

# Kalam: time has come to debate clemency issue

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**Bangalore:** India's inspiration machine and former President of India APJ Abdul Kalam touches 80 next month. "I will be entering into my 81st orbit," he said in his inimitable style. It was almost midnight when he sat down for an interview with The Times of India at the palatial VIP suite in Raj Bhavan. He just finished having his dinner -- a glass of butter milk and a masala dosa. Excerpts:

## Are you for clemency?

When I was the President, I suggested to Parliament that they must debate the issue. The time has come to do that. I cannot say yes or no to your question. As an individual - as Kalam - I feel that no human being has the power or right to take away the life of another. But as former President of India, I will say the country must debate the issue.

## India is witnessing a massive movement against corruption. What are your views on the Lokpal and Anna Hazare? Will things change?

Ours is a beautiful country. The Anna Hazare movement was a communication channel for the entire country on a deep-rooted menace called corruption. But bringing in laws will put people in jail. That's all. We need to have citizens with impeccable integrity, only then will any law work.

Recently at Mussorie, while addressing 150 new IAS probationers, I asked them to take an oath that they will work with integrity and succeed with integrity. A young IAS woman asked me what if the system around

I think there is civilization on other planets and we would be able to make contact if we could reach where light reaches. Astronomy is a fascinating subject. Students should be enabled to imagine such things on their own with use of cultural knowledge and international exposure. It is the teacher who should be pioneering this thought into students.

**Former President APJ Abdul Kalam** | SPEAKING AT THE INAUGURATION OF GALAXY FORUM FOR INDIA 2011 IN BANGALORE ON THURSDAY.



her and her superiors was corrupt. To that my reply was: There will be hurdles, you may not get good postings, you will be shunted out but then at the end of it, you would have to build a brand for yourself.

## So all individuals should become a brand by themselves?

Yes. A brand of great integrity and purpose. Build a circle of integrity around you and don't allow anyone to penetrate. When you eliminate the idea of 'what can I get' from each one's mind, then we have handled the menace called corruption.

## The law seems to be catching up with the corrupt. So is there hope?

Definitely. This country has a great future. We have gone through more difficult times. I am confident that the bad elements in the society will be eliminated sooner or later. If there is hope, it is here in India.

## Have you paid or offered bribe anytime in your life?

Not once. I have worked for 50 years in government, including 20 years in Isro, another 20 years in DRDO and the remaining 10 years holding various positions. I have dealt with lots of money and power. I have not been approached for any wrongdoing. Like I said earlier, if the circle of integrity is firm around you, then no one will dare come near you. It's a conviction that we have to make.

## As someone who has been pushing for focus on education, do you think India will meet the Millennium Development Goals?

We are on the right path. But as I have always said merely producing literates is not enough. Is there righteousness in all those whom we educate? Literacy should be a mission with a purpose. That's my belief and I am confident that India will achieve that.

# No clean Airce Says Investigative

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The CBI on Thursday said it had not given any clean chit to former telecom minister Dayanidhi Maran in the case relating to alleged arm-twisting of C Sivasankaran to sell his stake in Aircel to Malaysia-based Maxis group, which had close links with the ex-minister's family and TV channel.

Senior advocate K K Venugopal told a bench of Justices G S Singhvi and A K Ganguly that the agency's last status report before the court was categorical that though it had not laid its hand on evidence relating to arm-twisting of Sivasankaran, there was undue delay in allotment of spectrum prior to Maxis group taking over Aircel.

"Inquiry so far has not revealed any material about coercion for sale of Sivasankaran's stake in Aircel. But, the investigations have revealed there was a deliber-

# Wheat ex

**New Delhi:** The government, on Thursday, decided to lift the four year-old ban on ports but prohibited onion exports to rising prices.

The decision to open wheat export by the empowered Group of (eGoM) on food, headed by finance minister Manmohan Singh, in the wake of recession and storage problem.

"Wheat and non-basmati rice export been put under the Open General License (OGL)," commerce and industry minister Anand Sharma told reporters here.

However, the foodgrains export subject to quantitative restrictions of 100,000 tonnes each.