Welcome address by Mr. Ajit Nimbalkar on the occasion of the 26th Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture held on 4th August 2020

Welcome to the 26th Lalit Doshi Memorial Lecture. This is an annual event, but with a difference. All the 25 lectures earlier have taken place at the Y B Chavan Centre Auditorium in Mumbai. This year, due to the reasons that all of you are well aware of, we are having the event through live webcast on Microsoft Teams. However, this is in keeping with the spirit that Lalit Doshi had. He could adapt himself to any situation and come out with flying colours. This lecture will be as eventful as the earlier 25 lectures have been, if not better.

A few words regarding Lalit Doshi the person after whom this event is named and the Foundation which has his name. I knew Lalit Doshi since 1959, when he and I entered St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. Both of us did our graduation from the college, passed out in 1963. He was a student of Economics. I was a student of political science. We did our M.A. together and then entered the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). Lalit was a favourite student of economics of Dr. R.K. Hazari, who later went on to become the deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India. He taught students at St. Xavier's College for a few years and Lalit learnt a lot from him.

Generally, St. Xavier's College does not attract many students in government service. However, the class of 1963 was an exception. Three of us from that class went on to join government service. Lalit Doshi, Vijay Nambiar, who was also a political science student, and myself. Vijay of course went on to the foreign service, later on became ambassador to China, Pakistan, other countries and the United Nations. I am sure he is among the audience and listening to all of us from Delhi. After doing M.A. Lalit joined the service (IAS), he was allotted to Maharashtra cadre, did his district postings and then went on to specialize in industry.

The foundation of industries in Maharashtra was laid down in the 60s and 70s, largely due to the efforts of an enlightened political leadership supported by a strong team of administrators. Lalit Doshi had a big role in this. He was with MIDC, SICOM and later on Secretary Industries also. But it was not only industries that he worked in. For some time, he looked after the employment guarantee scheme in the planning department. In fact, when Government of India

started this scheme at the national level, he was one of the few persons who was invited to Delhi to know more about this scheme. At that time, Mr. V. S. Page, the then Chairman of the Legislative Council, Dr. Venkatesan, who was then Secretary, Planning Department, and Lalit Doshi were among the major players in the employment guarantee scheme. He also played an important role in the implementation of the Urban Ceiling Act and tried to make it as practical as possible.

In 1985, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Vasantdada Patil, had just resigned. The Chief Secretary, Mr R D Pradhan had gone to Delhi as home secretary and Mr. B. G. Deshmukh had taken over. Lalit and I both opted to go to Government of India on being empanelled as Joint Secretaries. Our orders came from the Government of India. But the new chief minister felt that good officers should not leave the state. They should remain with the state and stayed the transfers. This was a big blow at that time, but thanks to the intervention of Mr. Vasantdada Patil and the efforts of Mr. B G Deshmukh, who was chief secretary, the new Chief Minister was made to convince that it is in the interest of the state as well as the officers, that we be allowed to go to Government of India.

And in 1985, both of us rushed to Delhi as soon as the stay was vacated. We stayed in just neighbouring houses at Vinay Marg and both our families were constantly at each other's house. Lalit spent five years in the Department of Petro Chemicals Industries at that time. He never limited himself only to office work, he insisted on being in the field also and getting actual feedback. He was a family man yet approachable to everybody. In 1990, after completing five years in Government of India, both of us came back to Mumbai when Mr Sharad Pawar was the Chief Minister. I came as secretary to CM, he came back to the prestigious SICOM. Later on, from SICOM, he went on to become the Secretary, Industries. And in 1994 he accompanied Mr Sharad Pawar to Davos. The Chief Minister had been invited to Davos to participate in the international conference, and he took along with him Lalit Doshi, Secretary Industries, and Vinay Bansal, who was secretary to the CM at that time. On 30th January, at Davos, after completing the day's proceedings, Lalit and Vinay Bansal returned back to the hotel and went for a walk. Then Lalit had a heart attack and he passed away much before his time.

Lalit was a simple man who was different from many of the administrators. He always tried to find a solution to any problem that existed. He could never accept a no and kept on trying. He

was a simple person, but yet available to all. And friendly, whether it was an industrialist or the common man. And he tried his best to help out from the given situation. As a person he was a family man devoted to Pratima and was fond of his daughter Hemal and looked after her. But, before she grew up, he unfortunately had to go away. Wherever he worked, he tried his best and tried to help people and was really a person who was a public servant available to all.

Thank you.