1991), the Anil K. Bose Award (1995), the INAE Young Engineers Award (1997), the Swarnajayanti Fellowship (1997–98), the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize (2000), the INAE Visvesvaraya Chair Professorship (2007–09), the J.C. Bose Fellowship (2013), and many other awards. He is an elected Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi; the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore; the Indian National Academy of Engineering; and the West Bengal Academy of Science and Technology. He received a DSc (Honoris Causa) from Kalyani University in 2018, an Honorary DLitt from Techno India University in 2024, and an Honorary Doctorate in Engineering from the University of Engineering and Management, Kolkata, in 2026, for his contributions to science and technology.

INSTITUTE FELLOW

The Institute Fellow Award, instituted by IIT Kanpur in 2005, recognizes and honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the Institute's growth. These contributions have impacted not only the fields of education, academics, and industrial development but also the broader well-being of society, bringing laurels and recognition to the nation both domestically and internationally.



INSTITUTE FELLOW

Prof. Indranil Manna

(MT/MME/1985)

Vice-Chancellor, Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi;
Professor of Eminence (Honorary), IIT Kharagpur;
Former Director, IIT Kanpur

Prof. Indranil Manna is a distinguished metallurgist, academician, and researcher whose work encompasses materials science, engineering education, and academic leadership. His contributions have advanced materials research and strengthened technical education in India.

Prof. Manna's academic journey began with a B.E. in Metallurgical Engineering from Bengal Engineering College, University of Calcutta, in 1983. He subsequently obtained his M.Tech. in Metallurgical Engineering from IIT Kanpur in 1985 and his Ph.D. from IIT Kharagpur in 1990. He joined IIT Kharagpur in 1985 and was appointed Professor in 2003, building a distinguished academic and research career over four decades.

Prof. Manna's research covers a wide range of areas, including the relationship between microstructure and properties, phase transformations, additive manufacturing, surface engineering, nanostructured materials, nano/ferro-fluids, and advanced engineering materials. His work on amorphous and nanocrystalline aluminum alloys, laser- and plasma-assisted surface engineering, and moving-boundary solid-state transformations is widely acclaimed. He teaches courses in materials engineering, laser materials processing, and additive manufacturing.

Over the years, Prof. Manna has held several prominent leadership positions. He served as Director of CSIR–Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute (CGCRI) from March 2010 to October 2012 and as Director of IIT Kanpur from November 2012 to November 2017. He has also served as the 14th President of the Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE) from 2020 to 2024. He is currently the Vice-Chancellor of Birla Institute of Technology (BIT), Mesra, Ranchi, and Professor of Eminence (Honorary) at IIT Kharagpur, following his superannuation in January 2026.

Prof. Manna has contributed to national initiatives in research, innovation, and engineering education. He served as National Coordinator of the Impacting Research, Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT) initiative and has been associated with programmes including Uchchatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY), the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC), Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), and Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). He has also served as National Coordinator of the Centre for Engineering Education and Excellence (CEEE) of INAE. As the founding National Coordinator of CEEE, he has also contributed to strengthening engineering education through a mentoring programme for faculty members from less-resourced engineering institutions, supported by the Infosys Foundation.

Prof. Manna visited different renowned R&D institutions and universities abroad as a guest scientist like Max Planck Institute at Stuttgart and Technical University of Clausthal (Germany), Unipress in Warsaw (Poland), Liverpool University (UK), Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), Ecole Polytechnic de Mines (France), National Institute of Materials Science at Tsukuba (Japan), University of Tennessee (USA), and University of Ulm (Germany) with teaching or research assignments.

He was the Chairman of the Research Council of CSIR-AMPRI, Bhopal and CSIR-NML, Jamshedpur, Member of the Research Councils of BHEL, CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL), Society of IIM Indore, Board of Governors of IIM Lucknow, IISER Pune, IIEST Shibpur and IISER Kolkata. He was a member of the Governing Body of the Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF), Executive Council of AICTE, the Administrative Council of the Abdul Kalam Technical University (UP), and SAMAVESH, a NITI AAYOG Think-Tank Group. He was the Chairman, INSA-INSPIRE Faculty Fellow Scheme (Engineering Sciences) of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Chairman of the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Metals, Materials, Mining Engineering Section of SERB-DST, Member of the Board of the Steel Research Technology Mission Initiative (SRTMI), PM Trophy Committee and R&D Board of the Ministry of Steel, and Member of the Research Council of ARCI, Hyderabad (DST) and Research Advisory Board of GAIL India and R&D of BHEL, Hyderabad. He was an active member of the committee on Science Technology Innovation Policy (STIP) of India and chaired the Surface Engineering (V12H3) group under the Advanced Manufacturing Forum of Vaishvik Bharatiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) scheme. Earlier, he briefly served as an expert in NAAC and NBA. He was a Member of the Academic Council of Homi Bhabha National Institute (Department of Atomic Energy), Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandir at Belur, and currently serves the National University of Study and Research in Law, Indian Institute of Coal Management, and Jharkhand State Faculty Development Academy in Ranchi.

During his academic career, Prof. Manna contributed to the development of specialised research facilities at IIT Kharagpur, including laboratories for plasma ion implantation and coating, FEG-SEM, PLD, mechanical alloying, wear and erosion testing, electron-beam joining, pulsed laser deposition, and nanofluid synthesis and characterisation.

Prof. Manna has served as Vice-President (Science and Society) of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA), President of the Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE) from 2020 to 2024, and Vice-President of INAE from 2014 to 2019. He held the JC Bose Fellowship awarded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) from 2012 to 2022 and delivered the MGK Menon Memorial Lecture of the National Academy of Sciences, India, in 2026. He served as President of the Indian Institute of Metals (IIM) from 2016 to 2017 and its Vice-President from 2013 to 2016, and as President of the Materials Science Section of the Indian Science Congress Association from 2009 to 2010.

His honours include the Platinum Jubilee Medal Lecture Award of the Indian Science Congress Association (2011); the National Metallurgist Award (2018), Lifetime Achievement Award (2024), Metallurgist of the Year Award (2002), and Young Metallurgist Award (1991), conferred by the Ministry of Steel, Government of India; Honorary Doctor of Science degrees from the University of Kalyani and Kazi Nazrul University (2017); Distinguished Alumnus Awards from IIT Kharagpur (2016) and IIEST Shibpur (2014); and the TWAS Prize in Engineering Sciences. He is a Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), the Indian National Science Academy (INSA, 2010), the Indian Academy of Sciences (2008), the Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE, 2005), and the National Academy of Sciences, India (2005). He served as INAE Visvesvarya Chair Professor from 2009 to 2011 and INAE-AICTE Distinguished Industry Professor from 2007 to 2009 at IIT Kharagpur. His other honours include the Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship (2001), the Mouat Medal from the University of Calcutta (1999), the Premchand Roychand Scholarship from the University of Calcutta (1992), the INSA Medal for Young Scientist (1992), and the DAAD Fellowship (1988).



INSTITUTE FELLOW

Prof. V. Chandrasekhar

Head, Department of Chemistry, Ashoka University;
Visiting Distinguished Professor, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Hyderabad

Prof. V. Chandrasekhar is a distinguished chemist recognised for his contributions to inorganic and organometallic chemistry and molecular materials. He obtained his Ph.D. in Chemistry from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, in 1982, followed by postdoctoral research at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA.

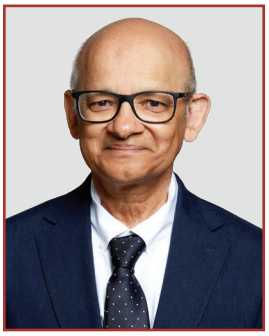
He joined the Department of Chemistry at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur in 1987 and served the Institute until his superannuation in November 2023. During his tenure, he served as Head of the Department of Chemistry from 2008 to 2010 and Dean of Faculty Affairs from 2011 to 2012. He subsequently held senior academic and leadership positions at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Hyderabad, and the National Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhubaneswar.

His research interests span molecular materials, including molecular magnets, main-group organometallic chemistry, inorganic rings and polymers, and polynuclear metal assemblies. His work also explores the design and properties of metal complexes, their catalytic applications, and the development of materials with distinctive magnetic and photophysical properties.

Prof. Chandrasekhar has received several prestigious national and international honours, including the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize in Chemical Sciences (2003), the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Bessel Research Award of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany (2003), the Chemical Research Society of India Medal (2002), and the Homi Bhabha Fellowship (1999–2000). He is an elected Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences, the Indian National Science Academy, the National Academy of Sciences, India, and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). He has also contributed to the scientific community through editorial roles, including his association with Organometallics and his role as Associate Editor of Dalton Transactions.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

The Distinguished Alumni Award (DAA) is the highest award given by IIT Kanpur to its alumni in recognition of their outstanding achievements. The award honours individuals who have made significant contributions in their respective fields, through academic and professional excellence, entrepreneurship, management, or service to humanity, bringing distinction to their alma mater.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Prof. Prakash Panangaden

(MSc5/PHY/1975)

Honorary Professor, School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh;
Professor Emeritus, School of Computer Science, McGill University

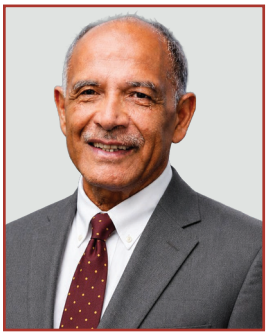
Prof. Prakash Panangaden is an internationally renowned computer scientist whose research has made fundamental contributions to theoretical computer science, programming language semantics, logic, probabilistic systems and quantum information. He is currently an Honorary Professor in the School of Informatics at the University of Edinburgh and Professor Emeritus in the School of Computer Science at McGill University.

