

Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet

The Government of India has reconstituted the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SAC-C) under the Chairmanship of A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Govt. of India. The 38-member committee includes as ex-officio members the Secretaries of Departments of Science & Technology, Biotechnology, Ocean Development, Scientific & Industrial research, Atomic Energy, Space, Agricultural Research & Education, Defense Research & Development and the Presidents of Indian National Science Academy, Indian Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Sciences, Indian National Academy of Engineering, ASOCHAM, CII, FICCI. The other members are Veena Tandon, North-

Eastern Hill University; D. N. Buroghain, IIT, Guwahati; Geeta Talukdar, Vivekananda Institute of Medical Science, Calcutta; Jamshed J. Irani, TISCO, Jamshedpur; P. Balaram, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; Sushil Kumar, Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Lucknow; S. K. Joshi, DRDO, Delhi; J. M. Khanna, Ranbaxy Research Laboratory, New Delhi; S. K. Basu, National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi; Ashok Khosla, Development Alternatives, New Delhi; P. K. Kaw, Institute of Plasma Research, Ahmedabad; P. S. Goel, ISRO Satellite Centre, Bangalore; L. Poonawala, Tetrapak, Pune; Govardhan Mehta, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; C. G. Krishnadas Nair, HAL,

Bangalore; Azim Premji, WIPRO, Bangalore; T. Ramasamy, CLRI, Chennai; Placid Rodriguez, IGCAR, Kalpakkam; N. Balakrishnan, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and the Directors of IARI, Delhi and the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, Bangalore. Y. S. Rajan, the newly appointed Scientific Secretary to the Principal Scientific Adviser will be the member-secretary.

The committee which will be an advisory body will tender advice on science and technology policies and program and their implementation. For the first time the science academies and the associations of industries will be formally represented by their presidents.

Prime Minister commits more R&D funds

While addressing a gathering at the Kaiga-II Nuclear Power Station dedication ceremony, on 5 March 2000, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said (excerpts from his address follow):

As I flew over the Kaiga project site a little while ago, I saw the beauty of lush tropical forests surrounding the magnificent domes of the two nuclear power reactors. This is the India of my vision: a nation that preserves its heritage even while marching forward and embracing the latest in science and technology for rapid development.

This 220 MWe Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor is indigenously designed, meets the latest safety standards and has state-of-the-art technology, ... it is now synchronized to the grid. This success symbolizes India of the twenty-first century.

... Energy is an essential ingredient for rapid social and economic development. Our per capita energy consumption must be increased substantially before the benefits of growth can reach all parts of our country, including rural areas. ...

Having overcome technological challenges, it is time for us to cut costs. Technologies, to be widely accepted, should be economically competitive, lest they are edged out. I commend your efforts to reduce project gestation period to (about) five years. This will definitely cut costs and accelerate the progress of the nuclear power sector and I promise you my Government's full support.

Friends, science and technology should be harnessed for the welfare of humankind and not its destruction. Over the years, we followed a policy of restraint in the area of nuclear weapons. Finally, in May 1998 we were com-

pelled to exercise the nuclear option due to deterioration of the regional security environment. ...

I would urge our scientists to work with renewed vigor to master the emerging frontiers of technology so that we can defeat today's neocolonialism exercised through technology control.

My Government is committed to increase funding for research and development from one per cent of the GDP to two per cent in five years. I would like to assure the young talent of this country that my Government will fully support them in their efforts to make a career in science. For this purpose, we are preparing a plan to assure a guaranteed career profile for our young boys and girls, who are highly talented in science, right from the 10 + 2 stage, provided they opt for a career in research in India and live up to their initial promise.