

## **The new creators**

Two people were in news recently whose contribution in the technological arena have been significant - Dr. Ian Wilmut, the Biotechnologist who engineered the birth of 'Dolly' and Bill Gates, the information technologist who visited India for the first time. Significantly both these men are creators in their own way. While the former has been instrumental in creating life forms, the latter has brought computers to life.

Creating inanimate things would no longer enthuse man. His desire to create something full of life and blood has now been realised, thanks to Dr. Ian Wilmut and his team. The development of 'Dolly' through asexual reproduction has given rise to not only biological but also ethical questions. It has kicked up a debate on more ambitious human clones. What would happen to the social fabric of our existence? If a new individual is cloned from an old person, how old will the clone be? Such disconcerting questions are being posed by anthropologists now. Dr. Wilmut is not supposed to work on similar experiments with humans, since British Government has banned such a thing. But there is no guarantee that this wouldn't be done elsewhere.

When such a big furore is being created at the new development in biotechnology, a person who has more than a passing interest in biotechnology, visited India recently. Mr. Bill Gates, who is incidentally on the board of Darwin's molecular - a biotech organisation, was in news not for his interest in biotechnology but for his views on information technology. The creator of the most user-friendly graphic user interface - the Windows, made his first visit to India obviously with an eye on the cheap and highly potential software manpower in the country. Mr. Gates, who created a whole new era of computing, was of the opinion that India could be a software superpower only if the Internet is used efficiently. The man of billions was critical of some people's fears that Internet would destroy the societal concept and advised that any new scientific development would have its pros and cons. He recalled similar fears during print media's uptrend when people said that everybody would become bookworms. Mr. Bill Gates visit certainly helped the Indian IT industry not so much in terms of foreign investment but in terms of knowing more about IT management.

These two gentlemen will go down in the history as outstanding contributors to science and technology.

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