His research interests include probabilistic processes, reinforcement learning, quantitative logics and quantum information theory. Prof. Panangaden graduated with an M.Sc. in Physics from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in 1975. He subsequently earned an M.S. in Physics from the University of Chicago in 1978 and a Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1980. He later transitioned into computer science, obtaining an M.S. in Computer Science from the University of Utah in 1985. He began his academic career in physics before moving into computer science, serving at the University of Utah and Cornell University and subsequently joining Queen's University and McGill University. He joined McGill in 1990 and became Professor in 1996, remaining there until his retirement in 2024. From 2018 to 2024, he was also a core member of the Montreal Institute for Learning Algorithms (MILA). Since July 2025, he has served as Honorary Professor at the University of Edinburgh. Prof. Panangaden's research has profoundly influenced the mathematical foundations of probabilistic computation.

His work has advanced the theory of Markov processes, bisimulation, behavioural equivalence, metrics, programming language semantics and logics for probabilistic systems. Together with collaborators, he established a landmark connection between the behavioural equivalence of continuous-state processes and their logical properties. His work has also contributed to quantitative extensions of equational logic and methods for reasoning about approximate equality. His intellectual contributions extend beyond probabilistic systems to quantum information theory, concurrent programming semantics, modal logic and category theory. He developed a formal calculus for reasoning about measurement-based quantum computation and has contributed to understanding the relationship between causal structures and the topology of globally hyperbolic spacetimes. His research has also increasingly engaged with machine learning and reinforcement learning, with recent work appearing in ICML 2026 and other leading venues. Prof. Panangaden's contributions have received exceptional international recognition.

He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2013, Fellow of the Association for Computing Machinery in 2020 and Fellow of the Royal Society in 2025. In 2026, he was elected Fellow of the European Association for Theoretical Computer Science. His other honours include the Leo Yaffe Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching, the Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching, the Class of 1890 Outstanding Teaching Award and two LICS Test-of-Time Awards for influential research papers. He is the author of Labelled Markov Processes and co-author of Implementing Mathematics with the Nuprl Proof Development System. He has also played an important role in the wider research community through service to organisations including the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the U.S. National Science Foundation and other research and evaluation bodies.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to Theoretical Computer Science, Programming Language Semantics, Probabilistic Systems and Quantum Information, and his significant impact on the mathematical foundations of probabilistic computing and machine learning, IIT Kanpur confers upon Prof. Prakash Panangaden the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Academic Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Prof. Upmanu Lall

(BT/CE/1976)

Global Futures Professor; Director, ASU Water Institute,
Arizona State University

Prof. Upmanu Lall is a Global Futures Professor in the School of Complex Adaptive Systems at Arizona State University, and Director of the ASU Water Institute at the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory. His work sits at the intersection of hydrology, climate dynamics, water resource systems, risk management and sustainability, with a particular focus on using data science, statistical modelling and systems approaches to address complex water and climate challenges. He received his B.Tech. in Civil Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in 1976, followed by an M.S. and Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin in 1980 and 1981, respectively. His doctoral work focused on the value of information in relation to uncertainty and risk, building on his earlier work in mathematical modelling of water-energy systems.

Prof. Lall began his academic career at the University of Utah and later served as Professor and Associate Director of the Utah Water Research Laboratory at Utah State University. He joined Columbia University in 1999 and spent more than two decades there, serving as Alan & Carol Silberstein Professor of Engineering, Professor of Earth and Environmental Engineering and Civil Engineering & Engineering Mechanics, and Director of the Columbia Water Center. He also served as Chair of the Department of Earth and Environmental Engineering and held a senior research role at Columbia's International Research Institute for Climate and Society. At Columbia, Prof. Lall founded and led the Columbia Water Center, developing a multidisciplinary approach to water challenges that brought together hydrology, climate science, statistics, economics, policy and systems analysis.

His research has pioneered the application of nonlinear dynamical systems, nonparametric statistical methods, hierarchical Bayesian models, systems optimization and simulation to hydrologic and climatic systems. His work has addressed water resource planning, flood and drought risk, groundwater depletion, climate prediction, agricultural water uses and the water-energy nexus. His research and public engagement have increasingly focused on developing practical solutions to water and climate risks. At ASU, he leads the Water Institute, which brings together researchers and practitioners to forecast and address water challenges at local, national and global scales. His recent work has examined extreme weather, water security, climate resilience and innovative approaches to managing water resources. Most recently, he is pursuing novel adaptive chaos control strategies for steering the atmospheric circulation with the goal of defusing weather extremes such as severe storms, floods, droughts, heat waves and deep freezes.

Prof. Lall's contributions have been recognised through numerous honours, including, the Borland Lecture on Hydrology, the Langbein Lecture, and the Peter Eagleson Hydrologic Sciences Award, all from the American Geophysical Union; the Arid Lands Hydrology Research Award and the Ven Te Chow Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers; the Henry Darcy Medal from the European Geosciences Union; and the Jelle Zijlstra Award from the European Chamber of Digital Commerce. He is a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Through his research, institution-building and engagement with governments, development organisations, industry and scientific communities, Prof. Lall has made significant contributions to understanding and addressing the world's interconnected water, climate and sustainability challenges.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to Hydrology, Climate Science, Water Resources Management and Risk Analysis, and his distinguished impact on developing data-driven and multidisciplinary approaches to global water and climate challenges, IIT Kanpur confers upon Prof. Upmanu Lall the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Academic Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Prof. Ravi Ahuja

(BT/MT/PhD/ME/IME/1977/1979/1982)

Founder & CEO of Optym;
Professor Emeritus, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering,
University of Florida, Gainesville

Prof. Ravi Ahuja is a professor turned software entrepreneur. After spending 20+ years in academics as a teacher and researcher, he founded Optym 20+ years ago to turn his research into software products. Prof. Ahuja specializes in the theory and practical application of Network Optimization.

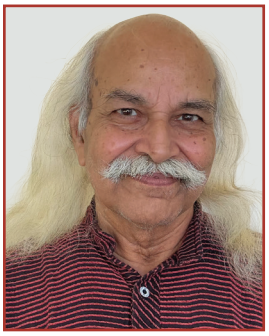
Prof. Ahuja entered the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur in 1972 to study Mechanical Engineering and earned a B.Tech in Mechanical Engineering in 1977. He continued his education at IIT Kanpur, earning an M.Tech in 1979 and a Ph.D. in 1982, both in Industrial & Management Engineering. Upon completing his Ph.D., he joined the faculty of Industrial & Management Engineering at IIT Kanpur and worked there from 1982 - 1996.

He was offered a visiting professorship at the Sloan School of Management at MIT in 1986, and he spent considerable time at MIT during the period 1986 - 1998. This research work resulted in widely referenced research papers and a textbook, “Network Flows: Theory, Algorithms, and Application,” which he coauthored with Prof. James Orlin (MIT) and Prof. Thomas Magnanti (MIT). This book received the prestigious Frederick W. Lanchester Prize in 1993, given to the best publication of the year in the field of Operations Research and Management Science. This book is considered the bible of Network Optimization and has been used as a textbook from its publication to the current date around the world including MIT, Stanford, Carnegie-Mellon, Columbia, Georgia-Tech. Prof. Ahuja is most proud of this academic contribution.

He joined the faculty of Industrial & Systems Engineering at the University of Florida (UF), Gainesville in 1998 and stayed there until 2018 when he became Professor Emeritus. At UF, he co-authored two books, and his research received the 2003 Pierskalla Award, the 2006 Daniel H. Wagner Award, the 2007 Koopman Prize, the 2008 INFORMS Fellow Award, the 2013 Railway Applications Section Distinguished Member Award and the 2015 Florida Governor's Business Ambassador Award.

At UF, he had the opportunity to work on practical routing and scheduling problems faced by railroads and airlines. He gradually transitioned from theoretical research to solving practical business problems arising in transportation and logistics which were natural applications of his academic research in Network Optimization. In 2004, he recruited his four Ph.D. students and founded a company “Innovative Scheduling” which is now known as “Optym.” Optym now has 300+ employees with its headquarters based in Dallas, Texas, and a development center based in Bangalore, India. Optym’s clients include leading airlines, railroads, trucking and mining companies. Prof. Ahuja plays the role of Algorithm Designer and Architect for its SaaS products.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to Operations Research, Network Optimization, Logistics and Transportation, and his distinguished impact in translating advanced optimization research into practical solutions, IIT Kanpur confers upon Prof. Ravi Ahuja the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Academic Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Prof. Harish Chandra Verma

(MSc2/PhD/PHY/1978/1981)

Distinguished Professor, Department of Applied Physics,
Delhi Technological University

Prof. Harish Chandra Verma is an eminent Indian experimental physicist, author and educator whose work has made a lasting contribution to physics research and physics education in India. He is currently a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Applied Physics at Delhi Technological University and was formerly a Professor in the Department of Physics at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. He is best known for his two-volume textbook Concepts of Physics, which has become one of India's most influential physics textbooks for students preparing for engineering and science entrance examinations.

