



भौतिक अनुसंधान प्रयोगशाला, अहमदाबाद Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad

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80_PRL Ka Amrut Vyakhyaan

Wednesday, 24 May 2023

@ 04:00 PM (IST)

**“FUTURE SPACE EXPLORATION – A
PERSPECTIVE”**

Wg. Cdr. Rakesh Sharma Ashoka Chakra (Retd.)

Fighter Pilot, Indian Air Force (Retd.)

Test pilot at HAL &
First Indian cosmonaut



<https://youtube.com/live/2E5UDgJpwpE?feature=share>



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Title: “FUTURE SPACE EXPLORATION – A PERSPECTIVE”

Speaker: Wg. Cdr. Rakesh Sharma Ashoka Chakra (Retd.)

Fighter Pilot, Indian Air Force (Retd.), Research Cosmonaut at ISRO, Test pilot at HAL

First Indian cosmonaut

On

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Abstract

“The Human civilization is poised to recommence space exploration; this time, not to explore but to inhabit, first the Moon and later, perhaps, Mars.

How should we plan for this fundamental shift in our space activity? Do we adopt the same paradigm as we have done thus far i.e., the initial explorer takes it all? Should our approach be exclusive or inclusive? Should we be going out there while continuing to retain our national identities or, as explorers from Planet Earth? Do we go forth by leveraging the advantage one or the other nation has by virtue of its better technological base or, do we go out as a civilization from Planet Earth that recognizes that Space is not the domain of any one nation, that all human activity in outer space must benefit humankind resident on Planet Earth, as has been mandated by the United Nations? .”

The Speaker

Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma (Retd.) Ashok Chakra was Graduated from the National Defence Academy in 1968. After completion of flying training, he was Commissioned into the Indian Air Force as a Fighter Pilot, in 1970.

He flew 21 Operational Missions on a Mig-21 aircraft during the Indo-Pak War in 1971. He was selected for the Production Test Pilots Course in 1975 and later, in 1979 for the Experimental Test Pilots Course at the Test Pilot’s School of the Indian Air Force’s Aircraft and Systems’ Testing Establishment, Bangalore.

Wg. Cdr. Sharma served as an Air Force Test Pilot for 15 years before being seconded to the Industry, in 1987. During this period, he was selected for the Joint Indo-Soviet Space Mission, 1984, which culminated in an 8 days Near Earth Orbit Space Flight. He was awarded the Ashoka Chakra by the Indian Government; The Hero of The Soviet Union and The Order of Lenin by the erstwhile Soviet Government.

He returned to his test flying career after the space flight and served as the Chief Project Pilot of India’s Light Combat Aircraft ‘Tejas’ and, as Chief Test Pilot of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL). During this period, his skills were extensively utilised by HAL on its indigenous Intermediate Jet Trainer Project. Out of a flying career spanning 33 years, he spent 24 years testing aircraft and systems. During this period, he flew 4000 hrs on all front- line fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force, apart from the NT-33, NF-16 and the F-18. Retired from test flying in July 2001.

He joined the IT Industry in 2001 as the Chief Operating Officer of a Business Process Management IT company. Later, he headed the Indian Aerospace and Defence business unit of Parametric Technology Corporation, USA, till his retirement from active service in 2009.

Post retirement, he was appointed as Chairman of the Board of Candela Labs, an IT company located at Bangalore till he decided to step down in 2019.

