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## Press Release

### Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey Inaugurates 25<sup>th</sup> Edition of New Delhi World Book Fair

“Books were imperative in the past, they are imperative at present and will remain imperative in future also,” said Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey, Minister of State for Human Resource Development while declaring open the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of New Delhi World Book Fair being held in New Delhi at Pragati Maidan from 7 to 15 January 2017.

He added that whenever we go through difficult times, books are a source of relief. Books help us to understand our thoughts and express them in a better way. Therefore, they have been given significant place.

Talking about the tradition of books in India, Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey said that sacred books like Bhagvad Geeta, Bible, Quran and Gurugranth Sahib are considered important in India. In ancient times when the small kingdoms were fighting against each other, books like Kamban’s *Ramayana* united people. He further said that the Theme of the Fair, Manushi would bring forth the important contributions of women.

Dr Paratibha Ray, noted Odia author and Jnanpith awardee was the guest of honour on the occasion. Sharing her thoughts on being a woman writer, she said that literature is beyond gender and geography. All writers are humanists, male or female. He added that women writings are very powerful and separate entity because views are different and therefore, writings are also different. She remarked that Indian women writings have vitality and variety. Women writers have tried to knit the society with unified spiritual values. They are sensitive to traditional values.

H.E. Mr Tomasz Kozlowski, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to India was the special guest on the occasion. He said that publishing industry is flourishing in India. Indian industry is one of top six countries in the world. He also mentioned that Indian literature is widely read in Europe and literature in different Indian languages like Hindi, Malayalam and Tamil has been translated into European languages including Polish. He also declared that the European Union would be guest country at next edition of New Delhi World Book Fair.

Earlier, Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT welcomed the guests. He said that this edition of New Delhi World Book is very special for NBT as it is the silver jubilee of the book Fair. Moreover, NBT is celebrating 60 years of its foundation this year.

Defining NBT's past six decades of journey as a journey of knowledge, Shri Sharma said that NBT has put up a special exhibit showcasing NBT's achievements and contributions towards promoting books and reading.

"India is the land learning and women have played a significant role in carrying forward the tradition of learning since Vedic times," said Shri Sharma. He added that Manushi, the theme of the fair is depicting their major contributions in spreading knowledge. He also talked about NBT's Veergatha and Women Pioneers series which have recently been launched in an attempt to connect the youth with our glorious past.

Ms. Shubhra Singh, Executive Director, Indian Trade Promotion Organisation also spoke on the occasion. She said that several facilities like online tickets, paid wifi, ATM etc. have been provided to the visitors at the book fair.

Ms. Aparna Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of HRD, was also present at the occasion.

Dr Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT thanked the distinguished guests, authors, publishers, distributors for their active participation in the Fair. She also thanked India Trade Promotion Organisation for their support. She also hoped that the visitors would get an opportunity to glance through the rich tradition of women writings.