

NAL Foundation Day Function

NAL was set up with offices in New Delhi on 1 June 1959 and moved to Bangalore on 1 March 1960. For over a decade now NAL Has established the practice of celebrating its Foundation Day in the first week of June. This year's Foundation Day was delayed by a few weeks but the wait proved to be worthwhile. Prof Y K Alagh, Union Minister of State for Science & Technology and Power was the chief guest at this year's celebrations (colleagues will recall that Mr K R Narayanan, now the President of India, graced the NAL Foundation Day function on 11 June 1988 when he was the Union Minister for Science & Technology).

The celebrations began at 9.30 in the morning at the Belur Campus with the function to dedicate the Wind Tunnel Centre to the memory of Dr P Nilakantan, NAL's first Director and the architect of NAL's wind tunnel projects. Dr T S Prahlad, Director, welcomed the gathering, which included Dr Nilkantan's son, daughter, brother and a host of other relatives, and paid rich tribute to the vision and commitment of Dr Nilakantan. Prof Alagh then unveiled a plaque to formally rename NAL's Wind Tunnel Centre as the Nilakantan Wind Tunnel Centre and released a special booklet recounting the story of NAL's wind tunnel. Speaking on the occasion, Prof Alagh said that it was a "lovely occasion" where NAL Scientists and friends had gathered to pay a tribute to a remarkable scientist and engineer. "Dr Nilakantan must have been an extraordinary individual; you cannot be a normal person if you are to dream the dreams of Dr Nilakantan", he said.

Two hours later, Prof Alagh arrived at the overflowing Systems Auditorium to deliver the Eleventh NAL Foundation Day Lecture (a detailed report of his lecture will appear in a future issue). The function opened with a brief presentation on NAL's programmes and plans by Dr Prahlad. This was followed by Prof Alagh's lecture and remarks by Prof U R Rao- who presided over the function. The highlight of this year's function was the special programme to honour Chairmen of NAL's Research Councils: Prof S Dhawan and Prof U R Rao and NAL's four former Directors. It was a special moment as the three former Directors: Dr S R Valluri Prof R Narasimha and Dr K N Raju walked up to the stage to a thunderous ovation to receive the citation scroll (see box containing Prof Dhawan's citation; future issues of the *Pasteboard* will reproduce other citations.)

Prof Satish Dhawan

National Aerospace Laboratories is privileged to honour Professor Satish Dhawan at today's special Foundation Day Function to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Indian Independence. Professor Dhawan has moulded the development of science and technology in India for half a century. As Chairman, Space Commission and Secretary, Department of Space, Professor Dhawan led the Indian space programme to an astonishing state of maturity. In doing so he provided a model for the country on how to define, formulate and organize high technology projects, and deliver sophisticated products within stipulated time frames. As Director, Indian Institute of Science, Professor Dhawan led the Indian scientific community to newer heights of success, achievement and eminence.

NAL is singularly fortunate to obtain Professor Dhawan's advice, guidance and affection for nearly four decades. He was a member of NAL's Executive Council since its inception in 1963 and his formal association with NAL continued till he stepped down as Chairman, Research Council in 1994. Professor Dhawan's advice to NAL was always marked by scrupulous objectivity and a deep concern for its possible social relevance to the country.

As NAL completes 38 years of existence, all of us at NAL take pride in saluting one of the truly great builders of modern India.