

MEETING REPORTS

based measurements in validity of POLDER satellite data over southern Indian Ocean was also emphasized. K. V. Prasad (NRSA, Hyderabad) presented his work related to trace gas emission from biomass burning of secondary mixed deciduous forest estimates from satellite and ground-based measurements in the, Eastern Ghats area, Andhra Pradesh. Use of IRS-P4 OCM data and ground truth data to quantify a few trace gases during pre- and post-burning was presented. Different components of biomass combustion have been calculated and correlated with the satellite data, which was found to give good results.

In the technical session on 'Forest and agriculture', Indrani Chaudhary (SAC, Ahmedabad) demonstrated the use of

Radarsat data acquired in 24-days repeat cycle in monitoring different stages of rice crop growth. B. M. Singh (INRIMT, Dehra Dun) presented the utility and cost effectiveness of IRS III and PAN data in sodic land mapping of UP. M. S. Yadav (RSAC, Lucknow) presented the application of multi-date multi-stage monitoring of sodic lands in a part of Pratapgarh district, UP using remote sensing and GIS. Vegetation detection through remote sensing in extreme arid zone was presented by S. Kumar (CAZRI, Jodhpur). He brought out the limitations of remote sensing techniques for vegetation mapping, in particular in the desert land of western Rajasthan.

Mapping of planform cyclicality in an unstable reach of Sarda river using

remote sensing and GIS was presented by K. Rajarajan (RSAC, Lucknow), who described the use of multi-date satellite data in conjunction with GIS and its use in identifying and delineating river channel changes in the middle reach of the Sarda river. It was indeed encouraging to note that use of multi-date satellite data is being made in studying the dynamic aspects of river channels, which is the basic requirement while planning for river training measures leading to combat floods and erosion on the water.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

News from SAC-C

The second meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SAC-C) chaired by A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, was held on 3 November 2000 in New Delhi. It was poorly attended by members from the industry and thus sprang a few surprises. SAC-C is a body primarily for tendering advice on S&T policies and programmes of the Government of India and their implementation.

According to the official press release, the following items were considered in the above meeting. SAC-C recommended a programme of action by the government, for which it identified specific projects for developing 'critical technologies in the country with forward strategic thinking and with forward engineering'. SAC-C members were appraised of the India Millennium Mission-2020 (IMM-2020), wherein programmes have been 'worked out to transfer India into a developed nation within 20 years, focusing on wealth generation and wealth protection'. A report of the sub-committee, on private sector initiative in higher S&T education

is now finalized. The report, submitted to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, 'welcomes' private sector participation while suggesting 'some regulation to rule out purely market-driven structures for faculty, students and course contents'.

Another sub-committee report on 'all aspects of simplification of administrative and financial rules and procedures in scientific ministries, departments and institutions' has been prepared. Among the recommendations of this report are those for increasing the financial limits from the existing amounts, for approval by scientific ministerial departments and providing 'real' functional autonomy for R&D autonomous institutions and removal of 'blanket and routine budgetary' cuts inflicted on scientific institutions. For furthering scientific activity, 'mobility' of scientists would be encouraged. Approval time for sponsored research projects would be 'within a month' after peer review. A Science and Technology Audit Board would be formed in the C&AG's office and this would have in addition, two part-time

members nominated from the S&T community.

Women, in the S&T arena, also figured in a sub-committee report on 'maximal utilization of the human resource of women S&T personnel'. The report sent for approval to the Group of Ministers on S&T recommends the following:

1. Relaxation of age of recruitment of women S&T workers by 5 years, to allow them to rejoin and restart.
2. A provision for additional months of 'leave without pay', beyond 135 days of maternity leave.
3. Facilities for a good creche within the campus for infants and children up to 5 years.
4. Flexible working hours for women.
5. Husband and wife to be posted in the same station.
6. Transportation to be provided during late hours of work.
7. Special schemes to be initiated that are suitable for women.

Nirupa Sen