Prof. Verma completed his B.Sc. (Hons.) in Physics from Patna Science College in 1975 and received his M.Sc. in Physics from IIT Kanpur in 1978. He subsequently pursued his Ph.D. in Physics at IIT Kanpur, completing it in 1981. His doctoral research was conducted under the supervision of Prof. G. N. Rao and Prof. R. M. Singru and focused on experimental nuclear physics. He began his academic career at Patna Science College, where he served as Lecturer and Reader from 1979 to 1994. He joined the Department of Physics at IIT Kanpur as an Assistant Professor in 1994 and remained at the institute until his retirement in 2017.

During his academic career, his research interests included experimental nuclear physics, ion-beam material modification, magnetic nanomaterials, nanocrystalline magnetic materials and alloys, and related materials applications. He has authored 139 research papers in reputed journals.

Alongside his research, Prof. Verma has made an extraordinary contribution to physics education. His two-volume Concepts of Physics, first published in 1992, has become a foundational text for generations of students preparing for competitive examinations and undergraduate physics courses. He has also authored Quantum Physics and produced extensive lecture material on nuclear physics and other areas of science. His teaching philosophy emphasises conceptual understanding, experimentation and the ability to approach physical problems through first principles.

Prof. Verma has also worked extensively to improve science teaching beyond the university classroom. He has developed hundreds of low-cost physics experiments that can be used by teachers as classroom demonstrations and has produced Hindi-language video lectures to make science education more accessible to students from Hindi-medium backgrounds. Through the National Anveshika Network of India and his work with the Indian Association of Physics Teachers, he has promoted hands-on and experimental approaches to physics education.

He has been instrumental in establishing and developing Shiksha Sopan, a social and educational initiative involving IIT Kanpur faculty, students and local communities to support children from economically weaker sections in villages around the IIT Kanpur campus. Through educational centres, scholarships, teacher-training programs and outreach activities, the initiative has sought to improve access to quality education and encourage scientific thinking.

Prof. Verma's contributions have been acknowledged through several prestigious honours. He received the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Shiksha Puraskar in 2017 and was conferred the Padma Shri in 2020. On 18 December 2021, he was awarded the Doctor of Science (D.Sc.), Honoris Causa, by the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. In 2022, he was named an Institute Fellow of IIT Kanpur. He was subsequently conferred an honorary degree by Uttarakhand Technical University. In 2025, he was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI), in recognition of his contributions to science and education.

In March 2026, Prof. Verma joined Delhi Technological University as a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Applied Physics, bringing more than three decades of teaching, research and science-education experience to the institution.

Through his research, widely influential textbooks, innovative teaching methods and sustained work with students, teachers and underserved communities, Prof. Verma has played a unique role in advancing both the practice and popularisation of physics in India.

In recognition of his pioneering contributions to physics research and science education, and his lasting impact on generations of learners, IIT Kanpur confers upon Prof. Harish Chandra Verma the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 for his outstanding service to humanity at large.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Dr. Panganamala Vijay Kumar

(MT/EE/1979)

National Science Chair Professor,
Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru

Dr. Panganamala Vijay Kumar is currently a National Science Chair Professor at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. His research interests include algebraic coding theory and signal design, with applications to wireless cellular communication, distributed storage, and satellite navigation.

He received his B.Tech. in ECE from IIT Kharagpur in 1977, his M.Tech. in EE from IIT Kanpur in 1979, and his Ph.D. in EE from the University of Southern California (USC) in 1983. He served on the USC faculty from 1983 to 2003, including as a Full Professor from 1995 to 2003. In 2003, he joined the Department of ECE at IISc, where he served as Professor until 2021, as Department Chair from 2012 to 2014, and as an Honorary Professor from 2021 to 2026. In February 2026, he was appointed National Science Chair (Mode I) by the Anusandhan National Research Foundation. Since December 2025, he has also served as an Advisor to VyomIC, a Bengaluru-based space-tech startup.

Dr. Kumar's research has had significant practical impact: a pseudorandom sequence family he co-designed was adopted as the short scrambling code of the global 3G WCDMA cellular communication standard, and the IZ4 family of spreading codes he co-designed was incorporated by ISRO into the civilian L1 signal of NavIC and flown aboard the NVS-01 and NVS-02 satellites.

His honours include the 1994 USC School of Engineering Senior Research Award, the 1995 IEEE Information Theory Society Prize Paper Award, the 2011/12 IEEE Data Storage Best Paper Award, the 2013 Dr. Rustom Choksi Award for Excellence in Research in Engineering at IISc, and the J. C. Bose National Fellowship (2017–22). He is a Fellow of the IEEE, the INAE, IAS, and INSA academies.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to the theory and practice of error-correcting codes and signal design for wireless communication, digital storage, and satellite-based navigation, IIT Kanpur confers upon Dr. Panganamala Vijay Kumar the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 for Academic Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Prof. Dipendra Prasad

(MSc2/PHY/1980)

Chairman, National Board of Higher Mathematics;
Emeritus Fellow, Department of Mathematics, IIT Bombay

Prof. Dipendra Prasad is an Indian mathematician and number theorist whose research is centred on automorphic representations, representation theory and the Gan–Gross–Prasad conjecture. He is currently an Emeritus Fellow in the Department of Mathematics at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

Prof. Prasad completed his bachelor's degree from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, in 1978 and received his M.Sc. in Physics from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in 1980. He subsequently worked as a research scholar at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, before earning his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1989 under the supervision of mathematician Benedict Gross. Following his doctoral studies, Prof. Prasad held research positions at TIFR Mumbai and was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton in 1992-93 as well as in 2006-07. He served as an Associate Professor and Professor at the Harish-Chandra Research Institute in Allahabad for about ten years from 1994, and then spent about fifteen years as a Professor at TIFR Mumbai.

In 2019, Prof. Prasad moved to IIT Bombay, where he continued his research and teaching in mathematics. His mathematical work has made significant contributions to number theory, automorphic forms and representation theory. He is particularly known for his work on the Gan–Gross–Prasad conjecture, which connects branching laws for representations of classical groups with arithmetic properties of representations and of automorphic forms. His research has resulted in influential publications on trilinear forms, local epsilon factors, branching laws, self-dual representations and related problems in the representation theory of reductive groups over local fields. He was an invited speaker at the International Congress of Mathematicians in 2018, where he presented work on Ext-analogues of branching laws.

Prof. Prasad's contributions have earned him some of the highest recognitions in Indian mathematical sciences. He received the Swarna Jayanti Fellowship in 1999 and the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for Science and Technology in Mathematical Sciences in 2002. He was elected Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences in 1995, the National Academy of Sciences, India, in 1997, and the Indian National Science Academy in 2003. His international recognition includes the Jean-Morlet Chair at the Centre International de Rencontres Mathématiques in 2016 and the TWAS Prize in 2019. He was elected a Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) in 2023.

Beyond his research, Prof. Prasad has contributed significantly to the mathematical community through academic and professional leadership. He served as President of the Commission for Developing Countries of the International Mathematical Union from 2018 to 2022 and as President of the Indian Mathematical Society from 2021 to 2022. His continued service to Indian mathematics is reflected in his role as Chairman of the National Board of Higher Mathematics, to which he was appointed in 2023.

> *Honouring his distinguished contributions to Mathematics, Number Theory and Representation Theory, and his enduring impact on mathematical research and the wider scientific community, IIT Kanpur confers upon Prof. Dipendra Prasad the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Academic Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Dr. Josyula Ramachandra Rao

(BT/EE/1984)

IBM Fellow;
Chief Technology Officer for Security Research, IBM

Dr. Josyula Ramachandra Rao, widely known as J.R. Rao, is an IBM Fellow and Chief Technology Officer for Security Research at IBM. His career has been defined by meeting the security challenges of each major platform shift, from mainframe to cloud, to AI and now to quantum. His current work sits at the intersection of securing AI, quantum computing and semiconductors. He built and leads IBM's security research organization of more than 200 scientists whose work spans cybersecurity, AI security, cloud and systems security, cryptography, confidential computing, quantum-safe migration and the security of quantum-centric supercomputing. Working with enterprises, government agencies, academic partners and IBM business units, he has successfully created and transitioned industry-leading security innovation into foundational industry standards and enterprise products. Throughout, his focus has been substantially enhancing security while minimizing the operational complexity of engineering and deploying resilient systems.

