Bhabha Atomic Research Centre celebrated National Science day-2014 with Chemfest-2014, a festival of Chemistry. The primary aim of the festival was to showcase the achievements of chemists of BARC in fields such as Nuclear Energy, Hydrogen and Solar energy, Health, Environment, Industrial & Societal Applications. The festival consisted of posters, exhibits, short lectures on topics of current interest, film shows covering achievements of DAE and interactive sessions with senior scientists. The venue was Training School Hostel & Guest House and Homi Bhabha National Institute, Anushaktinagar. The festival was open to public for four days; February 28- March 03, 2014. During these days, on the display were over 160 posters, 30 exhibits, 20 films, 16 lectures of 30 minutes each and four interaction sessions with senior scientists. The fest had a good mix of other disciplines namely, Physics, Electronic and Instrumentation, and Health Physics. A team of over 150 volunteers managed the festival in a professional manner. A large number of University and college students and faculty were invited to participate.

The festival was inaugurated on National Science Day, February 28, by Dr. R.B. Grover, Director, HBNI, Dr. J.V. Yakhmi, Chairman, AEES and Dr. R.M. Iyer, former Director, Chemistry Group, BARC.

During four days, over 1000 students accompanied by over 100 teachers from 21 colleges in and around Mumbai and nearby places attended the festival. The colleges include R. Jhunjhunwala College (Ghatkopar), V.G. Vaze College (Mulund), Modern College (Vashi), Sandesh College (Vikhroli), SIES College (Sion), Sri Sri Ravishankara School (Dharavi), Dept. of Chemistry, Mumbai University (Kalina), Vivekanand College (Chembur), Konkan Gyanpeeth College (Karjat), Birla College (Kalyan), Institute of Science (Fort), SNNDT University (Juhu), Somaiya College (Vidyavihar), ICL’s Motilal Jhunjhunwala College (Vashi), Deolali High School (Nashik), St. Joseph School (Panvel), A.E.C.S School-1, 2,3,4 and 5 (Anushaktinagar). In addition, a large number of BARC/NPCI/HWB employees visited Chemfest-2014 along with their family members. All four days of the festival experienced an overflowing enthusiasm and interest from the students, teachers and other visitors.

The display and posters in the Chemfest were organized in five thematic sections: (1) Energy including chemistry in front and back end of nuclear fuel cycle, hydrogen energy and solar energy, (2) Societal applications including clean water, fluoride/arsenic remediation, (3) Chemistry for Environment, (4) Chemistry for Health and (5) Chemistry at fundamental level. Some of the innovations ready for technology transfer were also displayed in the Chemfest. The students were also advised on the carrier prospects in basic sciences and also on how to join R&D in BARC.

Chemfest provided a unique opportunity to college and university students to know about the current research in BARC, to listen to topics of their interest and to interact directly with scientists/engineers. The interactive session with senior scientist, i.e., with Prof. J.B. Joshi, Homi Bhabha Chair Professor (on February 28, FN), Dr. V.C. Sahni, Homi Bhabha Chair Professor (on February 28, AN), Dr. Sekhar Basu, Director BARC (on March 01, AN) and Dr. J.P. Mittal, M.N. Saha Professor (on March 03, AN) were enjoyed by one and all.

Several students and teachers suggested that such programmes be organized by BARC in regular intervals and that will benefit the students in a continual manner.