LOW-LEVEL RADIATION RESEARCH LABORATORY AT KOLLAM INAUGURATED

Dr Anil Kakodkar, Director, BARC, inaugurated the new building of Monazite Survey Project (MSP) on September 4, 1999 at Kollam, Kerala, and named it Low-Level Radiation Research Laboratory. Dr (Mrs.) A.M. Samuel, Director, Bio-Medical Group, BARC, presided over the function which was attended among others by former Director, Health Services, Kerala State, collaborating staff from state health department, senior executives of IRE, Kollam and Chavara, students and professors of University of Kerala and other distinguished invitees.

Dr Anil Kakodkar, Director, BARC,
inaugurating the new building of
Monazite Survey Project at Kollam, Kerala

Dr K.B. Sainis, Head, Cell Biology Division, BARC, welcomed the Chief Guest and other dignitaries. Dr P.S. Chauhan, former Head, CBD, and Project Manager, MSP, reviewed the history of the Monazite Survey Project and outlined the currently progressing investigations such as those related to congenital malformations in newborns in the population from high background radiation areas (HBRA) and normal background radiation areas (NBRA), cytogenetic studies on adults and newborns, dosimetry, demographic survey for late onset diseases and recently started studies on germline DNA mutations and genetic polymorphism. He also elaborated on the future research goals of MSP.

Dr (Mrs.) A.M. Samuel, Director, BMG, emphasized the importance of research opportunities provided by this "nature's experiment" to study the effects of low level continuous irradiation on human population living in these areas for several generations and centuries. She was happy that these studies will now become a regular research activity of BARC under the banner of LLRRL. She also acknowledged the co-operation of IRE, Regional Cancer Centre, Trivandrum, and others and assured to strengthen these ties.

Dr Anil Kakodkar, Director, BARC, in his inaugural address appreciated the importance of the studies being carried out at MSP and their significance to people of the monazite belt. He also emphasized that the facilities at MSP (LLRRL) should be continuously updated so that people from other centres in the country will be encouraged to interact with BARC scientists to seek answers to the basic biological questions pertinent to the exposure of human population to continuous low level radiation. Comprehensiveness has to be accomplished in all the studies including dosimetry. He also felt that encouragement must be given to Universities and state level institutions to interact with our scientists and take up relevant projects through agencies such as BRNS. He desired that LLRRL should become a unique centre for research in this area of life sciences and health sciences.

Mr M.V. Thampi, Officer-in-Charge, MSP Laboratories, Kollam, proposed a vote of thanks.

Dr Kakodkar was shown the various facilities at LLRRL by Dr M. Seshadri, Project Manager, MSP.