New DELHI, Dec 09: The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) under the Union Ministry of Science and Technology has launched a new grant opportunity named after its former Secretary and eminent scientist, Dr.M.K.Bhan.

Called ‘M K Bhan – Young Researcher Fellowship Programme (MKB-YRFP)’, the grant aims to encourage young bright researchers to continue their research in the country after Ph.D. The scheme offers an independent research grant to young Post-Doctoral Fellows to enable them to emerge as future leaders and take up cutting edge research focused on issues of national relevance. This fellowship will be awarded for Research work to be carried out at DBT’s autonomous institutes only.

Maharaj Kishan Bhan (9 November 1947 – 26 January 2020) was an Indian pediatrician and clinical scientist. He received M.B.B.S. Degree (1969) from Armed Forces Medical College, Pune and M.D. Degree from Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research,
Chandigarh. He carried out extensive post doctoral research at All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the areas of diarrheal diseases and child nutrition with an emphasis on public health issues. He served as the president of the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (JIPMER).

He is a recipient of The Padma Bhushan, is the third-highest civilian award of the country. He was known for developing a vaccine for the dreaded disease of RotaVirus in collaboration with Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International. He was positioned as Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, from 2004 to 2012. He conceived the formation of Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), with a mandate to promote product development by industry in collaboration with academia. An elected fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences, he was awarded in 1990 the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for Science and Technology, the highest science award in India, in the Medical Sciences category.

The fellowship was launched by the Secretary, DBT, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Prof. M K Bhan, former secretary of DBT, on 9th November, 2020. For more details, DBT website (http://dbtindia.gov.in/) may be visited.

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