

# Editorial

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*S Mahadevan, Chief Editor*

The New Year has begun on a rather sombre note. The senseless devastation unleashed by a small band of deranged individuals in Mumbai has cast a pall on a nation that was basking in the glow of its recent technological achievements. Hundreds of lives were needlessly lost. Psychologists are at a loss to find an explanation for such pathological behaviour, uncommon even among the so-called lower animals. Terrorism, though it has had many manifestations in the past, has come to haunt our society in a major way during recent times as a retrogressive facet of human culture.

In a world that is shrinking, the only option against terrorism is for all nations to be united in their opposition to the purveyors of terror and their guardians. Though this would be ideal, unity at different levels has become a dream because of differences in perceptions and priorities. The least we could do as a nation is to make our borders more refractory for terrorists. Technology can help us in this regard in terms of increasing the sensitivity of our eyes and ears and by providing faster and better communication and mobility. It is time we invest more in such technologies.

We should not ignore the fact that there are sane individuals in all societies. It is important that such individuals stand united and speak up. One of the aims of terrorists is to destroy this unity by disrupting cultural, scientific and technological exchanges between nations. They should never be allowed to do so. In the past, they have partly succeeded in their efforts by forcing national borders to become more impervious. Nations have to strive harder to find a balance between national security and encouraging scientific and cultural contacts. There are several instances in the past where excessive concern for national security has thwarted international



Email:  
mahim@mrkg.iisc.ernet.in

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scientific interactions. This should be countered at all costs to protect the global character of science.

The unsung heroes who laid down their lives in the fight against terrorism have shown us the true meaning of the word courage. What can we, as individuals, do to honour their sacrifice? We can pledge to fulfill our responsibilities, whatever our vocation may be, to the best of our abilities and with renewed commitment. This will help strengthen our inner resolve to resist terrorism of any kind.

It is seventy five years since C V Raman founded the Indian Academy of Sciences to serve the cause of science in the country which was still under colonial rule. One of the goals in connection with the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the Academy is to make science accessible to people at large. Several public lectures and interactive sessions are planned to foster the spirit of enquiry particularly among the young. The year 2009 is also marked as the International Year of Astronomy as well as the Bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth. It is also the 150th anniversary of the publication of his famous book *On the Origin of Species*. *Resonance* will also join the world-wide celebrations by bringing out issues to commemorate these events.

This issue of *Resonance* features Sir James Lighthill, a versatile genius famous for his contributions to the field of fluid mechanics and applied mathematics. His work reflected a "perfect correspondence between a clearly identified physical process or mechanism and its expression and description in mathematical terms". His studies had significant impact in a variety of disciplines such as aeronautics, aeroacoustics, traffic flow, insect flight and swimming of fish. He had a serious interest in music and was a pianist as well as an excellent long distance swimmer. This issue carries articles featuring his contributions to both mathematics as well as fluid mechanics.

Readers of *Resonance* can look forward to exciting issues during the coming months.

*Resonance* wishes  
its readers a very  
happy 2009.

