

~~Check Against Delivered~~  
As Delivered

**Speech by the Prime Minister on the occasion of National Technology Day  
(May 26, 2010)**

It gives me great pleasure to be here today to participate in the National Technology Day 2010 function. At the outset I wish to heartily congratulate all the award winners for their achievements, for their sincerity and for their spirit of national service. I wish them even greater success and glory in the years ahead.

The National Technology Day symbolizes the importance the Government attaches to the development of the country's technological capabilities. The path to India's emergence as a technological power has not been easy. Our scientists and engineers faced many odds and came out with flying colours. The nation is proud of their achievements.

Our scientific capabilities grew on the strong foundations that were laid soon after independence. Our founding fathers realised that if India had to become truly self reliant, it would have to invest in scientific infrastructure. In the decades following independence, scarce resources were invested not only in building physical infrastructure but in developing world class scientific manpower that ranks among the best in the world. We are reaping the benefits of those far-sighted decisions.

Today we celebrate the achievements of an important pillar of our scientific establishment. I commend all the scientists and engineers of the DRDO who have contributed to strengthening our defence capabilities in different areas.

The DRDO has made its mark in diverse fields, ranging from advanced missiles, battle tanks, combat aircraft, electronic warfare, radar and communication systems, materials technology, armaments and ammunitions. The initial operational clearance for the Tejas light combat aircraft is scheduled for later this year, and will include multiple variants. The country's main battle tank, Arjun, has undergone successful evaluation and is under production. Several life support technologies developed by DRDO have helped to enhance the health and operational efficiency of our troops in extreme conditions.

Various missiles developed by DRDO have been inducted into our Armed Forces. New capabilities have recently been acquired for the BRAHMOS supersonic cruise missile. The successful launch of the Agni 2 missile earlier this month is yet another landmark in our strategic defence preparedness.

I would also like to acknowledge the spin-off benefits of DRDO's work on society at large. The simple and cost effective diagnostic kit for the H1N1 virus is a commendable effort which could have widespread societal applications. Technologies developed by DRDO for meeting fresh food requirements of our troops in remote high altitude areas like Ladakh have led to economic benefits for the local population.

While lauding these achievements, we should use the occasion of the National Technology Day to introspect on how we wish to see this sector develop in the years ahead. In many areas, we have moved fast, but our competitors have often moved faster. It is a fact our current level of self-reliance in Defence R&D is low and needs to be stepped up significantly.

Technology is changing at a very rapid pace. Globalization has resulted in changes in the rules of business. Only the most competitive and resilient companies can expect to survive in the global market. We must make sure we have the capacity to compete, to innovate and to deliver. If our systems are strong and robust, the world will respect us and be willing to work with us. This was the lesson we learnt in the process of negotiating the civil nuclear deal with the international community.

If we have to stay ahead of the curve, as we must, we must be open to new ideas. We must be able to learn from our experiences. We should be able to acknowledge and learn from our setbacks. It is a fact that some projects have been delayed and others have faced difficulties during

Dr. Siddhartha

MS

gagan @  
assistant  
com

operational induction. It is essential that DRDO learn from these experiences and work more closely with the Armed Forces, as well as the industry.

We should develop the capacity of making the right technology choices, of ensuring synergy between research and product development and of focusing on critical technologies of the future. India is in the forefront of knowledge based industries and we should harness this strength to meet our defence needs.

I am happy to note that DRDO has developed fruitful partnerships with the private sector. Greater participation of our industry in the defence sector is a must. The Government will encourage public-private partnerships as a catalyst towards this objective. We must use the offset scheme in defence procurement to fill the technological gaps in our capabilities.

I would also encourage our research and development organizations and laboratories to develop a closer interface with academia. It is essential that we motivate and incentivize our youth to focus on research activities. Development of advanced technologies is not a one-off event, nor can it be achieved in a day. An integrated approach to building a broad base of scientific talent, production capacity and a long-term vision are key elements to success.

I am glad to note that the Ministry of Defence is examining the recommendations of the External Review Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Professor P. Rama Rao on the functioning of the DRDO.

I firmly believe that if we put our mind to it, there is no reason why our successes in the software cannot be replicated in the Defence sector. We must strive for leadership in research and development in defence technologies. I would urge all of you assembled here today to think big and to act with a strong sense of self-belief, nationalistic spirit and the desire to excel.

I am confident that our scientists and technologists will be equal to the task and be able to convert challenges into opportunities. Your efforts will help in building a strong and self-reliant India. Our Armed Forces, who are the pride of the nation, and the citizens of our country deserve nothing less.

My best wishes once again to all members of DRDO family. I assure you of the government's full support in your endeavours.

Jai Hind.