



English rendering of the text of PM's address at the ceremony to release the photo book "President Pranab Mukherjee - A Statesman" at Rashtrapati Bhavan

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It's a robust journey with statesmanship since 1857 until now. There were several stages, several companions and so were there several challenges but Statesman tried his best to fulfill his responsibilities. Yesterday, I had an opportunity for a long casual chat with Mr. RNR. Once I had an opportunity to hold a very detailed discussion with Mr. Irani. He was a very staunch critic of me but it was a pleasure talking to him; he knew a lot. He was full of humor and easily accessible and that gave me an opportunity once in a while.

Our country has one weakness that could be the reason why all may not agree with me. We never emerged as a history conscious society and, therefore, looked at the Englishmen how they took care of small things. Recently, I was there in Portugal, we wanted to access at least the photo copies of the correspondence between Goa and Portugal when Goa was under the Portugal's rule. We know about the history of such a long period through those letters. This time when I visited Portugal, its government provided photo copies of that correspondence to Goa government that encapsulates those letters. We got it like a testimony to chronological journey of all the developments. In our country nobody cared for that. Even today, if we need to study something in India then our scholars are required to visit Britain to access its libraries to dig out the information. Basically, it's not in our nature. I think, it's not for devotion to an individual, these things are very important in the life of a nation and will do a great service to our future generations if we take them as historical events.

Look, this is a photo feature. For ordinary persons like us President means protocol; someone who is surrounded by big, powerful people; it means singing of national anthem; it means people standing up in a very special manner; the world sees these things. But we only get to know about that lively person among all these procedures when a photo journalist clicks his camera and when we see those pictures in form of a book then we realize that our President laughs like a child. It really moves your heart.

Even if there is an eminent guest from abroad, no matter how tall he may be, you can see from the pictures how confident the President is, it gives you immense pride. All these things are encapsulated in this book. It means that there is an individual besides the office of the President, these things reflect when we see through the camera, it reflects in the photographs.

During the time of Mahatma Gandhi so many cameras were not there, neither were there the arrangements like this but when you see the two photographs of Gandhi Ji; in one photographs he is sweeping with a broom in his hand and in the other one he is looking at something through a microscope. When you see these pictures then you get to know the magnitude of one's personality. These two pictures, they are capable of reflecting two sides of Gandhi Ji. In a way, when a photographer clicks a picture then he captures the moment in a way that is capable of making that moment everlasting.

Such documents lend immortality to history and Varun Joshi has tried to bring that thing in this document, the Statesman's team did the job very well. Otherwise when the era of SMS began you might have noticed that there were several articles that predicted that it would end the era of letter writing. Letter Writing in itself is a great legacy of human culture. Future generations will be deprived of many things if the era of letter writing comes to an end. Who would have thought about these things when those articles were published 25 years ago, even people at that time had no idea that technology would change so dramatically, perhaps every individual would become so creative that he can develop as a writer and new technologies will make us creative and may be it will be preserved as well.

There was a time when autograph had its importance then we gradually moved towards photograph and now there is selfie that is a combination of both an autograph and a photograph. Look at the changes. Selfie is a combination of photograph and an autograph. We can experience this thing that how far an idea can develop. If you look at this photo feature, then I think what people know about politicians, I will seek forgiveness of newsmen, several of them are here, that there is another aspect to an individual's life outside the scope of newspapers. Newspapers are not able to capture these things in the hustle and bustle of daily coverage, however, when things are produced through research after some time then it is realized that there is a different aspect of the person whom we see in our daily life. And therefore it's important to understand the inner feelings of the person, I think that this book provides the opportunity to know Pranab Da, provides the opportunity to get close to him and sometimes I feel that it provides the opportunity to peep inside his mind. I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Gupta Ji and his entire team, especially to Bhai Varun Joshi.

I'm fortunate that I got the opportunity to work with the respected President. I look back at my life that I got the opportunity to work with the people from different ideologies during the emergency, at that time I was not in politics, I was working in the social field. This opportunity was to work with the people with diametrically opposite ideologies. I was very young but during that time I learned a lot, I met with a lot of people. At that time Dhiru Bhai Desai was the vice chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapeeth. I used to visit his place during the emergency, he was a renowned Gandhian, Ravindra Verma was Congress man with a socialist ideology, I got the opportunity to get very close to these people and also with George Fernandez. It was a big opportunity in giving shape to my life. I recall this with a great pride that I got the opportunity to work with eminent Congress leader Naval Kishore Sharma Ji when I became the Chief Minister. I got the opportunity to learn a lot of things. And I believe that I was very fortunate to settle in Delhi under the guidance of Pranab Da. It was a great support for me.

I'm the kind of person who always wants that the job on hand should not finish early, because if it ends early what will I do in the evening? Once I saw this thing in a news paper, you people are able to get the news leaked from our office, you are very good at that! One day I was taking the meeting with officers and it was around 8 or 9 pm in the night, and the meeting got over by around

9 pm then I suddenly quipped that the meeting finished so early! So even at 9 pm in the night they said that it's okay we would see how can we pass the time, we would see! There is not a single meeting between the President and me in the last three years in which he did not show concern like a father, and this is the voice of my inner conscience that he always showed concerns like a father shows for his child. He said, look Modi Ji, you will have to rest for half the day. Pranab Da used to ask me: Why are you working so hard, please cut down some of your programs and you must take care of your health! It was during the assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, he used to tell me that winning and losing was part of life and used to ask me: Will you take care of your health or not? It's not a part of President's responsibilities but it was his nature, his feelings that he was concerned about a colleague. And I believe that this personality, this respect, this nature is very inspirational for the country and for the people like us what has been done by Pranab Da. I bow down to the respected President of India for his services. And today I congratulate Bhai Varun Joshi, I congratulate him for creating a legacy for future generations, I congratulate Statesman Group.

Thank you very much.

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