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PM pays tribute to Professor Dr Abdus Salam



** Says Dr Salam worked for promotion of science in Third World*

** Expresses pleasure over achievements of COMSATS*

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday paid rich tribute to Pakistani Nobel laureate in Physics and one of the most distinguished names in the history of science Professor Dr Abdus Salam, saying the great scientist worked all his life for promotion of science and technology in the Third World countries to solve their problems of poverty, ignorance and backwardness.

"We are fortunate to adopt the vision and passion of our great genius, Professor Dr Abdus Salam, a Nobel laureate in Physics," the prime minister said while speaking at the second meeting of the COMSATS Commission.

He expressed his pleasure over achievements of the COMSATS, saying the commission had strived hard to carry out a noble mission for the past seventeen years and succeeded in achieving commendable results.

Gilani said the credit for realising the great dream of Salam and other distinguished founding fathers of COMSATS went to Benazir Bhutto, adding that the former prime minister not only welcomed the idea of establishing COMSATS but also provided solid political and financial support to host the COMSATS Secretariat in Islamabad on a permanent basis. He expressed resolve that his governments would significantly enhance awareness about the importance of science and technology for social and economic development and growth of the country and the nation. "Let this resolve be seen through our efforts of further strengthening the COMSATS in coming years," he added.

Gilani said COMSATS had charted out its strategy and action plan for the next five years, adding that the coordinating council of the commission would consider the plan next month. "We need to ensure the long-term availability of sufficient funds for COMSATS to implement its enhanced programme for our common benefit," he stated.

"For this purpose, I would like to propose for your consideration the establishment of an endowment fund of \$10 million with input from the member countries and international donor organisations," the prime minister said, announcing that if the proposal was agreed in principle during the current meeting, the government of Pakistan was ready to contribute \$1 million towards the fund.

Gilani noted that the twenty-first century was going to be a decisive century in defining the shape of the world. Uncontrolled population increases in the developing countries, dilemmas of energy and industrial growth versus climate hazards, weaknesses in global economic management system, global conflicts, rising costs of food, health and

education, widening gaps of trust and confidence between the South and the North were some of the major challenges that would influence the course of our destinies and the world of our future generations, he said.

The prime minister also held a meeting with Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, who called on him at the Prime Minister's House. During the meeting, Gilani said the government of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had carried out massive development work in Azad Kashmir during the last four years, which spoke of the democratic government's commitment to welfare and development of people. The prime minister recalled his last month visit to Mirpur, where he attended the groundbreaking ceremonies of Meeran Shah Bridge and a new campus of Mirpur Science and Technology University, which would cumulatively incur a cost of around Rs 6 billion.