

## **The End of the Beginning**

“This is not the end, this is not even the beginning of the end, this is just the end of the beginning.” These words were part of a speech by Winston Churchill to inspire his nation to fight and stand up and be counted, during the Second World War. The same sentence was repeated by the Director, Prof. Balaram at the conclusion of the centenary conference which took place from 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> December.

So, we have had the conference not to mention the pre-conference events which included the IISc emblem formation at Gymkhana, Prime Minister’s visit and the Science and Technology Run among other events. The first phase of the Centenary year celebrations is over.

As we now relax and enjoy the wintry sunshine, and look back at those few days of frantic activity, it is true that we learnt a lot. We saw happy faces and disgruntled ones, we saw people revel in the atmosphere delighted just to be present, we heard praises and compliments, and we also heard unhappy and complaining voices.

We have received many responses, both positive and negative about the arrangements during the conference some of which have been printed in this issue. It is true that there were lacunae in certain areas, for example, people were not clear about lunch arrangements on the first day, registrations caused some problems, or some elderly people faced difficulty in transportation as the ‘Maini’ electric vehicles were placed either at the ATM gate, which involved crossing the road or near the Tea Board, which involved crossing the subway. But then again, we learnt to adapt and solve each problem. For instance, volunteers were seen helping elderly people, someone showed foresight and there was a policeman present at all times who stopped the traffic and allowed people to cross roads. On the rest of the days (except when the subway was closed), the electric vehicles came right up to CSIC.

A parallel can be drawn with a large piece of machinery where every small nut or bolt is important and every part must do its job for the machinery to work. A lot of these parts are usually considered unworthy of independent mention. Similarly, there were so many people apart from the student volunteers and the Centenary Committee who worked in the background and did a lot of donkey work. Such people are never talked about, and their task is similar to that of wicketkeepers in cricket or goalkeepers in football. If they are never mentioned, it means they have done a good job. They are only noticed when they make mistakes. A big example of this is the security. In the wake of the Mumbai attacks, we were fortunate enough to get a strong security cover who made sure that we had four problem-free days.

So, to conclude, we did a brilliant job notwithstanding some issues. Let us hope that we all learnt from whatever few mistakes we made, and do even better in the future. Here’s to the second phase of the Centenary celebrations.

**Arun R. (Student, CSA)**