

## CSIR's Diamond Jubilee function

NAL flagged off CSIR's Diamond Jubilee celebrations with a wonderful Foundation Day function on 26 September 2002 at the S R Valluri auditorium. The NAL function started at 10.30 a.m. -- the same time that CSIR's mega function, graced by the Prime Minister and telecast live, began in Delhi. It was difficult to decide which function to witness. Finally one decided to attend NAL's function and then catch up with the video recording of the Delhi function.

This proved to be a smart decision because NAL's function featured two remarkable lectures, by



Prof H S Mukunda on Combustion Science and Technology in India and Mr Shyam Chetty on Design and Development of Control Laws for Modern Aircraft.

Mr M R Narasimha Swamy welcomed the gathering and introduced the day's programme. Dr B R Pai, Director, presented a brief review of NAL's recent successes. He also read out a message from Dr R A Mashelkar, Director-General, CSIR, conveying his greetings on CSIR's big day. Dr Pai talked of CSIR's travelling exhibition featuring "sixty diamonds" from CSIR. "We are particularly happy that NAL has contributed four of these sixty diamonds", Dr Pai added. The NAL Director also announced the good news about NAL winning the CSIR prize for "business promotion and technology marketing" and Dr Manoj Nair's success in winning the CSIR Young Scientist Award.



Prof Mukunda's illuminating narrative covered wide ground: he talked of the 'actors' in combustion S&T in India and their aims, he wondered if we were 'followers' or 'leaders' and ruefully concluded that we were followers in most cases ("very often, we are learning from existing cases"). Prof Mukunda also discussed some examples, including the example of a domestic solid fuel based stove. The lecture also contained wise remarks and observations. Examples: "we have reached maturity levels in solid rocket technology, and the potential in liquid rocket engine development is promising" or "CFD tools in combustion S&T are still limited" or "the clean use of solid fuels is not sufficiently studied even today".

Mr Shyam Chetty's lecture on developing control laws ("the brain") for unstable fighter aircraft was brilliant. As a member (and now the leader) of the LCA national control law team, he has seen it all. The stupendous technical complexity of the problem couldn't have fazed Shyam; his real challenge was to tell the story in simple words. Shyam succeeded admirably. The best scientists are often also the best speakers.

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