

Manmohan Singh for development of eco-friendly technologies

Says nuclear, solar energy can make important contributions to energy security

P. Sunderarajan

VISAKHAPATNAM: Emphasising the grave challenges posed by climate change, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday highlighted the role of nuclear energy as an efficient and clean alternative source of energy.

Inaugurating the 95th session of the Indian Science Congress here, he identified the development of new technologies for energy conservation and renewable energy sources as "the most important area" for sustainable development. In this regard, he identified nuclear, solar and clean coal technology as the most suitable alternative sources of energy.

"I would like to see a concerted effort being made in the development of solar energy by our scientific, technological and business communities. In the longer run, atomic energy can also make an important contribution to energy security."

Restrictive regimes

Without directly mentioning the India-United States nuclear deal, he said, "It is in this perspective which has led us to seek the removal of restrictive regimes, which prevent India from participation



TOWARDS GREENER OPTIONS: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with M.S. Swaminathan (right) after he presented a gold medal to the agriculture scientist at the 95th Indian Science Congress in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. Indian Science Congress Association general president R. Ramamurthi (left) and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy are with them. - PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

in international trade in civilian nuclear materials, equipment and technologies."

The speech assumes significance as the Centre is facing stiff opposition from the Left parties in implementing the nuclear deal. The follow-up

steps in the form of firming up a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and seeking exemptions from the 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group has been delayed owing to differences between the govern-

ment and its Left allies.

Dr. Singh called upon the science and technology community to tap the traditional knowledge base of the country, apart from drawing upon modern science and technology, for the development of

affordable and scalable environment-friendly technologies.

"How do we pursue higher rates of income growth while being mindful of our natural resource constraints and concern for the environment?"

This is a scientific challenge as much as it is a challenge for our economic policymakers. It is a challenge for world science and a special one for Indian science."

He said that besides the energy sector, there was a need to develop such technologies on a war-footing in the areas of food production and utilisation and conservation of water, manufacturing technologies, mass transport systems, and building and construction technology.

On food production, he said there was a need to undertake a major revitalisation of research in agricultural universities.

He said that in the energy sector, there was a need to reduce the energy intensity of the economy and promote the use of energy efficient technologies, such as clean coal technology.

On the manufacturing sector, he regretted that it was not yet very efficient in the utilisation of natural resources, especially land and power.

He reiterated the commitment of the government to invest more in education, particularly in science, and urged the academic community to come forward with innovative ideas to overcome the shortage of good teachers