Report on DAE-BRNS Symposium on Nuclear and Radiochemistry

The tenth biennial symposium on “Nuclear and Radiochemistry” (NUCAR-2011), organized by the Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (BRNS), Department of Atomic Energy, in association with the GITAM Institute of Science, Visakhapatnam, and Indian Association of Nuclear Chemists and Allied Scientists, Mumbai, was held during February 22-26, 2011. This conference was exclusively dedicated to nuclear chemistry, chemistry of actinides & fission products and various aspects of radiochemistry. The conference was attended by nearly 350 delegates including scientists from National Laboratories, Universities and Research Institutes from India and abroad.

Inaugurating a five-day biennial symposium at GITAM University, Prof. Rama Rao, Chairman, Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (BRNS) of Department of Atomic Energy, stressed the need for trained and efficient human resources for making country’s nuclear programmes successful. He said, India’s nuclear programmes are self sufficient and our scientists are capable of handling challenges. Nuclear science and technology should be promoted and awareness must be created among people about radiation and the usefulness of nuclear power. While talking about research activity, Prof. Rama Rao said that BRNS was continuously supporting research programmes of various universities and institutions.

NUCAR-2011 Inauguration function, from left to right: Prof. Rama Rao, Chairman, Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (BRNS), Dr. M.V.V.S. Murthi, President, GITAM University, Prof. V. Venugopal, Director, Radiochemistry & Isotope Group, BARC, Prof N. Lakshmana Das, Principal, GITAM Institute of Science, Dr. R M. Sawant, Convener, NUCAR-2011, Dr. S.K. Sali, Secretary, NUCAR-2011 and Prof. G. Subramanyam, Vice-Chancellor of GITAM University.
through its various schemes. The top DAE official had a word of praise for Indian universities, particularly deemed universities, who have the benefit of autonomy, and advised them to take reputed US universities as benchmark to improve their quality. He appreciated GITAM University for achieving “A” status among other universities. Prof. Rama Rao hoped that the upcoming Bhabha Atomic Research Centre’s unit in Visakhapatnam would be a suitable place to train the required manpower in the nuclear sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. V Venugopal, Director, Radiochemistry & Isotope Group, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) said India has a flourishing and largely indigenous nuclear power programme and expects to have 20,000MW nuclear capacity by 2020 and 40,000 MW by 2032. To strengthen the country’s co-operation with the international community in the areas of advanced nuclear energy systems, Indian government is establishing a Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership at New Delhi and establishing a Neutron Observatory at Madurai to strengthen nuclear physics research activities.

GITAM University president Dr. M.V.V.S.Murthi lamented that students preferred IT and other courses to basic sciences. To make youngsters join science courses, incentives must be provided. Vice-chancellor of GITAM University Prof. G Subramanyam briefed about the university’s teaching and research activities. He expressed that the university is interested to offer nuclear technology programs under the guidance of DAE and other organisations. Principal, Institute of Science Prof N. Lakhsmana Das, Symposium organizing committee, Convener, Dr. R M. Sawant, Secretary Dr. S.K. Sali, IANCAS General Secretary, Dr. A.V.R Reddy and GITAM UGC Affairs Director, Prof. Ramakrishna participated in the inaugural session.

A special seminar was arranged to commemorate the centenary of the discovery of atomic nucleus by Ernest Rutherford, during this symposium. Prof. Marshall from Rutherford’s laboratory gave an invited talk on the birth of atomic nucleus and highlighted the contributions of Rutherford.

Indian Association of Nuclear Chemists and Allied Scientists (IANCAS) felicitated and presented two life time achievement awards to noted scientists Dr. R.H. Iyer, Former Head, Radio Chemistry Division, BARC with M. V. Ramaniah award and Dr. S.V. Narasimhan, Former Assoc. Director, Chemistry Group, BARC, with the Dr. K.S. Venkateshwarlu award.