NEWSLETTER

APJ ABDUL KALAM

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| HEADING 8 BIOGRAPHY **A.P.J. Abdul Kalam** (born October 15, 1931, [Rameswaram](https://www.britannica.com/place/Rameswaram), India—died July 27, 2015, Shillong) was an Indian scientist and politician who played a leading role in the development of [India](https://www.britannica.com/place/India)’s missile and [nuclear weapons](https://www.britannica.com/technology/nuclear-weapon) programs. He was [president of India](https://www.britannica.com/topic/president-of-India) from 2002 to 2007. His scientific achievements and popularity gained him the [epithets](https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/epithets) “Missile Man” and “People’s President.” | HEADING 8  of [India](https://www.britannica.com/place/India)’s missile and [nuclear weapons](https://www.britannica.com/technology/nuclear-weapon) programs. He was [president of India](https://www.britannica.com/topic/president-of-India) from 2002 to 2007. His scientific achievements and popularity gained him the [epithets](https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/epithets) “Missile Man” and “People’s President.” | “People’s president” |
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| [This Photo](https://akankshavarma.wordpress.com/2015/07/27/apj-abdul-kalam/) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/) |  |

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| Early life and career Kalam was born in a town in [Tamil Nadu](https://www.britannica.com/place/Tamil-Nadu) state to a fishing boat owner from a once wealthy family. The youngest of five siblings, Kalam persevered with his education despite his impoverished circumstances. He earned a degree in [aeronautical engineering](https://www.britannica.com/technology/aerospace-engineering) from the Madras Institute of Technology and in 1958 joined the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).  In 1969 he moved to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), where he was project director of the SLV-III, the first satellite launch vehicle that was both designed and produced in India. In 1980 SLV-III successfully released a satellite called Rohini into near-Earth orbit, taking India’s space program to the international stage. Kalam oversaw further development of launch vehicle technologies at ISRO, including the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle. | [This Photo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._P._J._Abdul_Kalam) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/) |
| missle program Having rejoined DRDO in 1982, Kalam planned the [Integrated](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Integrated) Guided Missile Development Programme, which produced a number of successful missiles. Among them was Agni, India’s first intermediate-range [ballistic missile](https://www.britannica.com/technology/ballistic-missile), which incorporated aspects of the SLV-III; it was first launched in 1989. Another success was the surface-to-surface tactical missile Prithvi.  **Missile program**  **Having rejoined DRDO in 1982, Kalam planned th Guided Missile Development Programme, which produced a number of successful missiles. Among them was Agni, India’s first intermediate-range**[**ballistic missile**](https://www.britannica.com/technology/ballistic-missile)**, which incorporated aspects of the SLV-III; it was first launched in 1989. Another success was the surface-to-surface tactical missile Prithvi.** |  |
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| NUCLEAR TESTS  From 1992 to 1999 Kalam was scientific adviser to India’s defense minister, and he later served as principal scientific adviser (1999–2001) to the [government](https://www.britannica.com/topic/government), with the rank of [cabinet minister](https://www.britannica.com/topic/cabinet-government). During this period he played a key role in the government’s weaponization of missile systems, giving India nuclear capabilities. In 1998 he was one of the chief coordinators of the [Pokhran-II](https://www.britannica.com/technology/nuclear-weapon/France#ref275663) series of nuclear tests, in which five bombs were detonated at a test range in the town of Pokhran, [Rajasthan](https://www.britannica.com/place/Rajasthan) state. His prominent role in the [country’s](https://www.britannica.com/topic/nation-state) nuclear weapons tests solidified India as a [nuclear power](https://www.britannica.com/technology/list-of-states-with-nuclear-weapons-2227841) and established Kalam as a national hero, although the tests caused great concern in the international committee.he died on July 27, 2025    international [community](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community). In 1998 Kalam put forward a countrywide plan called Technology Vision 2020, which he described as a road map for transforming India from a less-developed society to a developed one in 20 years. Among other measures, the plan called for increasing agricultural productivity, emphasizing [technology](https://www.britannica.com/technology/technology) as a vehicle for [economic growth](https://www.britannica.com/money/economic-growth), and for widening access to health care and education. “Find even more easy-to-use tools on the Insert tab, such as to add a hyperlink or insert a comment.” |