



WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"With greater technological advancements, particularly in the field of artificial intelligence, the ability to mislead the public through 'fake news' is only going to increase in the years to come." —DAWN

Red weapons, blue skies

CPC's 70th anniversary parade revealed China's well-established architecture for undertaking weather modification



AJEY LELE

CHINA'S PRESIDENT Xi Jinping announced that "no force" can shake China during the huge military parade to celebrate 70 years of Communist Party rule on October 1. China's progress in the military arena was on full display during this parade. One of the major military systems displayed was the new hypersonic ballistic nuclear missile. Such missiles are capable of breaching all existing anti-missile shields available with the major powers. However, one weapon, which China was expected not to "display" but to "demonstrate" was absent and that was the Weather Weapon.

Chinese authorities always try to ensure that they have blue skies during the conduct of such parades and festivities. However, this time, there was a cloud of smog hanging over Beijing. Though it did not dampen the spirits of the people, it did prove that the Chinese Communist Party may control many things but it still cannot control the weather. However, it is important to note that in recent past China has been manipulating the weather over a limited geographical area with some success before such mega events. There could be various reasons for China failing to do so this time.

In the past, on various occasions, China has successfully managed clear skies. The most talked-about incident was the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting held at Beijing during November 10-12, 2014. During this event, China ensured that Beijing, which is famous for its heavy haze and smog, would have absolutely blue skies. Since then, this Chinese ability to have blue skies on demand is famously referred as "APEC blue". In 2014, this became possible since Beijing and nearby regions were put under most stringent pollution control measures. It was a result of harsh 11-day emissions-reduction measures.

To have blue skies during the October 1 parade, the efforts started well in advance. August 20 onwards, no trucks were permitted to enter Beijing and all construction work was halted. Also, there was a major clampdown on mining activities and fireworks were totally banned. There was even a request for to stop production in the nearby industries. All this was leading to an improvement in the sky conditions. However, just few days before the event, a weather system in the form of a low-pressure front got positioned unfavourably and ended up pushing the pollution from the surrounding provinces towards Beijing. Also, there is a possibility that the authorities would not have employed heavy-handed practices against polluting industries for various reasons.

It is important to note that the Vice Premier Hu Chunhua had visited the China Meteorological Administration and had asked for possible meteorological support just before the 2019 parade. Normally, such support comes in the form of firing missiles/rockets on the rain-bearing clouds, making them precipitate before they approach the Tiananmen Square parade ground. Such rockets (with "warheads" containing dry ice, salt and silver iodide) are part of weather modification experiments and make precipitation happen. Usually, such rain also cleans up the smog-filled atmosphere. Possibly, this time there were no clouds around Beijing and hence, there are no reports of firing of any rockets. Exactly 10 years ago during the 60th National Day Parade, China had managed clear skies through such attacks on clouds. As per reports, some 432 rockets were fired then.