Dr. Rao's early work on power-analysis and electromagnetic attacks helped establish how cryptographic implementations are evaluated and protected against side-channel attacks, including his influential work on template attacks which won the CHES Test of Time Award. He was among the first prominent industrial researchers to articulate the dual vision of AI security: that AI must defend enterprise systems, and that AI systems must themselves be secured. He pioneered enterprise-scale security built on continuous machine learning and big-data analytics, developing empirical and analytical methods to detect and counter threats at scale. His recent work helps define security for autonomous AI agents, including secure-by-design architectures, agent identity, AI incident response and shared-responsibility models. He has also worked on the transition to quantum-resistant cryptography. He engages with governments, industry and international policy and technology forums on emerging cybersecurity and quantum security challenges.

Dr. Rao's standing has been recognised through his appointment as an IBM Fellow, IBM's highest technical distinction, and his election as an IACR Fellow in 2025. He has twice been elected to co-lead the Coalition for Secure AI (CoSAI), an OASIS Open project, where he helps shape industry approaches to securing AI. In 2026, he took part in discussions on AI security at the RSA Conference on securing the AI lifecycle and addressing new security challenges arising from autonomous AI agents. His work has appeared in leading venues in cryptography, security and distributed systems and has more than 9,700 citations on Google Scholar. It has influenced both academic research and practical security engineering. He also holds numerous United States and European patents.

Through more than three decades of research and technical leadership, Dr. Rao has helped shape the evolution of cybersecurity from foundational cryptographic protection to the security of cloud, AI and quantum-enabled systems. His ability to connect fundamental security research with large-scale technological deployment has made him a distinguished figure in the global cybersecurity community.

> *Honouring his distinguished contributions to Cybersecurity, Applied Cryptography, AI Security and Quantum Security, and his outstanding contributions to anticipating and meeting the security challenges of each new computing platform, from cloud to AI to quantum, by advancing security innovation, standards and technologies at a global scale, IIT Kanpur confers upon Dr. Josyula Ramachandra Rao, the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Professional Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Mr. Ravi Agrawal

(BT/MT/EE/1986/1988)

Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes,
Government of India

Mr. Ravi Agrawal is the Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the apex administrative and policy-making body for India's direct tax system under the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. With a career spanning more than three decades in public service, he has worked across taxation, e-governance, environmental governance, education, disinvestment, enforcement and policy-making.

His work has consistently focused on using technology, process reform and stakeholder participation to make public administration more efficient, transparent and citizen-centric. He received his B.Tech. in Electrical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in 1986 and his M.Tech. in Electrical Engineering from IIT Kanpur in 1988. He subsequently pursued a Post Graduate Diploma in Financial Management from Indira Gandhi National Open University and a Bachelor of Laws from Chaudhary Charan Singh University. Mr. Agrawal joined the Income Tax Department in 1989 and has spent approximately three decades in the department, complemented by assignments across other ministries and government institutions. In the early stages of his career, he served in various assessment, investigation, administration and adjudication roles. As Additional Commissioner of Income Tax, he conceptualised and implemented the 'Model Range' in Ludhiana, introducing digital receipt of tax returns, standalone processing and digital record maintenance. He also led investigations into financial transactions with implications for direct taxation and received four CBDT awards for investigative work. One of his significant areas of contribution has been the digitisation and re-engineering of India's tax administration.

As Additional Director General (Systems) and Commissioner of Income Tax (Systems–CPC-TDS), he conceptualised and implemented the digitisation of the Tax Deducted at Source system and rolled out the Tax Credit Statement and online generation of TDS certificates. He also led the computerisation of the Income Tax Department, including the Centralised Processing Centre for income-tax and TDS returns, the Refund Banker Scheme for electronic refunds, tax-payment modules and the expansion of Aaykar Seva Kendras across more than 700 offices nationwide. His public-service contributions have extended beyond taxation. At Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, he served as Controller of Finance and Controller of Examinations and spearheaded the digitisation of degree scrolls. As Director in the Ministry of Food and Public Distribution, he worked on warehouse mapping, warehouse policy and the determination of economic costs for food and sugar subsidies. As Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, he conceptualised and implemented an online bid-submission platform for strategic disinvestment of public-sector enterprises and contributed to the listing and minority stake sale of government holdings. As Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Mr. Agrawal contributed to the conceptualisation and development of PARIVESH 2.0, an integrated platform for environmental and forest clearances.

The initiative significantly reduced the time taken for environmental clearances, while his wider work in the ministry included the Wetlands of India portal and initiatives relating to wetland conservation and spring rejuvenation. Returning to senior leadership in the Income Tax Department, he served as Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, where he conceptualised and established a Cyber Forensics Lab in the Investigation Directorate, Delhi. He subsequently served as Member, CBDT, before assuming the chairmanship of the Central Board of Direct Taxes in July 2024. In this role, he has led initiatives in tax administration, legislative reform, digital transformation, taxpayer services and institutional capacity building. His tenure was extended in 2025 and, most recently, he was re-appointed as Chairman, CBDT on a contractual basis from July 1 through December 31, 2026, or until further orders. Under his leadership, major recent initiatives have included the drafting and implementation of the Income Tax Act, 2025, together with associated Rules and Forms, with an emphasis on simpler language, technology alignment and reduced litigation. He also conceptualised and implemented the SAKSHAM–NUDGE framework, a behavioural tax-governance approach designed to encourage voluntary compliance through trust, clarity, participation and targeted interventions.

His work has also encompassed the development of digital tax infrastructure supporting large-scale processing of returns, refunds and taxpayer information, as well as capacity-building initiatives across a workforce of more than 55,000. Mr. Agrawal's contributions to public administration have been recognised through several honours, including the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration for the projects steered by him, the Finance Minister's Certificate of Merit, the Gold Medal for National E-Governance Award under the Government Process Re-engineering and Certificates of Merit for Best Practices, Citizen Charter and Perspective Plans. Across his career, Mr. Agrawal has combined technological innovation with administrative reform, applying digital systems, process re-engineering and behavioural approaches to improve the delivery of public services at scale. His work has contributed to the modernisation of tax administration as well as broader reforms in environmental governance, public-sector disinvestment and government service delivery.

> *Honouring his distinguished contributions to Public Administration, Tax Administration, E-Governance and Policy and Legislative Reform, and his sustained impact on the digital transformation and modernisation of government systems in India, IIT Kanpur confers upon Mr. Ravi Agrawal the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Professional Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Mr. Lokvir Kapoor

(BT/ME/1987)

Executive Chairman and Co-Founder,
Pine Labs

Mr. Lokvir Kapoor, Executive Chairman and Co-Founder of Pine Labs, has contributed to the growth of merchant commerce and financial technology through innovative solutions in payments, point-of-sale systems and merchant financing. Headquartered in Noida, Pine Labs has expanded across diverse sectors and international markets, becoming a unicorn in 2020 following an investment from Mastercard.

Mr. Kapoor holds a B.Tech. in Mechanical Engineering from IIT Kanpur (1987) and an MBA from IIM Bangalore. Before co-founding Pine Labs, he held financial management and business development roles at Schlumberger in India and overseas.

His enduring commitment to IIT Kanpur is reflected in his support for the Bright Minds Scholarships, which enable meritorious students to pursue their education irrespective of financial constraints. In 2026, his landmark philanthropic contribution towards the Student Activity Centre 2 and the Central Dining Facility further strengthened the Institute's student-life and campus infrastructure. IIT Kanpur has recognised him among its Principal Donors.

> *In recognition of his contributions to entrepreneurship, fintech and merchant technology, and his sustained commitment to education and the development of IIT Kanpur, the Institute confers upon him the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 in the category of Entrepreneurship & Management.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Dr. Tushar Deepak Chandra

(BT/CSE/1988)

Distinguished Engineer, Google

Dr. Tushar Deepak Chandra is a Distinguished Engineer at Google, where he works on AI transformation: rethinking how major business lines should operate as next-generation frontier models arrive, and charting the path from where they are today to where they need to be.

He received his B.Tech. in Computer Science from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in 1988 and a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Cornell University in 1993. His doctoral thesis, advised by Sam Toueg, introduced unreliable failure detectors, a foundational concept in fault-tolerant distributed computing. He was awarded the 2010 Edsger W. Dijkstra Prize in Distributed Computing, together with Vassos Hadzilacos and Sam Toueg, for research arising from his Ph.D. thesis.

Dr. Chandra began his career at IBM Research, working at both the T. J. Watson and Almaden Research Centres. There, he designed Phoenix, the cluster technology that became the foundation of IBM's Reliable Scalable Cluster Technology (RSCT), and initiated Gryphon, one of the earliest internet-scale publish/subscribe systems. He subsequently served as Lead Development Architect in IBM's Tivoli Software Division before joining Google in 2004.

At Google from 2004 to 2020, he worked on some of the company's foundational systems. He founded and led Google's Paxos implementation, the fault-tolerance foundation beneath Chubby, the Google File System master and other mission-critical systems, and worked on Bigtable, Google's distributed storage system for structured data. He co-founded Sibyl, a large-scale machine-learning platform that powered more than 300 launches across most of Google and whose architecture became the basis for TFX, Google's production machine-learning platform. As a Distinguished Engineer, he also pioneered conversational recommendation, deployed across Google Assistant, Search and YouTube.

