



Shri KC Pant, Raksha Mantri inaugurating the Conference. Seated (from l to r) are: Shri SS Murthy, Chairman, Organising Committee and Director DESIDOC; Shri Bansal, Distinguished Scientist and CCR&D; Dr. Sam Pitroda, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Technology Missions and Late Shri PG Krishnamurthy, Convener.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATABASES AND NETWORKS

The Defence Scientific Information & Documentation Centre (DESIDOC) organised an International Conference on Bibliographic Databases and Networks during 22-25 February 1989 at New Delhi. About 330 delegates including about 30 foreign experts participated in the Conference. An exhibition of current information technology products and services was also organised along with the Conference. Shri KC Pant, Defence Minister inaugurated both the Conference and the exhibition. Dr. Sam Pitroda, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Technology Missions delivered the keynote address on the occasion.

In organising the Conference, DESIDOC was assisted by the Association of Government Librarians and Information Specialists (AGLIS). The Conference was co-sponsored by the Dept. of Science & Technology; Aeronautics Research & Development Board (ARDB); Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL); Dept. of Atomic Energy; Dept. of Biotechnology;

Dept. of Electronics; Dept. of Science and Technology; National Informatics Centre (NIC); National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT); and Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC).

Only invited papers from the Indian and foreign specialists having expertise in planning, design, implementation and/or operation of databases and networks were presented in four technical sessions devoted to: Planning and Development of Databases, Operation of Databases, Planning and Development of Networks, and Operation of Networks. These sessions were chaired respectively by Dr. FG Kilgour, Founder Trustee of OCLC, USA; Prof S Sampath, Chairman, Recruitment and Assessment Centre, DRDO, New Delhi; Shri SPS Mahendru, General Manager, CMC Ltd., New Delhi; Shri YL Agarwal, Chairman & Managing Director, TCIL, New Delhi; and Dr. N Seshagiri, Director General, NIC, New Delhi.

Lively discussion followed the presentation of papers. There was also a panel discussion on the problems faced in the implementation and operation of databases and networks. The panelists were: Mr. Barry L Burton, Hong Kong Polytechnic; Dr. FG Kilgour, Founder Trustee, OCLC, USA ; and Dr. Roger Flynn, University of Pittsburg, USA; and Shri MS Narayanan, Director, ASG, DRDO. Shri YN Reddy, Director Computer Centre, Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking moderated the discussions.

Shri SL Bansal, Distinguished Scientist and Chief Controller Research & Development, in his Presidential address emphasized that information centres should devote special attention to the use of new computing and communication technologies for communicating with the users for ascertaining their information needs and providing them exhaustive information through resource sharing and use of national and international networks at reasonable cost. He mentioned



Shri KC Pant, Raksha Mantri opening the exhibition on information technology products and services.

Inaugurating the Conference, the Defence Minister said that India was on the threshold of a revolutionary change in its economic and social life, largely occasioned by rapid advances in information technology. He advised the information scientists and database managers to use technology as a tool to meet the needs of the end users. He further stressed that since technology knows no geographical boundaries, scientists and engineers should modify these technologies to suit the Indian milieu, especially in rural areas so that the poor harvest the dividends accruing from adoption of the new technologies.

that the network connecting all technical information centres (TICs) of DRDO, as envisaged by DESIDOC, was under active consideration of DRDO HQrs.

Dr. Sam Pitroda, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Technology Missions, delivered the keynote address. Highlighting the importance of information in the present day life, he emphasized that information is the basis for any action in the government. Merging of communication and computer technologies had given a new thrust to the tasks of organising, structuring, transmitting and manipulating information to derive a variety of

inputs. No technology had such an impact as information technology, he opined. He informed that the government was already seized of the problem and that projects like Vikram, INDONET, RAILNET, NICNET, etc. were at various stages of implementation or operation. "The programme of interlinking over 150 university libraries through a dedicated network is on the anvil. He stressed the need for linking of information systems with the people to harness the power of information for better and expeditious gains. He advised adjustment to new work environment, work culture and work standards and described manpower as an asset for India which must be put to maximum use.

Earlier, Shri SS Murthy, Chairman of the Organising Committee and Director, DESIDOC welcomed Shri KC Pant, Dr. Sam Pitroda, Shri SL Bansal and other distinguished guests and delegates, and explained the objectives of the Conference. He said that a number of online networks are coming up in India, some of them being already in operation. He hoped that the experts presenting their papers at the Conference would provide useful guidelines and directions of value in the planning and establishment of networks that are contemplated or are on the anvil. He also mentioned that although many of the databases operating in several countries hold huge volumes of data or information, they have low retrieval efficiency, as the indexing and information retrieval aspects have not been given adequate attention. He hoped the Conference would also discuss in detail aspects like vocabulary control, retrieval efficiency, etc. in addition to other aspects.

Dr. S Ramachandran, Secretary, Dept. of Biotechnology in his valedictory address, advocated the creation and updating of databases and making them accessible not only to experts and decision makers but also to industry and common users. He said that India is well advanced in adoption of information



Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia playing on the flute.

technology in comparison not only to developing countries but developed countries as well. He felt that many people in India are satisfied with limited information, but if we are to be competitive at global level, we must know first of all what is happening in the rest of the world. He stressed the importance of the supply of reliable and processed information, as information has become a marketable commodity and plays a vital role in decision-making.

The four-day Conference was interspersed with two cultural programmes in the evenings, one on the opening day in which Shri Siva Prasad gave a novel performance through whistle music at Azad Bhavan Auditorium. Another programme on the same evening was Kuchipudi dance by the duo Shri Jaya Rama Rao and Smt. Vanashree Rao. On 23 February 1989 at Ashok Hotel Convention Hall, celebrated flutist, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia gave his performance following Hindustani classical music performance by the well-known vocalist Smt Krishna Bist.