

NOTE

An open letter to Mr Tata

Sandip Bandyopadhyay writes :

Dear Tataji,

Thanks for your enlightening letter which appeared in a section of the press on 17 October, this year. But for this letter, we could never know that you were cherishing a noble “dream of contributing to the industrial revival of West Bengal”—the hapless state which is foolish enough to disrupt your dream by a “politically motivated” agitation that finally forced your *Nano* out.

As a young boy in the early 1960s, I would look at the sky-high Tata Centre in Calcutta (Kolkata), awe-struck. I was sure that my audacious eyes would never be able to get to the Centre’s height to touch the firmament. And now, at the age of 55, I once again understand that the experience and education I have gained meanwhile is too small to gauge the depth of your intelligence and imagination.

Two years ago you had embarked on a small car project at Singur because you had “tremendous” faith in the policies of the West Bengal Government led by Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharjee. I wonder what made you so sure that Mr Bhattacharjee and his cohorts represent the sentiments of the entire population of the state! You never cared to probe the public mind of WB since you entered into a secret deal with the State Government over the said project.

In your letter you have held out the prosperity that your project could usher in by creating jobs, providing livelihood to the local people and thus “enhancing” the quality of their lives. But why didn’t you make a clean breast of your plan and project to make the imbeciles, that the agitationists are, see how generous you are, to realise that while they are only fond of agitation, you stand for benediction? Why did you rather go to court to prevent the terms and conditions of the deal from coming to light? You have advised us to express our “views and aspirations” as to the future of WB. Being a “good, contributing, corporate citizen”, why didn’t you set the example yourself?

You certainly remember the inaugural chapter of your Nano tragedy scripted on 2 December, 2006. The Singur peasants refused to part with their land, the source of their living. The police went on the rampage, pounced upon them and forcibly occupied the fertile land for your project, in your name. Sorry Tataji, we are too callous to understand how benevolent you are! By virtue of your wisdom you have finally chosen the right M. But alas, our experience continues to misguide us by (mis)- taking T for terror, rather than for your celebrated surname.

With best wishes.

25.10.08