

N. Kondal Rao (1924–2008)

N. Kondal Rao, an eminent metallurgist and nuclear scientist, passed away on 22 October 2008 after a brief illness. He is survived by his wife and three sons.

Nidamarty Kondal Rao, born on 15 July 1924 at Nidamarru village, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, graduated in metallurgy from the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi in 1948 and obtained his doctorate in Metallurgy from the University of Aachen, Germany in 1955. After working for sometime in metallurgical industries at Calcutta and Bombay, he joined the Department of Atomic Energy in 1956.

Rao made remarkable contributions in the field of nuclear fuel fabrication. He was responsible for the development and production of nuclear fuel and other core components for both the research and power reactors. The sophisticated facilities for nuclear fuel fabrication for supply of uranium metal clad in aluminium fuel elements for the CIRUS Reactor at Trombay were set up under his guidance, at the Atomic Fuels Division, which Rao was heading from 1956 to 1978.

The first half charge of fuel – zirconium alloy-clad natural uranium dioxide

fuel bundles for the RAPS-I Reactor at Rawatbhata, Kota, was also fabricated under his dynamic leadership. The quality of the fuel elements and bundles fabricated under his leadership was considered to be much superior compared to the part supply made by Canada.



Rao was instrumental in setting up the Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC) at Hyderabad, for which he was the Chief Executive from 1978 till his retirement in 1984. NFC supplies all the required zirconium alloy structural components, nuclear fuel bundles for all the nuclear power stations in the country. With his insight into the

fuel fabrication technology, the country has attained self-reliance. Due to his vision, NFC has also diversified into manufacturing seamless tubes of many materials for both strategic and commercial applications, which meet both national and international standards.

Rao was associated with various scientific and engineering institutions and industries in different capacities. He was President of Andhra Pradesh Academy of Sciences, The Powder Metallurgy Association of India, Indian Vacuum Society, and Chairman of The Indian Institute of Metals, Hyderabad chapter.

Rao received the National Metallurgist's Award of the Ministry of Steel & Mines, Government of India in 1968 and the Telugu Velugu Award from the Andhra Pradesh Government.

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Erratum

Fibroblast growth factor regulates early mesoderm and neural development in chick embryo through its action on *brachyury*, *gooseoid*, *ERNI* and *noggin*

Seema Borgave and Surendra Ghaskadbi

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In the legend of Figure 2 (p. 1220), in lines 6 & 15, 'ec' stand for ectodermal cells and NOT for endodermal cells. In both 2 *c* and 2 *k*, endodermal cells are not stained (clearly pointed out by an arrowhead in 2 *c*).