

## Atomic Energy Commission chief Kakodkar to retire Nov 30

Eminent scientist Anil Kakodkar, who played a strategic role in clinching the India-US civilian nuclear deal last year, will retire as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) Nov 30.

Kakodkar, who was part of the team of scientists that successfully carried out the Pokhran-I (1974) and Pokhran-II (1998) nuclear tests, is also secretary, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

With exactly a month left before the 65-year-old Kakodkar demits office, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government has yet to name his successor.

Among the names doing the rounds is that of Srikumar Banerjee, the director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) here.

Traditionally, BARC directors have had an edge in occupying the coveted post of AEC chairman. Kakodkar was one such, preceded by other scientists.

Kakodkar made his parting remarks Friday evening while addressing the BARC Founder's Day celebrations, coinciding with the birth centenary of Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha, the architect of India's nuclear program.

'This is the last time I am addressing you from this podium. I wish to thank you all for your strong commitment to the programme and your support to the efforts to sail through the nuclear fuel supply crises...,' Kaokdkar said.

Kakodkar, who has always advocated India's self-reliance in the nuclear sector, took over as AEC chairman from R. Chidambaram, currently principal scientific advisor to the Indian government, in November 2000.

Awarded the Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian award, this year, Kakodkar is also the chairman of board of governors, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai.

Kakodkar is an alumnus of the Ruparel College, Matunga in south-central Mumbai, and the prestigious Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, both affiliated to University of Mumbai. He joined BARC in 1964.

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