From 2020 to 2023, Dr. Chandra was Distinguished Engineer and Head of Onboard Software at Waymo, the software that drives the car: it enables Waymo's vehicles to perceive their surroundings, anticipate the behaviour of other road users and plan the car's own path through traffic. He led the team through a major revamp of the onboard software stack, the foundation of the Waymo Driver today, and through its first nine releases: from one car in a two-square-mile area of San Francisco, operating from 10am to 4pm, to round-the-clock, all-weather driverless paid rides across all of San Francisco and about 200 square miles of Phoenix, with early-rider service in Los Angeles. He also helped build the release engine behind those launches.

Returning to Google in December 2023, he led the Applied Machine Learning organisation. His team brought state-of-the-art research into Google's products, including model selection, prompt engineering, supervised fine-tuning and LoRA, model distillation and upgrades, small language models and AI agents, delivering multi-billion-dollar business value. In June 2026, he moved into his current role.

Dr. Chandra's career represents a distinctive combination of foundational research in distributed computing and large-scale engineering leadership in machine learning, autonomous driving and AI. His work has contributed both to the theoretical understanding of fault-tolerant distributed systems and to the deployment of machine-learning technologies serving products at global scale.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to Distributed Computing, Machine Learning, Autonomous Vehicles and Large-Scale Systems, and his distinguished impact on the development and deployment of AI and distributed technologies at global scale, IIT Kanpur confers upon Dr. Tushar Deepak Chandra the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Professional Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Prof. Sanjay E. Sarma

(BT/ME/1989)

Fred Fort Flowers (1941) & Daniel Fort Flowers (1941)
Professor of Mechanical Engineering,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology;
Eminent Visiting Professor, Asia School of Business

Prof. Sanjay E. Sarma is the Fred Fort Flowers (1941) and Daniel Fort Flowers (1941) Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His work spans RFID, sensors, the Internet of Things, manufacturing, automation, artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, digital learning and the future of education. He is widely recognised for pioneering technologies and standards that helped establish RFID as a foundational technology for the modern Internet of Things.

He received his B.Tech. in Mechanical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in 1989, followed by a master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University in 1992 and a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1995. Before joining MIT, he worked at Schlumberger Oilfield Services in Aberdeen, United Kingdom, and at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Prof. Sarma joined MIT in 1996 and subsequently became one of the founders of the Auto-ID Center at MIT, which he co-founded in 1999 with Sunny Siu, David Brock and Kevin Ashton. The centre developed the technical concepts and standards underlying the Electronic Product Code (EPC) system and modern commercial RFID. These standards were subsequently adopted through GS1 and EPCglobal and have become widely used across global supply chains. His work helped transform RFID from a specialised identification technology into a scalable platform for tracking and managing objects across the physical world.

His entrepreneurial career has been closely connected with his research. Prof. Sarma co-founded OATSystems and served as its Chief Technology Officer; the company developed enterprise software and systems for RFID applications and was acquired by Checkpoint Systems in 2008. He has also served on the boards of technology and industry organisations and advised companies and governments on emerging technologies, innovation and the Internet of Things. Beyond his work in RFID and industrial technologies, Prof. Sarma has played a transformative role in education and digital learning.

At MIT, he served as Director and subsequently Dean and Vice President for Open Learning, where he led initiatives including MITx, MIT OpenCourseWare, MicroMasters, MIT xPRO, the Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Lab and the MIT Integrated Learning Initiative. Under his leadership, MIT significantly expanded its global digital-learning ecosystem and developed new models for accessible, technology-enabled education.

In 2023, Prof. Sarma took on the role of CEO, President and Dean of the Asia School of Business in Kuala Lumpur, a position he held until May 2025. He subsequently returned to his academic role at MIT and currently serves as an Eminent Visiting Professor at the Asia School of Business. He also continues to serve on the school's Board of Governors. His research interests have evolved alongside emerging technologies and include RFID, sensors, Internet of Things, manufacturing, computer-aided design, autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, energy and transportation.

He has authored more than 150 publications and is the co-author of The Inversion Factor: How to Thrive in the IoT Economy, which examines how connected objects, intelligent systems and new business models are reshaping industries. He was one of the principal authors of the original numbering system for Aadhaar.

Prof. Sarma's contributions have been recognised through numerous academic and industry honours, including the National Science Foundation CAREER Award, the Cecil and Ida Green Career Development Chair, the Den Hartog Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Joseph H. Keenan Award for Innovations in Undergraduate Education and the MIT MacVicar Faculty Fellowship.

His technological contributions have also been recognised through the New England Business and Technology Award, the MIT Global Indus Award, recognition among BusinessWeek's e.biz innovators and Fast Company's Fast 50, and the RFID Journal Special Achievement Award. Through his research, entrepreneurship, institution-building and leadership in digital education, Prof. Sarma has consistently bridged engineering innovation with large-scale societal and commercial applications. His contributions to RFID and the Internet of Things helped shape a major technological ecosystem, while his later work in digital learning has expanded access to high-quality education globally.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to RFID, Internet of Things, Technology Innovation and Digital Education, and his distinguished impact as an academic, entrepreneur and institution-builder, IIT Kanpur confers upon Prof. Sanjay E. Sarma the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Entrepreneurship & Management.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Dr. Vigyan Singhal

(BT/CSE/1989)

Vice President, Hardware Engineering, NVIDIA;
Member, Board of Trustees, UC Berkeley Foundation

Dr. Vigyan Singhal is Vice President of Hardware Engineering at NVIDIA, where he leads engineering efforts in hardware design and verification. He is a pioneer of formal verification - the use of mathematical methods and automated reasoning to prove the correctness of complex digital systems. Over more than three decades, his career has combined foundational research in formal methods with entrepreneurship, translating academic ideas into technologies that have shaped modern semiconductor design.

Dr. Singhal received his B.Tech. in Computer Science and Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur in 1989, and went on to earn his M.S. and Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of California, Berkeley. His doctoral research, carried out under the guidance of Prof. Robert K. Brayton, focused on the formal verification of digital systems and contributed early methods for formal reasoning about hardware.

He began his professional career as a Research Scientist at Cadence Design Systems. He then founded Jasper Design Automation, serving first as Founder and CEO and later as Vice President of Engineering and CTO. His technology made Jasper the leading provider of formal verification tools for the chip design industry. Jasper was acquired by Cadence Design Systems. Dr. Singhal subsequently founded Oski Technology to build deep human expertise in applying formal verification, so that critical chip design problems beyond the reach of automated tools could be solved. Oski merged with Chip Design Pvt. Ltd., founded by Mr. Rahul Joshi (BT/EE/1988), and built teams of experts in Gurugram, India, and Budapest, Hungary - a large fraction of them being IIT Kanpur graduates across departments. Most major chip design companies became Oski customers, and NVIDIA, after working with Oski for more than a decade, acquired the company in 2021.

Dr. Singhal's technical and entrepreneurial contributions made formal verification practical for the chip design industry. He has authored numerous research papers in the field, including influential work presented at major conferences. At NVIDIA, the acquisition of Oski brought his team's formal verification expertise into the company's hardware engineering organisation, strengthening its investment in verification as its products have grown increasingly complex across accelerated computing, networking and autonomous systems.

Beyond industry, Dr. Singhal has maintained a strong connection with academia. He regularly teaches formal verification at UC Berkeley, Princeton and Stanford. In July 2026, he joined the Board of Trustees of the University of California Berkeley Foundation, adding an institutional leadership role to his longstanding relationship with the university.

His career represents a rare combination of research, technological innovation and entrepreneurship. By carrying formal methods from academia into practical tools and solutions, Dr. Singhal has advanced the state of the art in verifying increasingly sophisticated chip designs, leaving an enduring mark on both the semiconductor industry and the academic development of formal verification.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to formal verification, electronic design automation and semiconductor engineering, and his distinguished impact as a researcher, technology entrepreneur and leader in advancing reliable chip design, IIT Kanpur confers upon Dr. Vigyan Singhal the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Entrepreneurship & Management.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Dr. Satish Chandra

(BT/CSE/1991)

Research Scientist, Meta;
ACM Fellow

Dr. Satish Chandra is a Research Scientist at Meta, where he leads work on AI agents for software development. For nearly three decades, he has worked on the tools that software engineers use to build, test, and repair large software systems — first through mathematical analysis of programs, and more recently through machine learning and large language models.

He earned his B.Tech. in Computer Science and Engineering from IIT Kanpur in 1991 and his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1997, where his doctoral work received the Computer Sciences Department's Outstanding Graduate Researcher Award.

His career began at Bell Laboratories, where he developed techniques for analysing software to detect defects. At IBM Research, he advanced program analysis and test automation for large enterprise software systems, with his research incorporated into IBM products and services. He also spent several years at IBM Research India, where he founded a software engineering research group among the first of its kind in the country.

He joined Facebook in 2016 and founded Big Code, one of the first industrial research groups dedicated to applying artificial intelligence to software development. The team built tools that automatically fix software defects, recommend code, search large codebases by intent, and make software testing more efficient. Several of these technologies were deployed in Facebook's production environment, supporting software used by billions of people.