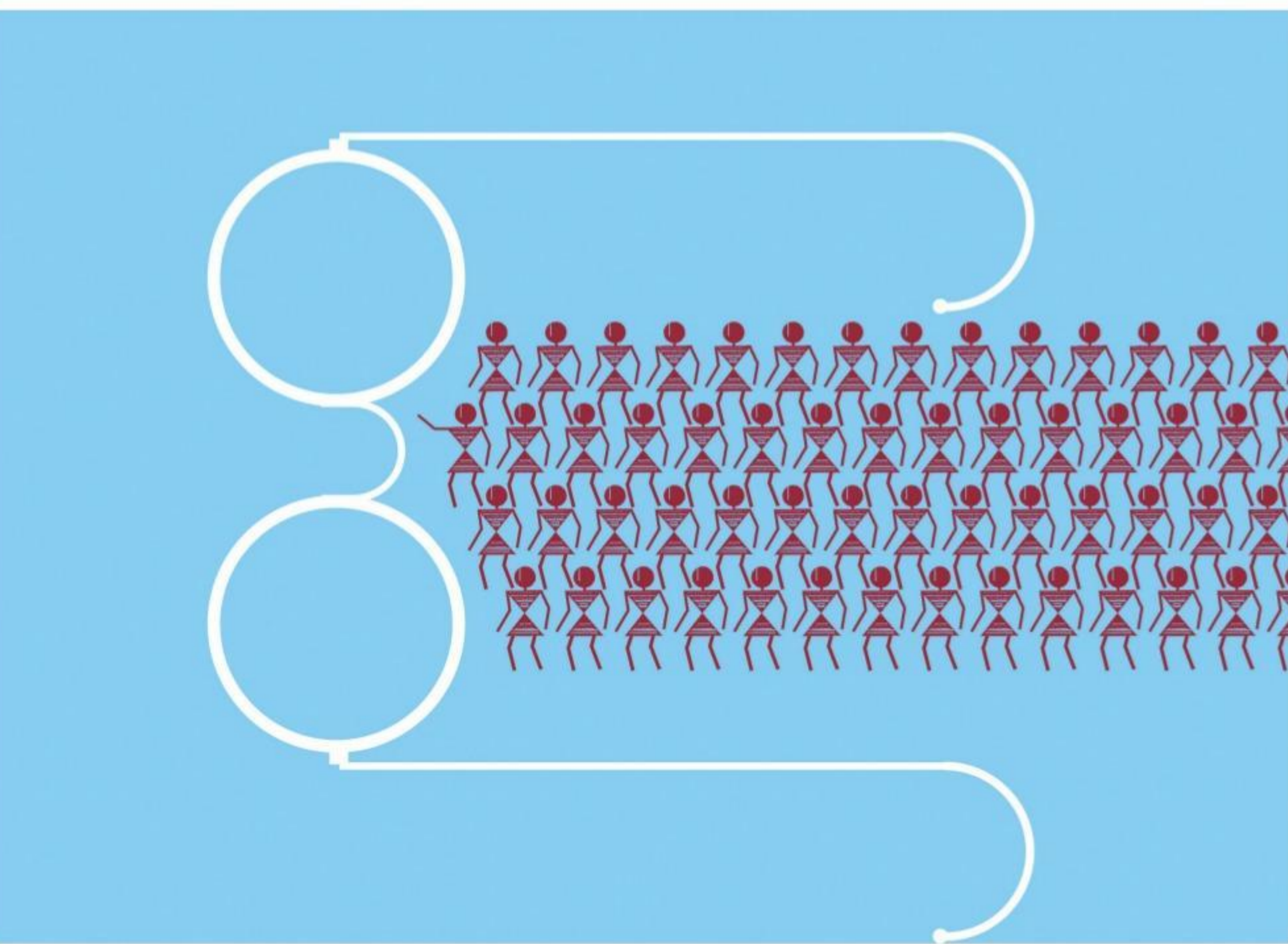
China has a well-developed infrastructure to undertake such tasks. They have many specialised vehicles ready to throw streams of air to chase away any approaching fog. Similarly, on August 8, 2008, the day of the Olympics opening ceremony, it was reported that the Chinese weather modification office had fired a total of 1,104 rain dispersal rockets. These rockets were fired to stop rain clouds approaching the Olympics arena. This operation lasted for eight hours and rockets were launched from 21 different sites.

There is evidence that in the past even during wars, states have used such techniques not only to help the advancement of their own forces, but also to cause flooding over enemy territory. During the Vietnam War (1967), US forces had launched Operation Popeye. This led to heavy flash floods and is known to have caused damage possibly worth three years of sustained bombing.

Today, China has a well-established architecture to undertake weather modification at will and runs one of the biggest weather modification programmes in the world, with investments touching millions of dollars. China has modified various aircraft to conduct weather modification experiments. They are keen to change the weather pattern over the Tibet region. There is a plan to use weather modification techniques to divert water vapour (Project "Sky River"). Many scientists are known to be working on the "art of mastering the weather".

There is a United Nations Convention called Environmental Modification or ENMOD convention, which prohibits states from "engaging in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques". Various major countries are signatories to this. However, even during peacetime, any large-scale weather modification experiments possibly leading to changes in the ecological balance are not a healthy proposal. Artificial weather changes, which could be a boon for one geographical region, may turn out to be a bane for other nearby regions.

