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BORIS GETS BREXIT, HAS LONG NIGHTS AHEAD

JOURNALISM WITH A HUMAN TOUCH

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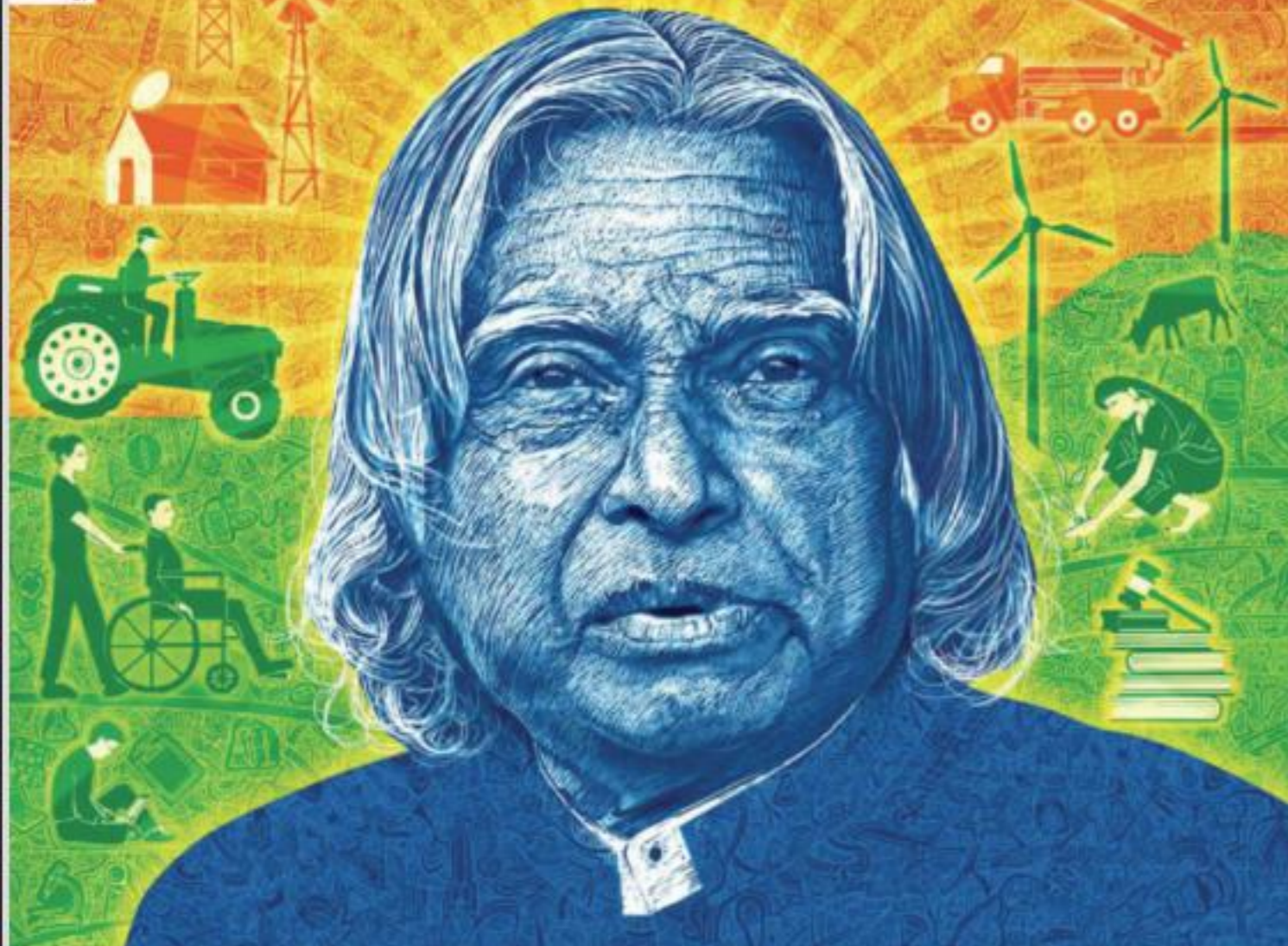
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THEWEEK**KALAM'S INDIA
IN 2020**

A REALITY CHECK

COVER STORY
INDIA IN 2020**Progress in
pockets**WHAT COULD BE 'NEW' ABOUT THE 'NEW INDIA' THAT
BREAKS AWAY FROM CLICHÉS AND EUPHEMISMSBY ARUN TIWARI
ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOB P.K.**W**hen A.P.J. Abdul Kalam decided to write about the India of the future in the mid-1990s, he had a 25-year timeframe and the term 20/20—used to describe eyesight—in mind.*India 2020: A Vision for the New Millennium* was published in 1996, during Kalam's stint as chairman of the Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC). It was written with his friend and then TIFAC executive director Y.S. Rajan. The book was well received as no one had earlier attempted to imagine India as a developed country.

Kalam was well positioned to visualise the contours of a developed India. He was the celebrated project director of India's first satellite launch vehicle project, the chief of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme and chairman of the committee for self-reliance formed in 1993 to reverse the 70:30 import-export ratio of defence equipment. The book focused on five areas—agriculture and food processing, education and health care, information and communication technology, infrastructure development, and self-reliance in critical technologies. Later, with Professor P.V. Indiresan, former director, IIT Madras, Kalam expanded the connectivity di-

mension to rural areas and presented his Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas mission.

After being elected president of India in 2002, Kalam made persistent efforts to buttress the spirit of "developed India". As co-author of his autobiography *Wings of Fire*, published in 1999, and member of his speech-writing team, I saw him closely, living and breathing the dream of making India a developed nation.India has indeed developed. But not the way he envisaged. In 2013, he involved me in writing *Squaring the Circle: Seven Steps to Indian Renaissance*, asking for a perceptual change, a different kind of mindset at the individual and community levels, which he realised was fundamental for a nation, especially a democratic nation, to become a developed country. A change in mindset did happen, to an extent. In 2014, India voted to bring in *achhe din*. With change in the air, Kalam departed in July 2015, on a hopeful note.

It is indeed evident that in the areas of information and communication technology, reliable and quality electric power, and surface transport and infrastructure, India has done remarkably well. Growth in agriculture and food processing did happen, but benefitted traders more than the farmers. Education and health care have been thoroughly commercialised. Ayushman Bharat has finally arrived, but there is huge trust deficit owing to the inefficient and, at times, horrendous ways of our public hospitals.