

The Tribune

Visionary President

PUNEETINDER KAUR SIDHU

Spirit of India

By APJ Abdul Kalam.
Rajpal Publishers.
Pages 180. Rs 195.

"It looks to me that we need a second vision for the nation, just like the one we had when we were actively pursuing our freedom movement against alien rule. At that time the spirit of nationalism was very strong. This second vision that is needed for making India a developed nation will once again bring the spirit of nationalism to the fore."

S*PIRIT* of India is former President, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's latest book. It presents a selection of his views expressed on some very interesting, relevant, oftentimes irrelevant questions posed to him. The questions, in turn, reflect the concerns, aspirations and dreams of the youth of India, his most devoted audience.

Dr Kalam discusses the major challenges facing contemporary India's growth story: divisive politics, communalism, corruption, economic inequalities, Naxalism, domestic terror, and unrest at our borders. He suggests how we can



overcome these challenges, both at an individual and the country level. Dr Kalam believes that at the heart of the nation is the individual and it is only when individual citizens achieve success that the nation can succeed.

In *Spirit of India*, Dr Kalam responds to hundreds of questions and concerns addressed to him by a cross section of youth from around the country and overseas. His answers, mostly bordering on the visionary, point us in the direction needed for the building of a united and prosperous nation. He is convinced that this task can be achieved, "If the 540 million youth

work with the spirit "I can do it", "We can do it", and "India can do it", nothing can stop India from becoming a developed country". Having tasted the fruits of development, the Indians are hungry for more—more education, more opportunities, more development. Dr Kalam believes that it is possible to progress at both the individual and national levels provided we abide by the principle "that the nation is bigger than any individual or organisation" and understand that "only borderless minds can create a borderless society".

His vision has been categorised under *Spirit of India*, *Spirit of Education*, *Creating a Scientific Spirit*, *Harnessing the Spirit of Youth*, *Inculcating the Spirit of Success* and *The Kalam Spirit*. In order to better acquaint oneself with the aspirations and minds of the Indian youth, this thought-provoking book should be a mandatory read for one and all. Also to remind oneself about the embodiment of selfless simplicity that is Dr Kalam; best reflected in his response to a poser by a Law College student from Mysore. "What is the future goal of your life?" "Seeing a smile on the faces of a billion people," replied Dr Kalam, ever the people's President.