The writer is senior fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi



CR Sasikumar

From protest to governance

Our Lokpal movement to schools, water, power — Gandhi's vision endures



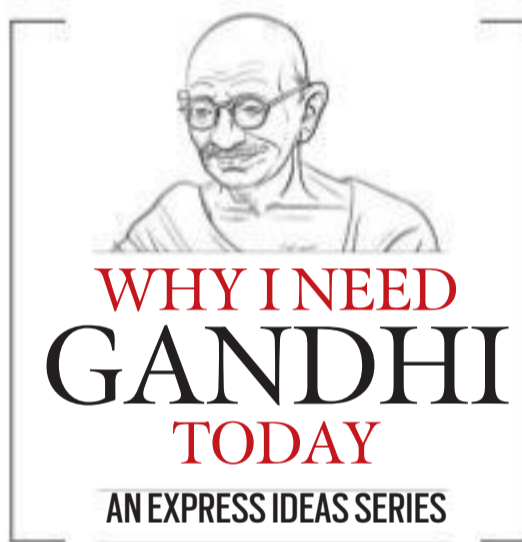
ARVIND KEJRIWAL

In the time I have been chief minister — nearly five years, I have witnessed Gandhian decentralisation of power being brought to life. Before 2015, the education minister was the most powerful authority when it came to all issues related to schools. For the smallest of expenses, administrative authority lay with the minister. Such a top-heavy power structure can never effectively run any public system, even in a city-state like Delhi.

In 2015, I along with Manish Sisodia met 1,000 principals of Delhi government schools and asked them to give us a list of the things they have wanted to do in their schools, but have not been able to for lack of funds. We made proposals based on the principals' inputs and that is one of the reasons why Delhi's education budget suddenly doubled that year to consume 25 per cent of the entire state's budget. The year after that, instead of going back to the principals once again, we gave them complete discretion over funds, and the freedom to use them. For the first time in the history of India's education system, government school principals were given the means and resources to run their schools the way they wanted to. This transformed the school administration, suddenly making it more efficient and energetic.

Similarly, we formed groups of parents — School Management Committees — to help with the school management: Maintaining cleanliness, keeping up mid-day meal standards, among others. Involving the people in governance by providing them the power to take decisions for themselves, and giving them the means to exercise that power, is the key to progress.

Today, a government school principal, along with the parent-led SMC, is empowered to hire a resource person, maintain their school infrastructure, purchase books of their choice for libraries, bring in experts for teaching music, arts, sports. All of this, without sending a single file to the department for permission. This is Gandhian governance being realised.



In the last five years, the government of the common man has been led by the most Gandhian of philosophies — looking out for the last man in the queue. It was Gandhi's dream that we build a country where every child has access to good education, every person gets quality healthcare, and all people live together in peace and brotherhood. I am happy this has started to become a reality in today's Delhi.

In the last five years, the government of the common man has been led by the most Gandhian of philosophies — looking out for the last man in the queue. In one of his last notes before his tragic death, he had said, "Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him." It was Gandhi's dream that we build a country where every child has access to good education, every person gets quality healthcare, and all people live together in peace and brotherhood. I am happy this has started to become a reality in today's Delhi.

Many of us believed that most Indian cities including Delhi have had 24 hours electricity supply for years now, but the reality is otherwise. Many parts of the city did not have access to such a basic necessity when we assumed office in February 2015. Our government had to push for more transformers, infrastructure upgrade to ensure all households have 24-hour electricity. Only about 58 per cent of the colonies were connected by water pipelines in 2015. Today, we have taken that number to 93 per cent, ensuring that lakhs of families do not have to rely on water tankers any more. Most importantly, the government of the common man has attempted to build a system where ordinary citizens no longer have to plead before bureaucrats for basic services.

Gandhi envisioned a country where every person can dream of a better life. In Delhi, today, there is a semblance of opportunity for people to lift themselves out of poverty. We are working towards building a Delhi where a dignified life is the right of all citizens. It is humbling when one realises just how little of India's progress would have been possible without Gandhi and the idea of Gandhi. My heartfelt tribute to the man whose memory continues to inspire a billion Indians.

The writer is the Chief Minister of Delhi

gation of Article 370. It said that through his references to 9/11 and the 26/11 attacks, Modi exposed Pakistan. It said the Houston event also showcased a new movement by India to connect with all expats across the world.

