

Use IT tools to empower masses: Ahamed

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By Our Staff Reporter

KOCHI, FEB. 2. The Union Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahamed, has appealed to the academic community to use the tools of Information Technology (IT) to empower the masses. "IT is an excellent tool for this mission, considering the vastness of our country and the remoteness of many areas."

He was speaking at the third international Convention for Automation of Libraries in Education and Research Institutes — CALIBER 2005, here on Wednesday.

The three-day convention is organised jointly by the Information And Library Network Centre (INFLIBNET), Hyderabad, the library network arm of the Universities Grants Commission (UGC), and the Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat).

Mr. Ahamed referred to the community learning centres proposed as a means to use IT to develop the northeastern parts of the country.

Future growth

Developments in the field of IT have brought about "unimaginable dimension on the development scenario". The total value of software and services exported during 2003-04 was estimated at \$12.5 billion. This shows a growth of 30 per cent in dollar terms over the previous fi-



The Vice-Chancellor of the Cochin University of Science and Technology, P. K. Abdul Azis, the Union Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahamed and the Honorary Chairman of INFLIBNET, at the inauguration of CALIBER 2005 in the city on Wednesday. — Photo: H. Vibhu

nancial year, he said.

The growth in future will be 'mind-boggling.' By 2008, India is expected to produce software and services worth \$80 billion and generate about 2.2 million jobs. Thus, the IT sector will have a 7 per cent share in the country's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and an export share of 35

per cent.

A total of 280 delegates are participating in the convention. Its theme is: Multilingual Computing and Information Management In Networked Digital Environment. As many as 120 theme papers will be presented.

The Vice-Chancellor of Cusat, P.K. Abdul Azis, delivered the

presidential address. T.A.V. Murthy, Director of INFLIBNET; S. Ramani, Chairman of INFLIBNET; A. Aravindakshan and Lopez Mathew, members of the Cusat Syndicate; M.D. Baby, organising secretary of CALIBER 2005; and A. Ramachandran, Registrar of Cusat; spoke at the inauguration of the meet.