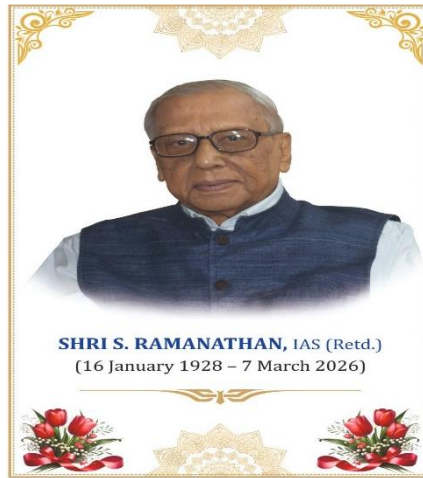


Obituary Note on
Shri S. Ramanathan, IAS (Retd.)



Karnataka and the Indian civil services have bid farewell to one of their most distinguished administrators, **Shri S. Ramanathan, IAS (Retd.)**, who passed away at the age of 98 after a life devoted to public service. His career spanned more than seven decades and mirrored the story of India's own journey—from the austere years immediately after independence to the building of modern infrastructure and institutions. Quiet, principled, and deeply committed to the ethos of public duty, Shri Ramanathan represented a generation of civil servants whose work helped lay the administrative foundations of the Indian Republic.

With a Master's degree from the Delhi School of Economics and a brief stint in teaching, Shri Ramanathan joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1952. His early years in Karnataka (then part of a complex administrative geography of Bombay, Mysore, and Hyderabad regions) were marked by intense field engagement. After returning from a United Nations assignment in Afghanistan (1965–1967)—where he worked as Community Development Expert assisting the Afghan government on local governance reforms—he joined the Government of India at the invitation of the eminent economist and Union Minister Dr. V.K. R. V. Rao as Director (Projects) in the Ministry of Shipping and Transport. In this role, he helped push forward a series of strategic projects, including the development of Mangalore and Tuticorin Harbours, the establishment of the Cochin Shipyard, and various shipping and dredging initiatives.

His contributions were equally significant in the field of civil aviation. As Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation and later as Whole-Time Member and Chairman of the International Airports Authority of India (IAAI), Ramanathan played an instrumental role in planning and modernizing India's airport infrastructure. He retired from service in 1986 as Secretary in the Government of India. From 1986 to 1988, he served as Director of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.

Post-retirement, Shri S. Ramanathan served as Director of several public sector undertakings including Air India, Indian Airlines, Shipping Corporation of India, and LIC. He was associated with the United Nations and several of its specialized agencies as a consultant. One of his notable contributions with lasting relevance to Karnataka was

chairing the High-Level Committee that recommended Devanahalli as the site for Bengaluru's new international airport.

Among the many awards received by him was the **Karnataka Rajyotsava Award** in 1998 for distinguished services in diverse fields of Public Administration. He also received the **Paul Appleby Award** from the IIPA in 2004 "*for outstanding services rendered to the institute and to the discipline of Public Administration*".

Shri S. Ramanathan served as **Chairman of the Karnataka Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration** from 1990 to 2022. During his 32-year tenure, he laid the foundation of a branch that is now recognized as one of the **Best Performing Branches** of the IIPA. From March 2022 till his demise at the age of 98 on 7 March 2026, he served as **Chairman Emeritus** of the Branch, during which he rarely missed a single meeting or event organized by the branch.

Shri S. Ramanathan authored/edited a few books, monographs and consultancy reports. Noteworthy among them are '*A Study on Airport Management – Theory and Practice*', and '*Landmarks in Karnataka Administration*'.

In remembering Shri S. Ramanathan, Karnataka and India recall not merely the achievements of a distinguished administrator but the example of a public servant who combined professional excellence with moral clarity. His life demonstrates that the quiet, routine work of administration—when guided by principle and dedication—can leave an enduring imprint on institutions and society.

May his soul rest in peace.