

## Karnataka

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### **Arunachalam: tap scientists for ideas to solve nation's problems**

Special Correspondent

*Concern expressed over imbalance in development in various fields*

— Photo: K. Gopinathan



**Discussing ideas: (From left) Scientists V.S. Arunachalam and K. Kasturirangan, MP, Governor Rameshwar Thakur and B.K. Chandrashekar, EGGT Managing Trustee, at the discussion-meeting of the 'Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Series on Technology and Society' in Bangalore on Tuesday.**

BANGALORE: If you think that India lacks people who can help find a solution to its energy crisis, think again. U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu, who is a distinguished scientist and co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics, has written to some scientists in India, including V.S. Arunachalam seeking suggestions on energy security for his country.

Disclosing this to presspersons on the sidelines of a meeting on the "Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Series on Technology and Society" organised by the National Institute of Advanced Studies and Environment and Good Governance Trust (EGGT) here on Tuesday, Dr. Arunachalam said he was yet to respond to the letter. "I am sure that such letters would have been written to thousands of other scientists," he said and wondered why India could not follow such a system of getting ideas from its own scientists.

Earlier, delivering a lecture, "As time goes by", Dr. Arunachalam recounted how a 12-page note drafted by him to draw the attention of the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, on important scientific issues became the core document for the science policy.

Expressing concern over the huge imbalance in development, he said it was a matter of shame that on the one hand the country could successfully undertake a moon mission, while on the other it had a large number of non-literates due to lack of educational facilities.

#### **Synergy sought**

B.K. Chandrashekar, former Legislative Council Chairman and EGGT Managing Trustee, expressed concern that the groundwater situation in Karnataka was acute and was in no way better than Rajasthan, which has largest tract of drought-prone area in the country. He called for a synergy among technologies, legislation and regulatory measures for effectively tackling problems.

The discussion series, which began on Tuesday, will be held at district level to create awareness among people about various issues.

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Innovative farmer Devangi Prafullachandra took exception to the trend of using a common methodology for tackling agricultural issues in different regions in the State. He stressed the need for adopting a region-specific approach depending upon rainfall, weather and other local factors.

He expressed concern that though there were plenty of appropriate farm technologies, they were not reaching farmers because of lack of access.

Agricultural scientist Dwarkinath called for launching a mission to help poor and dry-land farmers who were struggling to earn a livelihood.

The Green Revolution technology had not reached the poor and marginal farmers at all, he pointed out while stressing the need to cater for their needs at least now, he said.

#### Renewable energy

J. Srinivasan from the Centre for Atmospherics and Ocean Sciences of the Indian Institute of Science, who spoke on "Renewable energy technologies", said there were clear indications of solar energy costs dropping from the present level of over Rs. 15 a unit to Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 a unit in about 10 years.

He said it was possible to handle the country's power requirements by setting up solar power panels on just 0.3 per cent of the total geographic area of Rajasthan, which has high solar power intensity.

Governor Rameshwar Thakur hailed the progressive vision of Rajiv Gandhi.

NIAS Director K. Kasturirangan and Central Food Technological Research Institute Director V. Prakash spoke.

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