Silver Jubilee Congress of the Indian National Cartographic Association

The 25th Congress of the Indian National Cartographic Association (INCA) with international participation was organized jointly by the Departments of General and Applied Geography and Applied Geology, Dr Hari Singh Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar during 28 Nov to 1 Dec, 2005. The Congress was attended by more than 200 delegates and guests from all over India and abroad, besides 70 local delegates. The focal theme "Bridging the Digital Divide and Taking Cartography to Grassroots Level", was discussed related to the genesis as well as the future ramifications of the persisting hiatus between those organizations which have switched over to the computerized, digital ways of cartographic practices and the great mass of individuals and smaller organizations who are yet to adopt the new methods operationally. Besides these issues and challenges in making available the cartographic tools, techniques and products to the lay man, the congress also featured application-oriented presentations like GIS for Government Officials, Accountability and Monitoring, and for public security system.

H E Dr Balram Jakhar, the Governor of M P inaugurated the Congress and expressed the hope that the deliberations of the Cartographic Congress will pave way for the fuller utilization of Spatial Information Technology that India has acquired. He also gave away Eicher Trophies to the winners of the National Map Quiz. Besides releasing the Souvenir-cum-Abstracts volume, the Chief Guest also released a magnum opus on Native Indian Cartography authored by Prof B Arunachalam and published by INCA.

Presidential Address underscored the need of fuller cartographic education in academia delivered by Prof J L Jain, while the keynote address of the INCA CO-President and Surveyor General of India, Maj Gen Gopal Rao (read out by Add Surveyor General, Brig M V Bhat) presented a concise survey of the cartographic scenario in the country in the wake of IT revolution and its concomitants like spatial data infrastructure, new geo-spatial data policy and manpower development.

The prestigious Raja Todarmal Lecture was delivered by Prof Arunachalam, who focused on Indian moorings of new mapping endeavours of the Europeans in India in the 18th Century. Delivering the newly instituted Padma Bhushan Prof S P Chatterjee Memorial Lecture, Dr P Nag, Director, NATMO broadly brought to focus the contributions and personality traits of this doyen of Geography and Thematic Cartography in India.

There was an impressive list of special invited/guest lectures to go as lead presentations at the technical sessions by eminent scholars and the great mass of individuals and smaller organizations who are yet to adopt the new methods operationally. Besides these issues and challenges, in making available the cartographic tools, techniques and products to the lay man, the congress also featured application-oriented presentations like GIS for Government Officials, Accountability and Monitoring, and for public security system.

Mr Mukul Tiwari of GSI emphasized the need for unified spatial data base for digital cartography and Mr R K Chaturvedi, formerly of GSI presented a lecture on physiographic changes due to vertical tectonics in the Indian subcontinent. A popular lecture was also presented by A K Sonaka, GSI, on life of Homoindus in the Narmada Valley, MP more than half a million years ago.

More than hundred papers were presented in a twelve technical sessions, besides several poster presentations. For the first time in this congress a session was also held in Hindi. Vendors' session also featured several impressive presentations. Technical exhibition featured Rolta India, Topcon, AutoDesk, Riding Consultant Engineers, etc from private industry, and Survey of India, NATMO, NRSA, MP Council of Sc & Tech, etc among the government organizations.

The panel discussion dwelt on problems of Social Science disciplines in utilizing geo-informatic tools and techniques, and on the complementary vs the competitive nature of relationship between GIS and Cartography. The second evening featured a cultural programme presenting a range of Bundel cultural events of Central India which was greatly enjoyed by all.

The Chief Guest at the valedictory session of the Congress was the veteran Geophysist, Dr J G Negi, Dy Director of MP Council of Science and Technology, Bhopal who underscored the urgent need for and the scope for a starting full-fledged, department of Cartography/Geoinformatics in some of our universities.

Delegates and guests were taken on an excursion to Marble Rocks at Bheraghat on Narmada River, or to Khajuraho on the fourth day.

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