

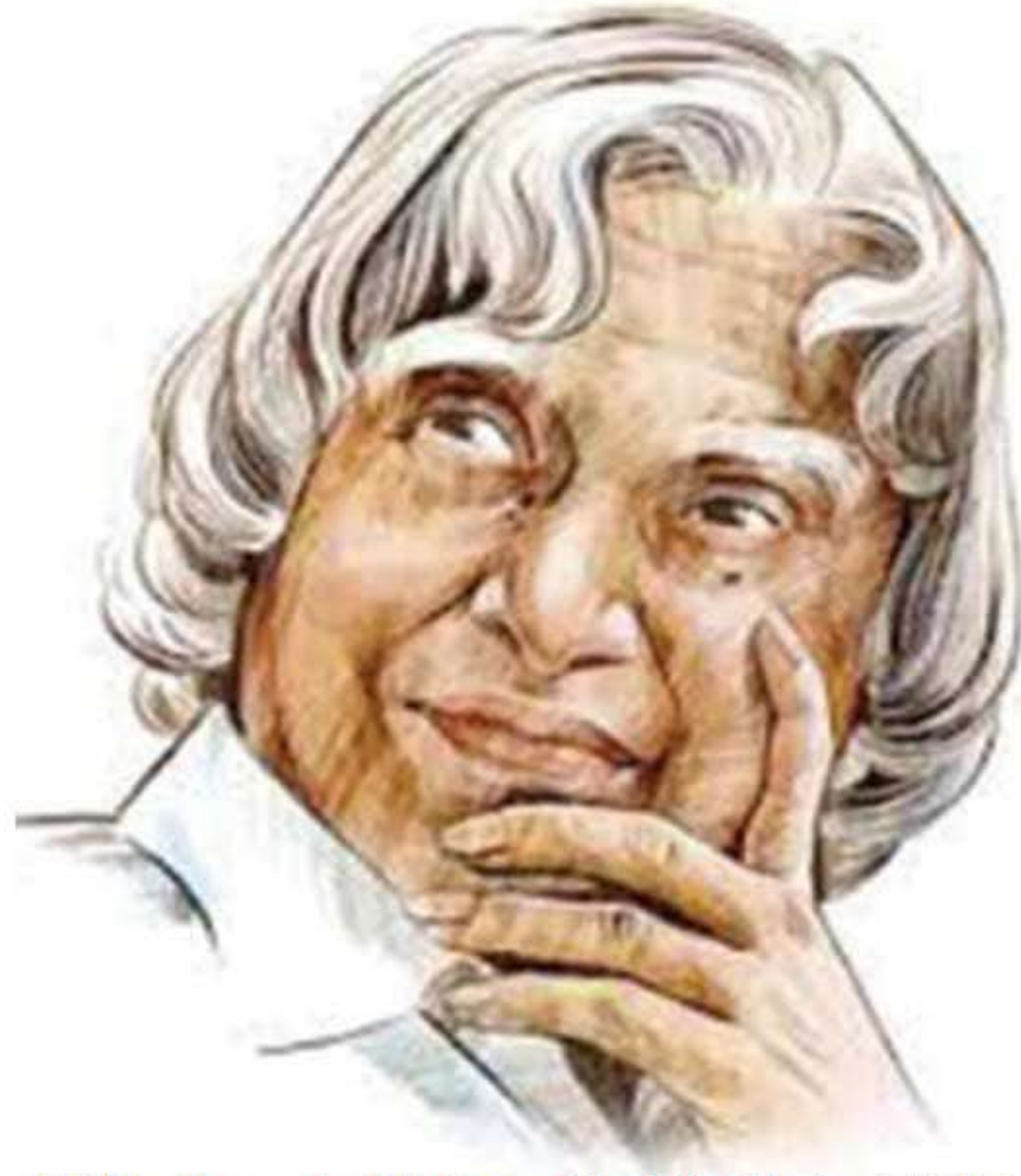
EVER IGNITING OUR MINDS

ON July 27, the death- anniversary of Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, A glorious son of Mother India, the 11th President of India, the whole nation will pay glowing tributes to him, recalling proudly the saga of his noble, dedicated services to the country.

Though seven years have passed since Kalam left us, he is always enshrined in the hearts of all Indians as the great scientist, noble teacher, inspiring orator, profound visionary, patriotic leader, exemplary guide to the youth and the People's President.

Born in a poor family as a boat-owner's son of Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, Kalam, with his stealy determination, life-long dedication, robust optimism and ceaseless industry, blossomed into India's most distinguished space-scientist and missile man of global renown.

As a rocket- technocrat, he was deeply involved in the manufacture and launch of S.L.V.3, Rohini, Menaka, Aryabhata and Bhaskara,



fulfilling the needs of Indian space-technology. To realise the country's defence needs, as a missile technologist, Kalam strove hard to make the country self-sufficient and strong and under his efficient stewardship, the most power-

ful missiles like Agni, Prithvi, Nag, Akash and Trishul were devised, manufactured and launched quite successfully.

All his life, Kalam pursued great and sublime dreams relentlessly, optimistically and determinedly and real-

ised them quite successfully. Whatever dreams and visions Kalam nurtured were not personal, but noble and sublime ones aiming at developing the nation scientifically and technologically.

Kalam was religious to the core of his heart with firm faith in the divine. But his was not the narrow-minded, orthodox religious outlook as he embraced all religions, assimilating the essence and true spirit of religion. He was engaged in a unique experiment of blending his religion and science when he voices "I had to test my belief in God and see if it could fit into the Matrix of scientific thinking." ("Wings of Fire")

Quite aware of the potential, hopes and aspirations of Indian youth, Kalam through his interactions with thousands of schoolchildren, college and university youth, inspired them to make them strong-minded, self-confident, optimistic and industrious and nurture great dreams, pursue them optimistically and real-

ize them with hard work.

Kalam is the author of books such as Wings of Fire, Ignited Minds, Indomitable Spirit, Learning how to Fly, Forge your Future, Turning Points etc.,

from which the youth can draw immense inspiration for the guidance of their life, to mould their character and develop their personality. Here, I wish to share with the readers, my most memorable experience about Kalam. In 2004, I received a letter of appreciation from Kalam for my poem 'An Angel dreaming of glorious India' (composed on Kalam) sent to him (Rashtrapati Bhavan). The letter bears not his fascimile, but the hand-written signature of Kalam. Later, I received two more letters of appreciation from him (Rashtrapati Bhavan) for my literary works sent to him. His prompt and positive responses testify to his humility and greatness.

- Dr Venugopala Rao Kaki,
Kakinada