

The inauguration of the sesquicentenary celebration of Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science this morning (July 29, 2026), was scintillated with memorable events. In his welcome address, Prof. Kalobaran Maiti, Director of IACS, proudly told the august audience that even though only one Nobel Prize winning work has come out of IACS, the Association can boast of ground breaking work like Kedareshwar Banerjee's work on crystallographic phase problems and Amal Kumar Raychaudhuri's cosmological equation that have paved the path for Nobel Prizes in later years. Many other ground breaking research work have led to wide ranging technological applications, thus fulfilling the objective of the Association "to cultivate science in all its departments by original research and to its varied applications to the arts and comforts of life", as defined by the founder Dr. Mahendralal Sircar.

Mahendralal Sircar's fourth generation descendant Arun Sircar graced the 150th year celebration with his august presence. It was a proud privilege for the Director to felicitate the octogenarian on this occasion.

Prof. Kalyan Chakraborty, hon'ble Minister of the Dept of IT, Science, Technology, Electronics, Food processing and Horticulture, Government of West Bengal, who presided over the inaugural programme, started his address with Guru Vandana, today being the auspicious Guru Purnima Day. Minister went on to say that Bengal has a rich legacy of scientific achievements and IACS is continuing with the tradition of sound research work in different fields. He also did the honours of releasing the book "A Sesquicentennial Odyssey", the IACS Song and the promo of audio drama on C.V. Raman's work, "Chasing the Feeble Fluorescence".

The inaugural programme was followed by an eye opening talk "Our origin, culture and consequences" by Dr. K. Thangaraj from CSIR – CCMB, Hyderabad, where he explained how genetic studies have got to the roots of rare diseases found in specific communities.

The last speaker before lunch was Ashoke Viswanathan, who, in his flamboyant style, enthralled the audience with his observations on the new directions that scientific research is taking and the vanishing boundaries between science and humanities. He also shared some insights he gained while making the commemorative film on IACS.

The post lunch panel discussion was on the topic "Cultivation of Science at 2047". Heads of eight institutions discussed and debated on how they can collaborate to address some of the pressing societal problems – be it health and well-being or environmental degradation or inclusive education or keeping alive students' interest in fundamental sciences. Prof. Kalobaran Maiti, who was moderating the discussion, concluded by saying that in line with the founder's vision, he would like to initiate a Calcutta Cluster of scientific organizations.