

PRESS RELEASE

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Vice Chancellor of SRM University-AP honoured with Bhaskar Award

The Vice Chancellor of SRM University-AP, Prof. Manoj K. Arora has been honoured with the Bhaskar Award, the highest recognition by the Indian Society of Remote Sensing. The award consists of a medal, citation and Rs. 2,00,000/-. The award was conferred to Prof. Arora by Dr Shailesh Naik, Former Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences and Dr Prakash Chauhan, Director-National Remote Sensing Centre & President of the Indian Society of Remote Sensing during the ISG-ISRS Annual Convention & National Symposium on the theme “GeoDiscover: Unravelling India’s Spatial Frontier”, held on Nov 28, 2023 in Pune.

Prof. Manoj K Arora said, “I am thrilled to receive the coveted Bhaskar Award and to be in the league of great fellow Bhaskar Awardees who have contributed immensely to the Indian Space Programme. I dedicate this award to my teachers, mentors and students.” The award has been given in recognition of his outstanding contribution and achievements in the fields of Remote Sensing, Digital Image Processing, Land Cover Mapping, Earth Sciences and Civil Engineering applications.

Some of the other awardees in this league are Mr Somanath, current ISRO Chairman, former ISRO Chairmen, Dr Radha Krishnan, Dr Kiran Kumar, Dr K Sivan, former Secretary of Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr Shailesh Nayak, Chief guest of the event and Former Surveyor General of India, Dr Prithvish Nag, to name a few.

Prof. Arora has done pioneer work in extracting accurate land cover information from a variety of remote sensing data using Machine Learning techniques. In particular, his work on generating fractional land cover images from coarse spatial resolution images (fraught with mixed pixels) using neuro-fuzzy classification and super-resolution mapping techniques in the late 1990s and early 2000s is widely acclaimed. He is one of the harbingers in using fuzzy set and pattern recognition techniques for landslide hazard zonation and risk assessment.

His works on accurate extraction of snow cover from remote sensing and estimation of snow depths are being used at an operational level in the Defence Geoinformatics Research Establishment (earlier SASE), a DRDO lab. He has also been involved in the use of geospatial techniques for the rail route alignment surveys of Rishikesh Karna Prayag and Annandpur Sahib Badrinath Railway Lines, and the prestigious Char Dham Railway Project of Government of India being executed by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited, and Drone surveys for cadastral mapping of Chandigarh City.

Some of his other works recognised by the scientific community are; the accuracy assessment of fuzzy classification, detection of surface & sub-surface military targets using hyperspectral and microwave remote sensing data, development of models for landslide movement estimation at a spatial level as well as at individual landslide level using PS InSAR and SBAS

techniques, and development of Object Based Image Analysis model for mapping glacier cover classes and land use in general from high spatial resolution remote sensing data.

Prof. Arora is equally contributing to academic administration to mentor higher educational institutions, departments, centres of excellence and research laboratories. He has been instrumental in establishing the Kalpana Chawla Chair of Geospatial Technology from an endowment given by Indian Railways at PEC Chandigarh and Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC) from the Niti Aayog at BML Munjal University. At SRM University-AP, he has established two new Centres of Excellence, viz, Centre for Geospatial Technology and Centre for Drone Technology focusing on product and technology development in Geospatial Sciences.

“Prof. Arora is a visionary leader and committed researcher under whose guidance the university has flourished as a research-intensive institute, embarking on novel frontiers of cutting-edge research. We at SRM University-AP heartily congratulate Prof. Arora for his worthy achievement and are elated to witness his future contributions to the field of Remote Sensing,” remarked Dr P Sathyanarayanan, Pro-Chancellor, SRM University-AP.

SRM University-AP is proud and ecstatic to have him as its leader.