Attacking left liberals on the issue of terrorism, the article suggested President Donald Trump had exposed the lie of "terror has no religion". "Till now, on the issue of rising terrorism across the world and in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India, the so called seculars would say terrorism has no religion and that it should not be associated with any faith. But President Trump made it clear from the dais that he would fight extremist Islamic terrorism jointly," the report said.

GANDHI ON SAVARKAR

IN ITS LATEST issue dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, *Organiser* has attempted to clear the air on Hindutva ideologue Veer Savarkar's clemency plea to the British administration when he was lodged in the cellular jail in the Andaman islands.

The article, written by J Nandakumar, has claimed that Gandhi was all praise for Savarkar and had called him "brave", "clever" and "true son of Bharat". The article has said that filing clemency pleas with the British

was commonplace in those times and the narrative of a chasm between Gandhi and Savarkar, and the latter's capitulation before the British power had been created by new-age leftist historians in the wake of Congress's defeat post the emergency.

Quoting a note by Gandhi as published in a book, the article said Gandhi had positive views about Savarkar and his elder brother, GD Savarkar: "The Savarkar Brothers' talent should be utilised for public welfare. As it is, India is in danger of losing her two faithful sons, unless she wakes up in time. One of the brothers I know well. I had the pleasure of meeting him in London. He is brave. He is clever. He is a patriot. He was frankly a revolutionary. The evil, in its hideous form, of the present system of government, he saw much earlier than I did. He is in the Andamans for his having loved India too well. Under a just government, he would be occupying a high office. I therefore feel for him and his brother."

SWADESHI AND SWARAJ

IN ITS SPECIAL issue, *Organiser* has also carried an editorial espousing Swaraj and an article by Prof Bhagwati Prakash which has argued that India must shift from Make in India to Made by Bharat to realise the dream of Swaraj.

Claiming that liberal imports and FDI jeopardised the growth of domestic industry and trade and increased foreign ownership, the article has argued for "economic patriotism" and "techno-nationalism" through mandatory norms.

"To turnaround this situation of persistent rise in trade and current account deficits as well as in the deficit in investment income, and also to remedy our growing dependence over foreign investments, along with saving various sectors of the economy, from further slipping into foreign ownerships, India should chart a course of self-reliance and Swadeshi inter alia by developing 'Made by India' products and brands through endeavours like promoting and adopting techno-nationalism and economic patriotism," the article said.

It said that the development of home-grown technologies and promoting these should be done "through mandatory norms and other methods". It can alone help the country to launch 'Made by Bharat' products and brands to alleviate the country's growing dependence upon imports and FDI. "Economic patriotism inter alia reflects one's resolve to buy the Made by India goods, wherever available. Which can be said as pursuing 'Swadeshi,'" the article added.

Compiled by Deeptiman Tiwary

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SWACHH LESSONS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The people's policy' (IE October 2). It rightly describes the Swachh Bharat Mission as a benchmark of transformative policy making. Such policies can also be adopted for pollution control and environmental conservation. Environmental protection is not achievable only by the government's initiative and corporate sector's financial support. It requires public participation as well.

Jainil T Shah, Ahmedabad

TOLL ON STATES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'States at Centre' (IE, October 2). Doling out of subsidies, freebies, leakages/pilferage, over-stuffed government departments and evasion of taxes are taking a toll on the financial health of the exchequers both at the state and Central levels. Disinvestment needs to be aggressive. Futile expenditure in the name of cow shelters and statues should be shunned. Advertising welfare schemes amounts to misuse of government resources. Rather than engaging in witch hunts, agencies should effectively uspin down tax dodgers.

Deepak Singhal, Chennai

CLEAN AIR

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Bad air but how bad' (IE, October 2). Crop residue burning in Punjab and Haryana is detrimental to the region's air quality. There is a need to exterminate this method of disposal of residue and create alternatives to stubble burning.

Nayan Agarwal, Ujjain

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to

editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

HISTORIAN, CRITIQUE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Her way of seeing' (IE, October 1). The writer says that his film was called good by two different political dispensations but not acceptable for airing on DD because one objected to Romila Thapar's critique of Emergency while another found the film's depiction of the Babri mosque's demolition objectionable. Thapar is above such narrow minded operators. "Caste is immutable while class is mutable," a sentence that I read in the early 1970s in a history book written by Thapar still rings true.

Basudev Mazumdar, Kolkata



