

Obituary: Prabir Guha Thakurta (1930-2010)

Uma Dasgupta

Prabir Guha Thakurta (b.1930) who died on 10 September 2010 was an early professional in Indian Forestry. A graduate in the Botanical Sciences from Presidency College, Calcutta, he joined the West Bengal Forest Service in 1956. Opting for voluntary retirement from the Govt. of West Bengal as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, he served the World Bank as Senior Forestry Specialist from 1988 to 1995. He was known among many even outside his professional circle as a dynamic Forest Officer and a lover of wildlife. Above all, he was a renaissance man in the truest sense.

Having spent his early years in Tagore's Santiniketan (1940-48), his natural talents turned him into an exceptional exponent of Rabindra Sangeet. He could have become one of the best professional singers in the field if he chose to. But he sang out of an inner passion and, in the last decade of his life, his love of Tagore's music deepened to turn him into an encyclopaedist of that genre. He continued with his pioneering and voluminous work as he battled with a difficult illness over the last two years of his life. His publication of the first volume of *Rabindra Sangeet Mahakosh* (2008) won him scholarly acclaim. His work remains in progress.

He is survived by his wife, Chandan, and three married children Parantap, Priadarshi and Achira.

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