Welcome address by Mr. Ajit Nimbalkar on the occasion of the 29th Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture held on 23rd August 2023

Mr. Shaktikanta Das, Mr. Manoj Saunik, Mr.Anil Bhandari, Bharat Doshi, and friends.

Let me begin with congratulations to ISRO Scientists, Prime Minister of India and the people of India. Indeed, this is an eventful day.

We are organizing the 29th Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture. A few words about Lalit, a close friend of mine. We entered St. Xavier's College, Bombay, in 1959, along with my other colleagues. We did our graduation together, we did our Masters, Lalit did it in Economics and I did it in political science. We appeared for UPSC exams, Lalit appeared while doing his Masters, I appeared after I did my Masters, so I was one year junior to him in the Services. Both of us were allotted to Maharashtra cadre.

In the college itself Lalit stood out. St. Xavier's College, at that time, was more known for placing students in private sector, even in films and less in government service. Lalit scored high marks in economics, he worked under Prof. R. K. Hazari, who later on became Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India. Lalit was his favourite student. After entering service, through out his career, he was a simple man but a high thinking intellectual. Irrespective of the post he occupied, he was available to everybody, right from the office boy to the top industrialists.

After finishing his district level postings, he went to MIDC, first as deputy CEO and later on he became CEO. He went to SICOM and then was Secretary Industries. Though he was known for the time he spent in industries sector, the government of Maharashtra also entrusted him with other important assignments. During that time, we had employment guarantee scheme. Maharashtra was a pioneer in that and politically was led by Mr V. S. Page, few administrators were associated with that and Lalit was one of them and Dr. Venkatesan another important administrator. The scheme was so successful that the government of India took it up and implemented it all over the country.

Then came the Urban Ceiling Act, though harsh in its implementation, and Lalit was entrusted with that job, and he tried to help people as much as

possible even in the implementation of that Act. Later on, in 1985, the government of India appointed him as Joint Secretary in the Petroleum Ministry. Around that time I was also appointed as Joint Secretary in the Labour Ministry, government of India. The then Chief Minister, when the transfer orders came, stopped it, and he said why should good officers go to government of India, we want to retain them here in the State. It was a blow to us, because for no mistake of ours we would have been blacklisted by government of India for three years. Mr. Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar was the Chief Minister and Mr. B. G. Deshmukh was the Chief Secretary at that time. Mr. Deshmukh tried to help get us relieved, but he could not do so.

I then approached Mr. Vasantdada Patil, who was the mentor of the chief minister, and a few months earlier he was the chief minister of Maharashtra. Mr. Vasantdada Patil, I worked in his secretariat also for some time, was very practical and understood the rules and regulations. He introduced private colleges in engineering and medical in the State, a major contribution. He understood the issue and talked to the chief minister and told him that relieving these officers will be in the interest of Maharashtra and our officers must work in the government of India and it would also be in the interest of their personal career. So, because of Mr. Vasantdada Patil, both Lalit and I, were relieved and we went to government of India. We went at the same time.

Coincidentally, Lalit and I, had flats in Shalaka, I was on the 13th floor and he was on the 11th floor, and when we went to government of India we stayed in Vinay Marg, Chanakyapuri, in back to back houses.

Lalit was available to everybody. One failing I found in him was lack of exercise, somehow he did not take his health very seriously. Unfortunately, a tragic end. He was very fond of children; my younger Son would approach him for his birthday gift than even me. He was very fond of his daughter, Hemal, a family man but devouted to work, complete devotion.

In 1990 both of us came back to the State, I came as secretary to the chief minister Mr Sharad Pawar and he took over as SICOM Managing Director. Later on as Secretary, Industries, he accompanied the chief minister to Davos. Unfortunately, while taking a walk with Mr Vinay Bansal, who was secretary to the chief minister, he had an attack and he collapsed. After his demise some

of his close friends and family members decided to form the Lalit Doshi Memorial Foundation. Bharat Doshi took the main lead and there were other close friends of his who contributed to this event. Today this lecture series has become an event, to which all of us look forward to. We have also made a contribution to St. Xavier's College, where an event is held in his memory every year and to Bharda New High School and Junior College.

As a person Lalit was very simple and accessible to all, we miss him a lot. In 1995 the first lecture was organized, Mr. Vaghul delivered the first lecture, after that we have had series of distinguished speakers, some of them like Mr. Deepak Parekh, Mr. Uday Kotak, who are here today, and I am sure the activities of the foundation will continue in the future. The trustees of the foundation are getting old, trustees like Mr. Prabhakaran, Mr. B. P. Bam, Mr. Arun Bongirwar, Dr. Homiar Vachha, have passed away. But we hope the younger ones will come forward and continue these activities.

Thank you.