From 2022 to 2025 at Google, he led work on applying large language models to software development, including Gemini for Google, a version of Google's Gemini model adapted to the company's own software and engineering environment. The work brought advanced AI assistance into the everyday development process of tens of thousands of Google engineers. He returned to Meta in 2025, where he works on AI agents that can carry out software-development tasks autonomously, and on how the capabilities of such systems should be measured.

Dr. Chandra has authored close to 100 research papers in leading venues including POPL, PLDI, ICSE, FSE, and OOPSLA. He is an ACM Fellow, a member of the inaugural class of the ACM SIGSOFT Software Engineering Academy, and an elected member of IFIP Working Group 2.4.

> *In recognition of his distinguished contributions to software engineering in general, and to AI-driven developer tools in particular, IIT Kanpur confers upon Dr. Satish Chandra the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Professional Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Mr. Rajat Verma

(BT/AE/1998)

Founder & CEO, LOHUM

Mr. Rajat Verma is the founder of LOHUM, the country's largest integrated critical minerals and advanced materials platform. He holds a B.Tech. in Aerospace Engineering from IIT Kanpur, a Master's degree in Aerospace from Stanford University, and an MBA from Harvard Business School. His experience spans aerospace, technology, private equity, and sustainable industrial development.

Mr. Verma founded LOHUM to address one of India's most strategic industrial challenges: securing access to critical minerals and advanced materials. India's ambitions in clean energy, defence, electric mobility, and advanced manufacturing depend on materials such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, rare earths, platinum group metals, and semiconductor inputs. His vision is to ensure that India, rather than remaining dependent on concentrated global supply chains, develops the domestic capability to mine, recycle, process, and manufacture these materials.

Under his leadership, LOHUM's operations span mining and recycling, critical minerals processing, and advanced materials manufacturing. The company processes more than 70,000 metric tonnes annually and produces catalysts, alloys, magnets, cathode active materials, and semiconductor materials, serving sectors including electric mobility, green energy, pharmaceuticals, electronics, and steel. With more than 90% of India's end-to-end battery recycling market, LOHUM has also established a large-scale circular economy platform that recovers valuable resources and reduces carbon intensity. Through its investments in the UAE and Africa, the company has extended its minerals and materials presence beyond India.

Mr. Verma's contributions extend beyond LOHUM. He serves as a Technical Expert on the Empowered Committee, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary of India, that oversees the $4 billion National Critical Minerals Mission, and is a member of the Expert Council of NITI Aayog's Frontier Technologies Hub. He co-chairs the CII National Taskforce on Advanced Materials, Critical Minerals and Metals, as well as the FICCI Taskforce on Critical Minerals for FY 2026–27. He also contributes to BIS committees developing national battery standards and serves on the board of More Retail, a joint venture between Amazon and Samara Capital.

For Mr. Verma, the larger opportunity is clear: India can move beyond being a consumer in the global energy and materials transition to become a reliable industrial anchor, producing the critical minerals and advanced materials that India and the world require.

> *In recognition of his exemplary contributions to entrepreneurship, clean technology, critical minerals, advanced materials, and battery recycling, IIT Kanpur confers upon Mr. Rajat Verma the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Entrepreneurship Excellence.*



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Mr. Abhishek Vinod Singh

(MSc5/PHY/2002)

CEO and Co-Founder,
AiDASH

Mr. Abhishek Vinod Singh is a serial entrepreneur and technology leader, currently serving as CEO and Co-founder of AiDASH, an enterprise AI company transforming grid resilience for electric utilities through its pioneering platform that unifies vegetation, asset, wildfire and storm intelligence. He completed an integrated M.Sc. in Physics at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, graduating in 2002.

Following his education at IIT Kanpur, he began his professional career in the technology sector, working with companies including Infosys, Xora and Arcot before moving into entrepreneurship. Mr. Singh has built and led multiple technology ventures across enterprise mobility, mobile applications and software.

In 2005, he co-founded DbyDX Software, where he served as CEO and led operations, sales and marketing, with responsibility for the company's P&L and the development of mobile solutions for the retail, travel and e-commerce sectors. DbyDX was subsequently merged with Kellton Tech Solutions, where he took on leadership responsibilities, serving as Senior Vice President and later COO of its U.S. operations. His responsibilities included global operations, business strategy, sales, alliances, key-account management and mergers and acquisitions.

Mr. Singh also co-founded Edureka and served as its Director, contributing to business-model development, product conceptualisation, development and launches. He later continued with Edureka as an advisor while holding a minority stake in the company. In 2019, he co-founded AiDASH, where he currently serves as CEO and Co-founder. Powered by SatelliteFirst™ Inspection & Monitoring, AiDASH delivers comprehensive visibility across the entire grid at the right frequency and budget, using the right data modality. More than 200 customers trust AiDASH to keep the lights on, spend where it counts, and defend every decision – Securing Tomorrow across every mile of the grid.

Throughout his career, Mr. Singh has worked across technology, enterprise mobility, business development, operations and entrepreneurship, with experience spanning developed and emerging markets. He has also been recognised as a thought leader in enterprise AI and climate adaptation and has participated as a keynote speaker at international conferences and industry events. His entrepreneurial journey reflects a sustained engagement with technology-led innovation, from mobile and enterprise software to AI-enabled platforms addressing large-scale industrial and sustainability challenges.

Mr. Singh is named as a co-inventor on 9 patents, and the AiDASH portfolio includes more than 30 patents and patent applications across the United States, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO/PCT), and Canada.

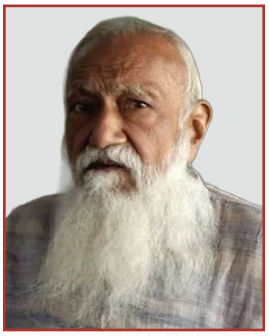
Under his leadership, AiDASH has been recognised globally for climate adaptation. It was one of 12 winners of the BloombergNEF Pioneers Award 2025, in the “Boosting Climate Adaptation Capabilities” category, and has been named to TIME's America's Top GreenTech Companies (2024, 2025, 2026) and the Global Cleantech 100 (2026).

In 2025, Mr. Singh received the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2025 Bay Area Award. He was recognised for pioneering the use of AI and satellites to help utilities prevent wildfires, reduce outages, and manage storm risk - work that places him among the leading climate-resilient infrastructure innovators in the United States.

> *Honouring his distinguished contributions to entrepreneurship, technology innovation and enterprise AI, and his sustained impact as a technology entrepreneur and business leader, IIT Kanpur confers upon Mr. Abhishek Vinod Singh the Distinguished Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Entrepreneurship & Management.*

SATYENDRA K. DUBEY
MEMORIAL AWARDS

The Satyendra K. Dubey Memorial Award (SKDA) was instituted by IIT Kanpur in memory of its alumnus, Mr Satyendra K. Dubey (BT/CE/1994), who sacrificed his life while upholding the integrity and dignity of his profession. The award recognises an alumnus of any IIT who demonstrates the highest professional integrity and an unwavering commitment to upholding human values.



SATYENDRA K. DUBEY MEMORIAL AWARD

Late Dr. Guru Das Agrawal

Former Professor and Head, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, IIT Kanpur, Former Member-Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board

Dr. Guru Das Agrawal, also known as Sant Swami Sanand and Swami Gyan Swaroop Sanand, was an eminent environmental engineer, academic, public servant and environmental activist whose life was dedicated to the protection of India's rivers and natural environment. He served as a Professor and Head of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at IIT Kanpur and was among India's pioneering voices in environmental engineering and river conservation. Born in 1932 in Kandhla, Uttar Pradesh, Dr. Agrawal graduated in Civil Engineering from the University of Roorkee, now IIT Roorkee. He subsequently earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley. His early professional career included work as a design engineer in the Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Department before he joined IIT Kanpur.

Dr. Agrawal's academic career at IIT Kanpur extended for nearly 17 years as Head of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. His work and teaching contributed to the development of environmental engineering in India, while his broader professional engagement connected engineering research with issues of pollution control, water quality and environmental protection. His expertise also led him into public service. He became the first Member-Secretary of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) during 1979–1980, helping shape India's institutional framework for pollution control. He subsequently remained engaged with environmental policy, research and education, including a visiting professor at the University of Roorkee and as an honorary professor of environmental sciences at Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya.

Dr. Agrawal became particularly renowned for his lifelong campaign to protect the River Ganga. From 2008 onwards, he undertook repeated fasts demanding that the river remain free-flowing and that environmentally damaging hydroelectric projects on its tributaries be stopped. His 2009 fast against the Loharinag Pala Hydro Power Project continued for 36 days and contributed to the government's decision to suspend the project. In 2011, he renounced worldly life and became a sanyasi, taking the name Swami Gyan Swaroop Sanand. He continued to campaign for the protection and rejuvenation of the Ganga, writing repeatedly to governments and policymakers and undertaking further fasts when he believed commitments to protect the river were not being honoured.

