Welcome Address by Mr. Ajit Nimbalkar, IAS (Retd.) on the occasion of the 30th Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture/Event held on 12th December 2024

Mr. Kamath, other distinguished guests and friends, welcome to the 30th and final Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture.

Lalit was a close friend and colleague. He passed away at an early age at Davos, and after his passing, some of his friends, colleagues and well-wishers got together and formed a Trust in his memory.

As Bharat has just mentioned, the activities of the Trust include the annual lecture, and we have had a 'Galaxy of Speakers' over the years. But we have also been closely associated with the educational institutions connected with Lalit, such as St. Xavier's College, where he studied, and Bharda New High School, where he received his schooling. Certain events have been organized annually in his memory as well.

Lalit and I were together in St. Xavier's College from 1959 to 1963. We did our graduation and post-graduation there, and then entered the service. Coincidentally, three of us classmates from St. Xavier's, Vijay Nambiar, Lalit Doshi, and I were together from 1959 to 1963 and got into services. Vijay went to the foreign services, while Lalit and I entered the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in the Maharashtra cadre.

I had the opportunity to see Lalit closely, not only in Maharashtra but also in the Government of India. He was a close friend, a simple person, but high-thinking and always available to all. He held very important posts, both in Delhi and Mumbai, but he was equally available to top industrialists and to common people alike. Even a few years back when I went to Delhi to his ministry, people would still inquire about Lalit and his family.

Why did we form this Trust and why the Annual Lecture? Of course, friends and colleagues had affection for him, but we wanted Lalit to be an example, a role model for the younger generation. We wanted to bring out his services to the state. Lalit was mainly in the industries department. He headed MIDC, SICOM and was the Department Secretary for Industry, among other roles.

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During that time, Maharashtra had very distinguished and forward-looking political leadership. We had Y. B. Chavan, Vasanth Dada Patil, Sharad Pawar, and later, Vilas Rao Deshmukh, among others. These leaders brought industries and development to the state, and they built a strong bureaucratic team with people like Lalit Doshi, Anand Bhadkamkar, Bapu Karandikar,

Yashwant Bhave, and others, who worked tirelessly for the state.

Lalit was also associated with other important activities in the state, such as the Employment Guarantee Scheme, which Maharashtra initiated and which was later adopted at the national level. Of course, now the "Ladki Bahin Yojana" has passed other schemes, but the Employment Guarantee Scheme was initiated by Mr. Page, who was the Chairman of the Council, with Lalit's significant assistance.

Lalit also played a major role in the Maharashtra pattern, which was later adopted by the Government of India, and he was involved in the Urban Ceiling Act, which was quite harsh at first and later withdrawn. Lalit played a significant role in providing relief during that time. He was a practical man, and though the Act was later withdrawn. Lalit resolved many of the difficulties surrounding it.

One failing that Lalit had, perhaps, was ignoring his health. Many colleagues and advisors advised him to take better care of himself. He continued with his busy schedule, carrying on regardless.

We wanted to bring out these aspects of his life so that he could serve as a role model for others. Initially, Lalit's friends assisted a lot, but a lot of the responsibility for organizing these functions fell on Bharat, who became the main person behind the events. Now, after 30 years, continuing this would have been difficult. Many of the trustees, as Bharat just mentioned, have passed away, and we thought it was time for the new generation to take the lead. There are role models emerging among the younger generation as well.

Bhushan Gagrani, for example, is one of the top bureaucrats in Maharashtra, and there are others doing excellent work. We hope their work will also be highlighted and serve as an example for others to follow.

Lalit was a simple man, but he was available to all and dedicated his life to the common man. We wanted this example to continue, but now I am sure there are others who will follow in his footsteps, and their work will serve as an example for the younger people in the coming years.

I wish Pratima and Lalit's daughter, Hemal, all the best and I am sure Lalit's memory will continue, not only in the hearts of people who knew him well, but also for the younger people who are following in his footsteps.

Thank you.

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