

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam - The Missile Man of India

Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, born on October 15, 1931, in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, was one of India's most inspiring leaders. He was not only a renowned scientist but also a visionary teacher and the 11th President of India from 2002 to 2007. His journey from a humble background to becoming the 'People's President' of India is a story of dedication, perseverance, and patriotism.

Early Life and Education

Abdul Kalam was born into a modest family. His father, Jainulabdeen, was a boat owner, and his mother, Ashiamma, was a homemaker. Despite financial hardships, young Kalam was a bright and hardworking student. He completed his schooling in Ramanathapuram and later graduated in Physics from St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli. His dream of becoming an engineer led him to study aerospace engineering at the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT). It was during this time that Kalam developed a deep passion for flight and aeronautics.

Scientific Career and Contributions

After completing his studies, Kalam joined the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and later moved to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). He played a pivotal role in India's first satellite launch vehicle, SLV-III, which successfully deployed the Rohini satellite in orbit in 1980. His leadership in missile development programs such as Agni and Prithvi earned him the title "Missile Man of India." Kalam also contributed significantly to India's nuclear tests in Pokhran-II in 1998, which marked India's emergence as a nuclear power.

Presidency and Vision for India

In 2002, Abdul Kalam was elected as the President of India with overwhelming support. His term was marked by humility, simplicity, and accessibility. He connected deeply with students, inspiring them to dream big and serve the nation. Kalam's vision document, "India 2020: A Vision for the New Millennium," outlined a roadmap to transform India into a developed nation. His speeches and writings often emphasized self-reliance, education, and innovation as the cornerstones of progress.

Legacy and Inspiration

After his presidency, Dr. Kalam continued to teach, write, and inspire millions. His books, such as “Wings of Fire,” “Ignited Minds,” and “My Journey,” continue to motivate generations of Indians. On July 27, 2015, while delivering a lecture at the Indian Institute of Management, Shillong, he collapsed and passed away doing what he loved most—teaching. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam’s life remains a shining example of how perseverance, faith, and vision can turn dreams into reality. His legacy continues to live on in the hearts of every Indian who dares to dream and work hard for the nation’s progress.