He was also associated with the Ganga Mahasabha and served as its Patron. His final fast began on 22 June 2018, with demands including stronger action to protect the Ganga and restrictions on projects affecting its natural flow. After 111 days of fasting, Dr. Agrawal died on 11 October 2018 at AIIMS Rishikesh. His death brought renewed national attention to the ecological condition of the Ganga and to the need for stronger river-conservation measures. Dr. Agrawal's life represented an unusual synthesis of engineering excellence, academic service, public administration and environmental activism. He moved from designing major engineering projects to questioning the environmental consequences of development and ultimately dedicated the final decades of his life to protecting India's rivers and advocating for sustainable development. His commitment to the Ganga made him one of India's most prominent environmental activists.

> *Honouring his distinguished contributions to Environmental Engineering, Public Service and River Conservation, and his lifelong commitment to protecting the Ganga and India's natural environment, IIT Kanpur confers upon the late Dr. Guru Das Agrawal the Satyendra K. Dubey Memorial Award 2026.*



SATYENDRA K. DUBEY MEMORIAL AWARD

Shri Babloo Kumar

(BT/MT/EE/2004/2008)

Deputy Inspector General of Police and Joint Commissioner of Police (Law & Order), Lucknow

Shri Babloo Kumar is an officer of the Indian Police Service belonging to the 2009 batch of the Uttar Pradesh Cadre. A product of the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya system, he completed his B.Tech. and M.Tech. in Electrical Engineering at IIT Kanpur. After a brief stint in the corporate sector in the United States, he chose a career in Public Service. He is recognised for his balanced, impartial and humane approach to policing, as well as his professional integrity, ethical steadiness and quiet professionalism.

During his career, Shri Kumar has held important operational and leadership assignments across Uttar Pradesh, serving as district police chief in Mahoba, Jaunpur, Jalaun, Shahjahanpur, Mathura, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Agra and Moradabad, and as Joint Police Commissioner in Noida and Lucknow, among other postings. He has also served in specialised organisations, including the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Corruption Organisation (UP ACO), the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (UP STF), the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad (UP ATS), the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), and UP-112. He has repeatedly been entrusted with districts facing sensitive law-and-order challenges, including Mathura following the 2016 Jawahar Bagh violence and Saharanpur following serious caste violence in 2017.

His approach combines dialogue, calibrated enforcement, impartial investigation and direct engagement with communities. During his tenure as SSP Saharanpur, the district maintained peace during the Bharat Bandh in April 2018. As Superintendent of Police, Shahjahanpur, he oversaw the fair and peaceful conduct of the 2015 Panchayat elections, earning recognition for the administration of the polls. His record also reflects a commitment to applying the law without regard to status or influence. Shri Kumar has contributed to technology-enabled policing and institutional modernisation. In the Anti-Corruption Organisation, he led initiatives involving digitisation, data analytics and technology-enabled investigation, strengthening transparency and accountability. This work received national recognition through the FICCI Smart Policing Award in 2022. He also contributed to the technological upgradation of UP-112, Uttar Pradesh's emergency-response system, applying his engineering background to the improvement of public services. As Additional Commissioner of Police, Noida, he was associated with policing and security arrangements for major national and international events, including MotoGP Bharat and the Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show. As Joint Commissioner of Police (Law & Order), Lucknow, he is entrusted with maintaining public order in the capital city of Uttar Pradesh. Among his most significant achievements is a campaign launched in Agra in July 2019 to trace missing girls and women. Over approximately 16 months, 626 girls were recovered and reunited with their families; around 60 per cent of those recovered were minors. Shri Kumar has also consistently supported police welfare initiatives, including measures for the welfare of women personnel, Police Modern Schools and support systems for police families. His career reflects a commitment to professional integrity, ethical responsibility, institutional strengthening and the protection of vulnerable citizens.

Shri Babloo Kumar has received several honours in recognition of his contributions to policing, public service and institutional development. He received the Director General of Police's Commendation Discs in Silver (2017), Gold (2018) and Platinum (2020), and was recognised by the Uttar Pradesh State Election Commission for ensuring the free, fair and peaceful conduct of the 2015 Panchayat elections. In 2021, he was named among India's 50 Most Popular Superintendents of Police in the FameIndia / Asia Post Survey. His contributions to technology-enabled policing and institutional modernisation were recognised with the FICCI Smart Policing Award in 2022.

Honouring his distinguished contributions to ethical policing, public service and institutional modernisation, and his sustained commitment to integrity, technological innovation and the protection of vulnerable citizens, IIT Kanpur confers upon Shri Babloo Kumar the Satyendra K. Dubey Memorial Award 2026.

YOUNG ALUMNI AWARDS

The Young Alumni Award (YAA) recognises alumni under the age of 40 who have distinguished themselves through significant achievements in their chosen fields during the early stages of their careers. The award celebrates their excellence, contributions and accomplishments, which bring recognition to their alma mater.



YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Prof. Anindya De

(BT/CSE/2008)

Associate Professor and Graduate Chair, Department of Computer and Information Science, University of Pennsylvania

Prof. Anindya De is an Associate Professor and Graduate Chair in the Department of Computer and Information Science at the University of Pennsylvania. His research lies at the intersection of theoretical computer science, algorithms and machine learning, with particular emphasis on Boolean function analysis, computational complexity, learning theory, high-dimensional probability and geometry. More recently, his research has increasingly explored the theoretical foundations of AI safety and alignment. He received his B.Tech. in Computer Science and Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in 2008 and subsequently earned his Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2013 under the supervision of Prof. Luca Trevisan. His doctoral research focused on theoretical computer science, including extractors, pseudorandomness and complexity-theoretic questions.

During his time at IIT Kanpur, Prof. De distinguished himself academically, receiving the President's Gold Medal in 2008 for the best academic performance among all departments in his graduating class. His early research at IIT Kanpur included work on fast integer multiplication using modular arithmetic, which subsequently appeared at the Symposium on Theory of Computing (STOC). Following his Ph.D., Prof. De spent two years at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, first as a Member and then as a Visitor, working with renowned mathematician Avi Wigderson. He subsequently held a post-doctoral position at Rutgers University before joining Northwestern University as an Assistant Professor in 2015. He joined the University of Pennsylvania in 2019 as an Assistant Professor and was promoted to Associate Professor.

His research has produced influential contributions across theoretical computer science. His work on Boolean functions and learning theory has addressed problems involving testing, approximation, computational complexity and the structure of high-dimensional functions. He has also contributed to algorithms for trace reconstruction, monotonicity testing, extractors and pseudorandomness, helping advance the theoretical understanding of what can and cannot be efficiently learned or computed.

Prof. De has also contributed to the theoretical foundations of machine learning. His research examines fundamental questions about learning algorithms, including their computational limitations, statistical behaviour and the mathematical structure underlying learnable functions. This work connects classical theoretical computer science with modern questions in machine learning and artificial intelligence. More recently, his research interests have expanded toward AI safety and alignment, reflecting his interest in the theoretical foundations required to make increasingly capable AI systems reliable and robust. His broader research portfolio therefore connects algorithms, complexity theory and learning theory with emerging questions about the safety and behaviour of advanced AI systems.

Prof. De's research has received significant recognition. He received the NSF CAREER Award in 2021, the IBM Pat Goldberg Memorial Best Paper Award in 2014 and was co-winner of the Best Student Paper Award at the Theory of Cryptography Conference in 2012. He has also contributed extensively to the broader theoretical computer science community through service on program committees for leading conferences including STOC, FOCS, COLT, ALT and ITCS. He also serves as an Associate Editor for the SIAM Journal of Computing. His research has received support from the National Science Foundation, including through his CAREER Award, and the UK AI Security Institute.

Through his research and academic leadership, Prof. De has helped strengthen the theoretical foundations of algorithms, machine learning and computational complexity while increasingly engaging with one of the most important emerging questions in computer science: how to build AI systems whose behaviour can be understood, evaluated and aligned with human objectives.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to Theoretical Computer Science, Algorithms, Machine Learning and Computational Complexity, and his distinguished impact on advancing the mathematical foundations of learning and emerging research in AI safety and alignment, IIT Kanpur confers upon Prof. Anindya De the Young Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Academic Excellence.*



YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Dr. Nitish Srivastava

(BT/CSE/2011)

Senior Director of Autonomy, Serve Robotics; Co-Founder and former CTO, Vayu Robotics

Dr. Nitish Srivastava is a machine learning and robotics researcher and technology entrepreneur whose work focuses on artificial intelligence, computer vision, deep learning and autonomous systems. He currently serves as Senior Director of Autonomy at Serve Robotics, where he works on autonomous navigation and the development of AI systems for real-world robotic delivery. He previously co-founded Vayu Robotics and served as its Chief Technology Officer, helping build an end-to-end autonomy platform for delivery robots using large-scale AI models. He received his B.Tech. in Computer Science from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in 2011. He subsequently earned an M.S. in Computer Science from the University of Toronto in 2013 and a Ph.D. in Machine Learning from the University of Toronto in 2016.

During his doctoral studies, he worked with Geoffrey Hinton and Ruslan Salakhutdinov on deep learning, including dropout, Boltzmann machines, sequence-to-sequence video models and transfer learning. Dr. Srivastava began his research career through internships at École Centrale Paris, Microsoft Research Silicon Valley and Google. At Google, he worked with the Google Brain team on language models and with the Android Speech Recognition team on representation learning for raw speech signals.

