Preamble

CSIR-National Physical Laboratory is one of the first National laboratories set-up under CSIR. Its foundation stone was laid by the first Prime Minister of India, late Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru on 4th January 1947. Late Dr. K.S. Krishnan, FRS, was the first Director of the laboratory. The main building was opened by the then Deputy Prime Minister, late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 21st January 1950.

CHARTER

The main objectives of NPL have been a) to establish, maintain and improve National Standards of Measurements and to realize the Units based on International system, b) to identify and conduct research in areas of Physics, which are most appropriate to the needs of the Nation and for the advancement of the field, c) to assist industries, national and other agencies in their developmental tasks by precision measurements, calibration, development of devices, processes and other allied problems related to physics and d) to keep itself informed of and study critically the status of physics.

CUSTODIAN OF NATIONAL STANDARDS OF MEASUREMENT

National Physical Laboratory has the responsibility of realizing the units of physical measurements based on the International System (SI units) under the subordinate legislations of Weights & Measures Act 1956 (reissued in 1988 under the 1976 Act). NPL also has the statutory obligation to establish, maintain and update the national standards of measurement & calibration facilities for different parameters. The seven SI base units are metre, kilogramme, second, kelvin, ampere, candela, mole (mol) and the SI supplementary units are radian (rad) & steradian (sr). The other derived units for physical measurement, that the laboratory currently maintains, are: force, pressure, vacuum, luminous flux, sound pressure, ultrasonic power; ac voltage; current and power; low frequency voltage; impedance and power; high frequency voltage; power; impedance; attenuation and noise; microwave power; frequency; impedance; attenuation and noise.

NATIONAL APEX BODY FOR CALIBRATION

The laboratory provides apex level calibration services in the country, offering National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration (NABL), the national accreditation body in the country (i) its qualified assessors as needed for establishing best measurement capability of the applicant laboratory; (ii) its technical input to enable NABL to decide the suitability of the applicant laboratory for accreditation, and (iii) its faculty to train testing laboratories for estimation of uncertainty in their measurements.

Besides, the laboratory is engaged in development of Certified Reference Materials to ensure high quality measurement and traceability of analytical measurements to national/international measurement system (SI unit) in order to fulfill the mandatory requirement of quality systems (ISO/IEC-17025) and of the NABL.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

National Physical Laboratory has to its credit innumerable number of achievements, a few major achievements are: a) Introduction of Metric system of measurements in India, b) Development of Indelible ink-the indelible contribution to Indian democracy, c) Estimation of methane gas emission from India-a nationwide measurement campaign giving countrywide advantage in environment protection, d) Setting up a pilot plant for development of Electronic Components (ferrites), which led to setting up a public sector Unit called Central Electronics Ltd. (CEL) in 1973, e) Development of know-how of the Electrostatic Photocopying machine using indigenous materials and f) Indian Standard Time.