

for AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis for the use of impoverished people in the developing countries. This would give positive signals to multinational drug companies as well as small biotechnology start-ups that there is a market for malaria and TB vaccines, and money can be made in these areas as well. It was indicated that the Bill Gates Foundation is considering possible support for such a programme. He stressed that every country

has to define its own priorities. However, most governments either neglect this or set wrong priorities. Citing the example for AIDS control he stated that against the estimated demand of 7–10 billion US \$, the commitments so far are in the range of 1–2 billion. It was stressed by many speakers that for the new technologies, the governments should have a promotional and regulatory role, while delivery should be left to the private

sector. Besides the applications of nuclear technologies, the issues that came up are equally relevant to science and technology development, technology transfer and management. Additional information can be obtained from www.iaea.org/worldatom

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Russia's supercomputer follows PARAM-10000

Following India, Russia has developed a supercomputer MVS-1000, capable of 1 trillion operations per second. This new machine ranks 30th in the list of the world's 500 most powerful supercomputers.

The capability to make Teraflops machines already exists in the Centre for the Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune. The PARAM-10000 supercomputer was exported by C-DAC last year to the Institute for Computer

Aided Design (ICAD), Moscow under an Indian export licence (India also has control over high-end computers developed by agencies such as C-DAC). Its present 100 Gigaflops capability is upgradeable to Teraflops.

Russia's supercomputer is housed in the Russian Academy of Sciences. This Russian Government-funded \$ 10 million computer started functioning in 1998 and was supported by President Putin, the Ministry of Industry, Science & Techno-

logy, the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Education and the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Studies. The institutes which participated in the project included the Keldysh Institute of Applied Sciences, the State Enterprise Quant, and the Interdepartmental Supercomputer Centre.

Plans for a \$ 20 million MVS-5000, which would be five times as fast as MVS-1000, could be realized by 2003.

Change of Guard

Rajagopala Chidambaram has recently assumed the mantle of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India. He takes charge from A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. A dinner was hosted by Murli Manohar Joshi, Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, Science and Technology (S&T) and Ocean Development in New Delhi on 30 November 2001 to bid farewell to Abdul Kalam. The dinner was attended by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, several scientists and distinguished guests. On this occasion, in his 'before dinner' speech, Joshi said, Abdul Kalam would be using his expertise in many areas and has not left science, calling it 'the beginning of seeding of many Kalam's'. Kalam, he added, would be working in the cause of science with school and college students.

In his speech, Abdul Kalam dwelt on the oft-repeated question posed to him 'what are you going to do?'. Kalam said: 'I have a vision for myself that between August 2001 and August 2003, I must meet 100,000 high school students. From August 2001 up to now I have met

16,000 students'. The students have a lot of imagination, I wish to share with them and ignite their minds for the national development of science and technology. He recounted meeting a fifteen-year-old girl, who enquired of 'Uncle Kalam' as to which of his endeavours and successes had given him happiness. Successes, such as putting the first satellite into orbit using SLV3 rocket, Agni missile or the nuclear mission. To this query Kalam wanted to give the truth and said 'all of it had given happiness and beyond that a bliss'. He also cited a question asked of him in Tripura – 'Why do scientists not visit our State?'. Kalam said, 'we should answer this'. He also said that his own website brought up several comments. One of these was from a young person in Atlanta, United States of America who said, 'I can sing the song of India when my country gets capacity to put sanctions on any country it wants'. Kalam said, 'I want to capture this imaginative spirit'. There was a recital by Sarod Maestro Biswjit Roy Chowdhury in honour of Abdul Kalam who is known also for his love for music.

Murli Manohar Joshi while speaking of the new Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India said he hoped that 'S&T would be further strengthened in the country'. He also added that the new millennium final draft policy, a vision of India's S&T policy was now available on various Academy websites and this would be finalized after 8 December 2001.

Speaking exclusively to *Current Science*, Chidambaram said, 'India is too big a country to absent itself from any field of S&T. However its investment in any field, at any point of time is a matter of wisdom'. His 3-fold priorities would be to attract young people to careers in science, to achieve 'techno-foresight' (to lend support to technologies relevant to the country such as rural agro-based food industry) and finally give further impetus for basic research.

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