Welcome address by Mr. Ajit Nimbalkar on the occasion of the 27th Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture held on 27th August 2021

Friends,

Welcome to the 27th Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture. It is 27 years since Lalit passed away, and coincidentally, Lalit was in service for 28 years from 1966 to 1994. So many years have passed away. The fragrance of his simple and friendly nature as a person and selfless service as an administrator still remains.

After Lalit passed away, we formed the Lalit Doshi Memorial Foundation. Basically, his family, his colleagues and all his close friends came together to form this trust. And they have been conducting various activities. First of all, there is the award ceremony which takes place every year. Earlier it used to be SICOM and now it is MIDC. The performance of a promising young industrialist is recognized and felicitated. And then Lalit's Bharda New High School and Jr. College as well as his college St. Xavier's organize certain competitions, Awards are given for excellence in academic performances through the foundation. The foundation also gives help to the needy students and those who are doing good work. Earlier the trustees were very close friends of Lalit. We had particularly certain close persons like Mr. Arun Bongirwar, Mr. Bam, Mr. Prabhakaran etc.,who were active in the foundation. Unfortunately, during the course of years they have passed away. They are replaced by other colleagues. And the activity goes on.

The main activity, of course, is the Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture, which, takes place in the month of August every year. We have had a distinguished line of speakers on various subjects for this lecture series. It started in 1995 with Mr Vaghul, then Chairman of ICICI, who spoke on Spirituality and Modern Life. After that different subjects were covered. Subjects like, economic reforms, corruption, terrorism, nuclear energy, foreign policy, climate change, judicial activism, etc. We had a distinguished line of speakers also. We had heads of financial institutions and industries, eminent economists, scientists, ambassadors, even ministers and parliamentarians, Judges of the Supreme Court, Civil servants, senior police personnel, educationists, almost all walks of life.

The quality of these lectures has been so eminent that various persons look forward to the organization of this lecture. Earlier we used to organise it at the

Y B Chavan Auditorium, and that was of course a meeting point also for all persons. But due to the pandemic this has been discontinued. Let us hope that next year we again meet at Y B Chavan Auditorium for the lecture. At most of these lectures, there was also the question-and-answersession people could participate actively in this. Lalit had a host of admirers and friends in all walks of life. Most of us gathered every year at the event of the lecture, to pay homage to the memory of Lalit and also to learn something new on the subject that is under agenda. But over the years, young people who did not know Lalit have also been joining this lecture series and they are participating not only because of the subject concerned, also because of the speaker who is delivering the lecture. But they are also inspired by the life of Lalit Doshi.

I would definitely like to, for the newcomers, briefly speak about Lalit. I knew Lalit personally since 1959 when we were in college together in St. Xavier's College. From 1959 to 1963, four years we were in the college. There is also Vijay Nambiar who is amongst the panellist here today. Vijay and I were political science students, Lalit was economics student and Professor Dr. R. K. Hazari was his teacher who was very fond of his student. After graduating from the college, the three of us went on to do our post graduation in MA in the University of Mumbai, again, Vijay and I did it in political science, Lalit did it in economics. And after doing our post graduation, the three of us appeared for the UPSC exam. Vijay of course went to the foreign service and had a distinguished career in IFS, later on with the United Nations also. Lalit and I were in the IAS and we were allotted to Maharashtra cadre.

Lalit served in various capacities. He of course did his usual district administration work, but his main focus was in industries and he worked in SICOM and MIDC, later on as Secretary Industries, also under the Government of India in the Ministry of Petro Chemicals. But it is not only industries that he is remembered, he also worked in two different areas which were at that time comparatively new for the administration. He worked for the Employment Guarantee Scheme. This was introduced for the first time in the country, in fact, in Maharashtra under the stewardship of Mr. Page, who was then Chairman of the Legislative Council. Lalit assisted him in the secretariat level. It was basically on the lines of the scarcity measures that were taken during the famine days. This was so successful that it was emulated by the Government of India also at the central level and the National Rural Employment Scheme was envisioned from the lines of the Maharashtra Government. Also, during the emergency the Urban Ceiling Act was introduced. This was for the first time, in some ways it was a harsh act, it was

repealed later on, but in spite of all the hurdles that were there Lalit tried to implement it as far as possible in the interest of all the persons. In the interest of people who would need a plan, in the interest also of the land owners. He tried to implement it truly and tried to help as many people as possible.

In industries, of course, he made his mark initially at MIDC and later on he went on to Government India, Ministry of Petro Chemicals, came back and took over SICOM and after SICOM he took over as Secretary Industries, in which capacity he had gone to Davos.

What are the main qualities of Lalit? I would emulate about five of them. First of all, he was, of course very intelligent, he had sympathy for the common man. He put in a lot of hard work, whatever he did, he did it with his entire strength and put his soul into it at. But he was also an excellent team worker and an excellent leader of the team. As part of the team, he mixed with everyone, followed the lead and as a leader he carried all people along with him. His favourite word was partner. Partners come on, let us do this.

He was always helpful. And had a genuine desire to solve problems. He did not have a no answer, but he tried to find out the solution, and help the person as much as possible. He was, whether it was a big industrialist or a class IV employee or a landless person, peon, driver, he helped everybody. In his approach, he was always development oriented. Efforts to improve the living of the common man, remove obstacles as far as possible. In administration, there is a tendency to say no easily, that is a quick way out. You do not have any problems if you say no, but if you say yes, then there are various issues that may come up, there maybe inquiries, etc. But he was not afraid of that. He went on with a positive approach and tried to help as much as possible.

Lastly, he was always receptive to new ideas. New techniques of working. Technology underwent a change, but he adapted himself to that and tried to make it as much friendly as possible. His memory still remains, today many of his works are continued by his successors and we remember him at this time, particularly the Lalit loyalists gather to pay him homage and I hope the new generation also gets inspiration from him. Today, we have an eminent educationist Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath to speak on higher education and I am sure all of us are looking forward to her speech.

Thank you.