100 YEARS SINCE FIRST POWERED FLIGHT -
AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA COMMENORATES THE EVENT

On 17 Dec 1903, a flight of 12 seconds covering a distance of 120 Ft (37 M) changed history. The Wright Brothers had flown the first manned, powered heavier-than-air flying machine. The Aeronautical Society of India celebrated the momentous occasion of "100 years since First Powered Flight" in a befitting manner with two major events. The first event organized by the Society was "Air Race India 2003" between November 20-22, 2003. The Society organized a two day event on December 17-18, 2003 at Bangalore, the birth place of the Society, and are International Seminar on "100 years since First Powered Flight"and a Technical Seminar on "Advances in Aerospace Sciences". The Society also held its 55th Annual General Meeting. Shri NR Mohanty, President, The Aeronautical Society of India handed over the Presidentship to Air Chief Marshal, S Krishnaswamy, PVSM, AVSM, VM & Bar ADC at the 55th Annual General Meeting.

The Centenary celebrations started on 17 Dec with three technical presentations. Prof Satish Dhawan Memorial Lecture was delivered by Dr GM Cleetus, Emeritus Scientist, DRDO on "Radar Technology Development in DRDO". Dr Biren Roy Memorial Lecture was delivered by Shri A Bhattacharyya, Department of Revenue Central Excise on "Flight Safety - A Vision for the Future Civil Aviation". The Society instituted the Kalpana Chawla Memorial Lecture in recognition to the outstanding contribution in the field of Aerospace by the late Kalpana Chawla, Indian born American Astronaut. The first Kalpana Chawla Memorial Lecture was delivered by Wg Cdr (Retd) Rakesh Sharma, the first Indian Astronaut, on "Kalpana - The Power of Imagination".

The Honourable Raksha Mantri, Shri George Fernades was the Chief Guest for the Centenary Session. The prestigious Dr Nilakantan Memorial Lecture was delivered by Dr G Madhavan Nair, Chairman, ISRO and Secretary, Department of Space on "Four Decades of Indian Launch Vehicle Technology". On this occasion the Hon. Minister released the Proceedings of the International Seminar, the Souvenir and the Special Issue of the Journal of Aerospace Sciences & Technologies besides a book titled "A Tribute to Indian Aeronautics" written by Dr CG Krishnadas Nair, former President of the Aeronautical Society of India. An exhibition showcasing the progress in Indian Aeronautics and Aerospace was also held.

The International Seminar consisted seven Technical Sessions containing 28 presentations by experts from India and abroad. Among the foreign speakers include BAE Systems, Snecma France, Pratt & Whittney, Sukhoi, Martin Lockheed, RAC MiG and Israel Aircraft.

The Technical Seminar on "Advances in Aerospace Sciences" consisted of 6 Poster Sessions with 45 papers accepted after review from Scholars, Scientists and Professional Engineers from all over the Country. The Society instituted two awards for the best papers and presented on the occasion. The best paper award carrying a Cash Prize of Rs. 10,000/- from among the Professional Engineers was awarded to Shri S Sadasivan, et.al, Scientist, ADE, Bangalore on "Airborne in-SITU and Group Based Measurements on a Small Aircraft-Structural Dynamic and Acoustic Signature Characteristics". With a view to encourage student authors the best paper on "Aeroelastic Design of an Ornithopter" was awarded a with a Cash Prize of Rs. 3,000/- to Mr Moble Benedict, et.al, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Mumbai.
A Philatelic Exhibition highlighting the Indian Aerospace was organized by Shri A Mahalingeswar, Bangalore. Over 900 delegates from all over the country and abroad attended the well organized two day seminar and other events. A Panel discussion on Aerospace Vision 2020 was held at the concluding session. Air Marshal P Rajkumar and Dr R Balasubramaniam conducted the Session with Dr PS Goel, ISAC, Dr PR Viswanath, NAL, Dr KVL Rao, ADA and Prof S Sudhakar, IIT Bombay as Panel Members. A vision paper has been prepared and submitted to the Council. In short, it can be said that the events organized by the Aeronautical Society of India to commemorate the "100 years since First Powered Flight" not only provided the opportunity for presenting and consolidating the progress achieved in the field of Aerospace Sciences and Technologies but also set the vision and direction for the country for the years to come.