

## Scientific fraternity of Pune elated at top honour for Rao

**Ardhra Nair** Posted online: Sun Nov 17 2013, 02:52 hrs

**Pune** : Professor C N R Rao who will be conferred Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award, may not be based in Pune but his association with research institutes in the city like National Chemical Laboratory is very old.

“In 1960s, Prof Rao often used to visit the NCL library for research. His tryst with NCL started then and it still continues,” said Saurav Pal, Director of NCL. “For almost nine years, he was the chairman of the NCL research council. He had come to NCL was in May,” said Pal.

“Prof Rao was my chemistry teacher in the 70s when I was in IIT Kanpur. The unique thing about him is that he can inspire you to the core. Whenever he gave any speech in NCL or outside, youngsters used to throng to listen to him because he had a quality to convince them about the power of science and research,” said Pal. “He will be coming to Pune in December. We will try to felicitate him in NCL at that time.”

“Prof Rao is an international authority on solid state and materials chemistry. He has published over 1,400 research papers and 45 books,” the website of the union government noted. IISER, a brainchild of Rao was made on the guidelines made by a panel led by him. Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Research centre at IISER-Pune was founded in 2008 by Rao.

“He is a grassroots scientist. We even gave him an honorary doctorate in last year’s convocation,” said K N Ganesh, Director, IISER. “He made funding for various projects very easy. He made the Centre clear the IISER project in two months,” said Ganesh, who is Rao’s son-in-law. “He doesn’t have a cell phone as he thinks of it as a distraction. I called his driver to talk to him and congratulate him. He came to know about the award while he was waiting at the Trivandrum Airport. When he arrived in Bangalore, he was overwhelmed by the huge crowd of well-wishers,” Ganesh said.