His early research experience established a foundation in machine learning, deep neural networks and representation learning. He subsequently co-founded Clarevision Research in 2015, a company focused on computer vision for autonomous driving. Clarevision developed models for real-time object detection, semantic segmentation and object tracking using LiDAR and camera data. The company was acquired by Apple in 2016, after which Dr. Srivastava joined Apple, where he worked on machine learning for autonomous systems and embodied agents. At Apple, he progressed from Staff ML Engineer to Staff Research Scientist, working on perception neural networks, sensor fusion, self-supervised learning and reinforcement learning for embodied agents. His work brought together advances in machine learning with the practical requirements of autonomous systems operating in complex physical environments.

In February 2022, Dr. Srivastava co-founded Vayu Robotics and served as its CTO. Vayu was founded to develop autonomous mobility systems using large-scale AI models, with a particular emphasis on navigation in complex, unstructured environments. Under his technical leadership, the company developed an end-to-end autonomy stack, a data engine capable of generating challenging corner cases at scale and a training approach designed to enable seamless transfer between simulation and real-world robotic environments. Vayu's technology was ultimately acquired by Serve Robotics in August 2025. Serve described Vayu as a pioneer in urban robot navigation using large-scale AI models, and said the acquisition would combine Vayu's foundation-model technology and simulation capabilities with Serve's real-world autonomous delivery fleet and data. Dr. Srivastava and his fellow Vayu founders joined Serve as part of the transaction.

Following the acquisition, Dr. Srivastava moved into his current role as Senior Director of Autonomy at Serve Robotics, where he continues to work on robotics, machine learning and autonomous navigation. His current work builds on the technology developed at Vayu and focuses on bringing foundation-model-based autonomy into large-scale real-world robotic deployment. His own account of the acquisition describes Vayu's work on an end-to-end autonomy stack, scalable corner-case generation, sim-to-real transfer and deployment on a robot fleet.

Dr. Srivastava's career reflects a distinctive progression from fundamental research in deep learning to applied machine learning, computer vision and ultimately the development and commercialisation of autonomous robotic systems. His work has consistently focused on enabling machines to perceive, learn and act in complex physical environments, contributing to the evolution of AI from laboratory research to embodied, real-world applications.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Computer Vision and Autonomous Robotics, and his distinguished impact as a researcher, entrepreneur and technology leader advancing AI-powered autonomous systems, IIT Kanpur confers upon Dr. Nitish Srivastava the Young Alumni Award 2026 for Professional Excellence.*



YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Prof. Faez Ahmed

(BT-MT(Dual)/ME/2012)

Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Director, Design Computation and Digital Engineering (DeCoDE) Lab

Prof. Faez Ahmed is an Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he holds the Esther and Harold E. Edgerton Career Development Professorship and directs the Design Computation and Digital Engineering (DeCoDE) Lab. An internationally recognised researcher at the intersection of artificial intelligence and engineering design, he is advancing computational methods that enable humans and intelligent systems to collaboratively develop innovative, efficient and high-performing engineering solutions.

Prof. Ahmed graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur in 2012 with a B.Tech.–M.Tech. dual degree in Mechanical Engineering. He subsequently gained industrial experience in Australia's railway and mining sector, where he worked on reliability engineering and pioneered data-driven approaches to predictive maintenance and infrastructure renewal planning. These experiences helped shape his interest in applying advanced computational methods to real-world engineering challenges. He earned his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Maryland, College Park, in 2019, followed by postdoctoral research at Northwestern University. He joined MIT's Department of Mechanical Engineering in 2020 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2025.

At MIT, Prof. Ahmed has established a research program combining artificial intelligence, machine learning, optimisation and engineering design. His work focuses on first-principles-informed generative AI, multimodal representation learning, automated design synthesis and human–AI design copilots. By integrating physical principles, engineering constraints and human expertise into intelligent design systems, his research seeks to transform how complex engineering products and systems are conceived, evaluated and optimised.

A major contribution of his research is the development of AI-driven methods capable of exploring vast design spaces, discovering novel solutions and addressing competing engineering objectives. His work spans generative models, topology optimisation, computational creativity and AI-assisted design discovery, alongside methods that augment human creativity and support collaborative design. Through these efforts, Prof. Ahmed is helping establish AI as an intelligent collaborator in engineering innovation.

Prof. Ahmed's contributions have earned him numerous prestigious honours, including the NSF CAREER Award (2025), AFOSR Young Investigator Award, ASME Design Automation Conference and Design Theory and Methodology Young Investigator Awards, Google Research Scholar Award (2024), Amazon Research Award (2026), and 3M Non-Tenured Faculty Award (2022). He has also received the University of Maryland Alumni Excellence Research Award and has held MIT's Doherty, ABS and d'Arbeloff faculty chairs.

Beyond research, Prof. Ahmed is committed to engineering education and academic leadership. At MIT, he teaches Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for Engineering Design, preparing students to apply emerging AI technologies to challenging engineering problems. His contributions to teaching were recognised with MIT's Joseph H. Keenan Award for Innovation in Undergraduate Education in 2026. He also serves as an Associate Editor of Design Science and on the editorial boards of Computer-Aided Design and Machine Learning: Engineering.

Through his pioneering research, educational leadership and commitment to translating advances in artificial intelligence into engineering practice, Prof. Ahmed is helping redefine the future of engineering design. His accomplishments exemplify the spirit of intellectual excellence, innovation and real-world impact fostered by IIT Kanpur.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to artificial intelligence and engineering design; his pioneering advances in generative AI and optimisation; and his distinguished achievements in research, education and engineering innovation, the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur confers upon Prof. Faez Ahmed the Young Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Academic Excellence.



YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Mr. Nikhil Kurele

(BT/ME/2016)

Co-Founder & CEO, Noccarc Robotics

Mr. Nikhil Kurele is an entrepreneur and technology leader, and Co-Founder & CEO of Noccarc Robotics, an IIT Kanpur-incubated medical technology company focused on developing smart, indigenously designed critical-care devices. His work combines engineering, entrepreneurship and healthcare innovation, with a focus on building affordable and technologically advanced medical devices for hospitals in India and global markets.

He received his B.Tech. in Mechanical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, in 2016. During his time at IIT Kanpur, he developed a strong interest in robotics and served as Secretary of the Robotics Club. He also undertook internships in design and technology, including at Tata Technologies and IIT Kanpur's Frugal Innovation in Design and Technology initiative. After graduating, he worked as a Graduate Engineering Trainee at Bajaj Auto Limited from 2016 to 2017, where he gained practical exposure to automation in assembly and machining processes.

Mr. Kurele co-founded Noccarc Robotics with fellow IIT Kanpur alumnus Harshit Rathore and Tushar Agarwal. The company initially developed autonomous waterless solar-panel cleaning robots, but its direction changed dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Faced with India's acute shortage of ventilators, the founders redirected their engineering capabilities toward healthcare and, in just around 90 days, designed and developed an indigenous ICU ventilator. During the first wave of the pandemic, Noccarc manufactured ventilators at scale, achieving a record production of 103 ventilators in a single day on May 23, 2021. Its indigenous ventilators, including the Noccarc V310 and H210, received the Technology Development Board, Government of India National Award 2021 for Technology Start-up. The company's rapid response demonstrated how engineering entrepreneurship could be mobilised to address an urgent public-health challenge. Under Mr. Kurele's leadership, Noccarc has since evolved from a ventilator-focused startup into a broader medical-technology company. Its portfolio now includes advanced ventilators and patient-monitoring systems, with products deployed across hundreds of hospitals in India. Recent reporting indicates that Noccarc products are present in more than 700 hospitals, including major government and private healthcare institutions, while its latest high-end ventilator has been installed in more than 155 hospitals. The company's current expansion is increasingly centred on intelligent healthcare technologies. Noccarc is developing AI-enabled solutions capable of analysing clinical data and supporting doctors in diagnosis and treatment, reflecting the company's transition from hardware manufacturing toward integrated medical technology and AI-driven critical-care systems.

Mr. Kurele's entrepreneurial journey has received significant recognition. He was featured in the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia list, and Noccarc's innovations have received national recognition for technology and healthcare innovation. In 2026, the company was among a group of deep-tech startups selected for support under the Government of India's Research, Development and Innovation initiative, further recognising its potential in indigenous medical technology. Beyond building a successful technology company, Mr. Kurele's work represents a broader contribution to India's technological self-reliance in healthcare. By developing critical-care devices domestically, Noccarc has sought to reduce dependence on imported medical equipment while making advanced healthcare technologies more accessible to Indian hospitals.

> *Honouring his pioneering contributions to Entrepreneurship, Medical Technology and Healthcare Innovation, and his distinguished impact in building indigenous critical-care technologies and responding to India's healthcare needs through engineering and innovation, IIT Kanpur confers upon Mr. Nikhil Kurele the Young Alumni Award 2026 under the category of Professional Excellence.*


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