

Ace cartoonist regales 'em

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Eminent cartoonist R. K. Laxman kept enthralled a large audience at the Raman Research Institute Auditorium on Wednesday with his verbal caricature of our country and its leaders and people.

In a 70-minute Gandhi Memorial Lecture organised by the RRI, Mr. Laxman tore into pieces our politicians and administrators much to the glee of audience.

In his inimitable, informal style, he spoke about India since Independence and its people and leaders and their eccentricities. He drove home the point that our leaders have brought our democracy to a stage where it is no more the "Government of the people, but Government versus the people".

He made light of the efforts which had gone into achieving Independence and unifying the princely States, just to divide the country into linguistic States. He traced the strife now in evidence all over the country, to the formation of linguistic States.

Lamponing the decision of our leaders to eliminate English, he said they thought by declaring one first day that Hindi would be our national language, everybody would start speaking in Hindi. "But what happened was, it made nearly two thirds of the people in this country illiterate, as only one-third in the country speak Hindi."

His digs at the leaders of Maharashtra, who had introduced prohibition which had only led to incredible degree of illicit liquor, were hilarious. He did not spare the planners, and their five-year plans.

He ended with a note of laments that the country had now fallen into the hands of professional politicians, who had "inadequate education, doubtful morals and unlimited ambition."