

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visits BARC

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“I am delighted to be here today. We live in an age in which human knowledge is growing at an exponential pace. It is a pace that was unthinkable only a few decades ago. Human knowledge and science and technology are the new determinants of national development. In the gigantic task of national development and nation building that is before us, the members of the BARC fraternity have played an outstanding role, and I salute you for it. I thank you on behalf of the nation for your efforts.

It is therefore a pleasure for me to speak to such a distinguished gathering of scientists today. This great national enterprise that BARC takes its name after the Father of India’s Atomic Energy Programme – Dr. Homi Bhabha, a great visionary and a great patriot who laid the foundations of a self-reliant nuclear programme for India. I pay homage to his memory and I salute his vision.

The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre has gained national and international recognition as the mother institution of our Atomic Energy Programme. BARC has been instrumental in the birth of a whole host of DAE institutions, ranging from cutting edge R&D to commercial operations. The BARC Training School has become the primary source of human resource talent for the entire Department of Atomic Energy.

Our nuclear programme has benefited from a generation of outstanding scientists and engineers. We recall with gratitude the contributions made by my friend and colleague, Dr Homi Sethna, Dr.P.K. Iyengar, Dr. M.R. Srinivasan, Dr Chidambaram and the late

Dr. Raja Ramanna. Dr. Kakodkar is carrying on this great tradition and I compliment him and his colleagues for their dedicated work. All these outstanding scientists have been nurtured by this great centre of scientific excellence. This is a fitting example of how great institutions



** Address of the Prime Minister at Trombay on June 4, 2005*

and outstanding individuals reinforce each other, a model we must replicate elsewhere in our country, in the management of our affairs and in our academic institutions.

The Department of Atomic Energy, which marked the Golden Jubilee of its establishment last year, has made tremendous strides ranging from fundamental scientific research to development and commercial applications of nuclear energy. Our Scientists have—and I say it with great pride—mastered all aspects of nuclear fuel cycle technology. This is an achievement for which the nation is grateful to them. They have also achieved high standards in safety and environment management. Nuclear technology developed in this Centre has found applications in industry, health, agriculture, food preservation, urban waste management and desalination.

It is a matter of national pride that India is among a select group of countries with advanced capabilities to utilize the entire gamut of fuel cycle operations. The technology to recover plutonium from irradiated nuclear fuel and use it to produce nuclear power in thermal as well as in fast reactors, making use of our vast thorium reserves, is critical to Dr Bhabha's vision of a phased but unconstrained development of our nuclear power programme. We remain committed to doing all that is necessary to realize Dr. Bhabha's vision. Our Government will ensure that the resource and capability base that BARC represents will be nurtured to meet our security needs in the years ahead.

To ensure our energy security in future, we must recognize that nuclear energy is an important component of our overall energy basket. We cannot allow energy constraints to retard our economic and social growth. Nuclear energy is a

clean and safe alternative to our dependence on fossil fuels. It is therefore imperative for the country to embark on a major expansion of nuclear energy. Our objective is to generate at least 20,000 MW of nuclear power by the year 2020 and we are determined to achieve this target.

Such an expansion will require a focused national effort. However, when we succeed, it will provide considerable scope for the establishment of nuclear power plants through international collaboration. We hope that countries with advanced nuclear power industries will come forward to make use of the growing opportunities in India for cooperation in civilian nuclear energy. This is not just in India's interest, but indeed in the interests of the international community as a whole, worried as we all are by global warming and all that goes with it.

India is a responsible nuclear power. While we are determined to utilize fully the advanced technologies in our possession – both civilian and strategic, we are also prepared for a constructive dialogue with the international community to remove hindrances to a free flow of nuclear materials, technology and know-how. Our non-proliferation and export control credentials are impeccable and have been further strengthened through a comprehensive legislative action against WMD proliferation that our Parliament passed only a few weeks ago.

Our nuclear programme has reached global standards of excellence. Our scientific and technological achievements have given us the will and confidence to explore enhanced interactions and exchanges with the outside world. Artificial barriers and technology denial regimes are an anachronism in

the age of globalization, and must be progressively dismantled. Given our scientific credentials we can add value to international cooperative endeavours. India would like to participate in all efforts to find alternatives to traditional sources of energy.

The most valuable resource in any scientific endeavour is its human resource base. This Centre must continue to attract the best scientific talent in the country. I am glad that the Department of Atomic Energy is encouraging greater student involvement in its research programmes and is strengthening linkages with our university system.

I am happy to announce today that the Department's proposal to set up a Dr. Homi Bhabha National Institute has been approved. This will bring together ten premier institutions all over the country under a single research-driven framework. This will help ensure that our scientists and our scientific establishments remain at the forefront of the pursuit of excellence, comparable with the best global standards.

In conclusion, let me once again convey my deep appreciation for your dedication and your deep commitment to our nation's growth. The nation is proud of the achievements of our scientists and technologists working dedicatedly here to develop our capability in atomic energy. In this journey of excellence, I assure you of the sustained support of the Government and our people. You should remain in the forefront of the national scientific endeavour. That is my prayer, that is my hope. May your path be blessed."