

edges of our science through hand-on demonstration and in-depth discussion with the experts.

The meeting drew a high number of decision-makers with a lot of discussions amongst the participants. Attendance at the paper presentation session was excellent with standing-room-only crowds noted at several sessions. Feedback from attendees was exceedingly positive with frequent complaints of too many good papers being presented at the same time and not enough time left to visit all the exhibitions.

Large crowd visited India Pavilion and there were numerous queries on hydrocarbon potential of Indian basin. The poster session on Petroleum Geology of India organized by ONGC, presented the evolution of different Indian basin and its hydrocarbon potential in detail. Considered an integral part of the North America, the International pavilion was being undertaken for the first time at an International venue and it was a grand success.

There was a Virtual Cafe in the International pavilion where people run the browser for WWW, reviewed E and P venture of different countries and looked at the business trend. Products range from mapping software to integrated work-stations, well services to geologic area studies, computer hardware to seismic data acquisition and interpretation were displayed.

The city officials of Vienna welcomed the attendees at a reception organized by Lord Mayors' office. Everyone enjoyed the beautiful neo-gothic architecture of the City Hall

amidst the traditional music of Austria.

Austria, the country of congresses and Vienna in particular, exemplified very well what is behind the conference theme — East Meets West — exchange of ideas and technical expertise, an access to new markets and opportunities to develop a new business of both the world.

A stroll around the exhibition hall at the convention demonstrates the profound and pervasive impact that computers and information technology has had on our lives. Computers control the flow of information. The flow of information is the source of power and freedom. So, the computer that might control us actually frees us. There is an old saying from the Spanish bull ring: The role of the bull is to be brave, the horse to be beautiful, and the man to be master. We must remain masters of our machines and we will definitely succeed.

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**Annual General Conference
of the International Atomic
Energy Agency (IAEA),
29 September-3 October, 1997,
Vienna**

This year IAEA completed 40 years of its existence. To all appearances it is enjoying excellent health after a healthy growth over

four decades. Today it has a membership of 128 states, showing an increase of 40 over the number of "initial states". It has an annual budget of about \$ 300 million and a strength of 2200 employees. IAEA belongs to the UN family, but is autonomous with its 35-member Board of Governors and the General conference. India is a permanent member of the Board. There are about a dozen Indian staff members in the professional category, including two at Director level. All appointments are on a temporary contractual basis and selections are made from candidates recommended by respective governments.

Promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and prevention of acquisition of nuclear weapons by states which do not have them now (by applying Safeguards), remain the main goals of the IAEA. With the growing opposition to nuclear power in many quarters, the Agency nowadays, it seems, does not lead a propaganda in favour of nuclear power, but, besides applying safeguards, concentrates on providing assistance and training in various uses of nuclear technology to member states, especially in the safety of existing nuclear power stations. There are today about 443 nuclear power plants in 31 countries. One should note that the IAEA applies safeguards by consent of the states, pursuant to agreements entered into. Annually the IAEA carries out over 2000 safeguards inspections in non-nuclear weapon states. IAEA has no police or military power to enforce its decision; as a last resort it can report a discovery of diversion of nuclear material to the UN Security Council.

This year's Conference elected a new

Director General. After Hans Blix from Sweden, who held the post since 1981, the Egyptian lawyer Mohammed Elbaradei was elected to the high post. Apart from the plenary speeches and debate several scientific seminars were held. One on *Turning Some Military Nuclear Technology to Peaceful Use* was chaired by R Chidambaram, Chairman: Indian Atomic Energy Commission. To mark the 40th anniversary of the Agency, two books were issued: *History of the International Atomic Energy Agency: The First Forty Years* by David Fischer and *International Atomic Energy Agency: Personal Reflections*. One might recall Homi Bhaba, the father of atomic energy in India, was closely connected with the establishment and development of IAEA right up to his sad death in 1965 in a plane crash. Bhaba was on his way to Vienna to attend an Agency meeting when the accident happened.

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Indian Science Cruiser and

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Vienna, 2 October, 1997.

Technical Sessions of MIRC of ASA held at National Institute of Oceanography, Goa (India)

The Third Technical Sessions of the Madras-India Regional Chapter of the Acoustical Society of America was held at National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) Dona Paula, Goa on 8th and 9th September, 1997.
