The Indian Association for Radiation Protection organised its 31st National Conference (IARPNC-2014) on the “Advances in Radiation Measurement Systems and Techniques” at Multipurpose Hall, BARC Training School Hostel, Anushaktinagar, Mumbai during March 19-21, 2014. The conference was attended by about 400 scientist, including Radiation Protection professionals from DAE, IAEA, DRDO, industry. Invited speakers both from India and abroad shared their expertise and important insights in the field of radiation protection. One of the important features of the conference was the participation of a large number of students and professors from universities from all over India.

The scientific deliberations of the conference included latest systems and techniques developed for radiation measurements, environmental radioactivity, assessment of radiation exposure to the public from natural radiation and emergency preparedness. There were thirteen invited talks; notable amongst them were the ones on Fukushima accident by Dr. T. Suzuki, an IAEA expert from Japan, Epidemiological investigations by Dr.K.B.Sainis, Former Director, BMG and Dr R.A.Badwe, Director, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai. Dr. Sainis noted that comprehensive data from high background radiation areas of Kerala from a cohort of more than 300,000 persons exposed to high levels of natural radiation did not show any incidence of excess cancer rates over the incidence rates in normal population. These studies lead to non-applicability of linear no threshold (LNT) model at least for doses below 100 mSv. Dr. Badwe informed that the cancer incidence rates are about 40 for 100,000 persons in rural area and about twice of this in the urban areas. The extensive studies undertaken by TMC, have also not indicated any additional cancer incidences, attributable to power plant operations in different regions in India as compared to those observed in nearest control population.

There was a lively panel discussion on ‘Nuclear Power, Radiation Protection and Public Perception’ on the concluding day of the conference. The panellists included experts from BARC, AERB, NPCIL and DAE. Many panellists expressed their views that based upon the international research, there may be a possibility of having a threshold dose below which there is no risk for exposure to external radiation or can have benefits as predicted by the radiation hormesis.