

Kakodkar (Nuke chief ) in freedom cry

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New Delhi, Feb. 18 (PTI): Top nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar today said India remained dependent on foreign technologies and called for plumbing the country's "own knowledge pool" if it has to survive global competition.

The Atomic Energy Commission chief, who had stirred a controversy with his recent comments against last July's nuclear deal with the US, said India has been making "important contributions" to the global knowledge pool for ages.

"I often wonder why," he added, "with ... such a capability for original thinking, we remain vulnerable to foreign dependencies."

Kakodkar, who was speaking at the Indira Gandhi National Open University, said the country could never become a global technology leader unless it achieved leadership at least in some areas "where we have strengths".

He pointed out that while the new knowledge, which is the output of basic research, is shared globally, "sharing of technology is not without constraints and costs".

"There are barriers arising out of commercial, strategic, political and such other considerations," he said. "Building technologies out of our own knowledge pool within the country is thus of crucial importance."

The call to reduce dependence on foreign technologies follows the shadowboxing between the Prime minister's Office and the country's nuclear establishment over the separation of civilian and military nuclear facilities as part of the July 18 deal.

In a recent interview, Kakodkar had said that putting fast breeder reactors on the civilian list would not be in India's strategic interest, both for long-term energy security and for maintaining nuclear weapons capabilities.

He also felt that any such move would push India into another "import trap" and make it dependent on supplies of imported enriched uranium.

Today, at his convocation address at the university, Kakodkar said education had to be relevant to the needs of society.

"Our higher education system must empower our youth to feel confident about addressing the issues of development based on scientific innovations and inputs tailored to the needs of our society. We should prepare experts rather than just activists to carry the development forward," he said.