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Press Release

Shri Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Human Resource Development Opens New Delhi World Book Fair 2019

"The world of books is unique. Books have their own fragrance and to appreciate it, we need to read books," said Shri Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Human Resource Development while declaring open the the 27th edition of New Delhi World Book Fair at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi on 5 January 2019. He added that reading is part of culture of India and the desire to read books has never been less.

"With growing presence of Kindle and audio books," Shri Javadekar remarked, "the number of people who read printed books, has not diminished and the number is increasing day by day."

Emphasizing upon the importance of the habit of reading, Shri Javadekar said, "Reading 50 pages of a book every day brings new ideas, imagination, and dimensions in life." He added that reading enriches life and brings prosperity in life. He also talked about Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's love for books. He said that despite his busy schedule, he finds out time to read books.

He said, "This year the theme of the Fair is 'Books for Readers with Special Needs', and during the Fair several literary and cultural activities will be organised at the Fair. He further said last year more than 12 lakh booklovers visited the Fair which shows that the culture of reading is increasing.

Welcoming Sharjah as the Guest of Honour at the Fair, Shri Javadekar said that more than two million Indians have made UAE their home which shows that the cultural ties between the two countries have grown over the years.

"As a member of Executive Council of Emirate of Sharjah, the body which translates the vision of His Highness Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah. I am honoured to be here today to celebrate another significant milestone. We are all here today at New Delhi World Book Fair, a major calendar event in the cultural and publishing world", said H.E. Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Qasimi.

On being the Guest of Honour at the Fair, Mr Fahim said, "We are excited today to turn this opportunity into a memorable missionary and cultural event, straight from the heart of Sharjah and UAE for all the book fair participants and visitors." He added that book fairs are essential platforms that allow us to share our intellectual property and to learn from both of cultures and strengthening relations.

He said that India is UAE's long standing partners and continue to do that on economic, scientific, educational and cultural front. He remarked that occasions such as these are necessary to foster stronger relations.

Welcoming the guests, Prof. Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT said that although technology has become an integral part of our life, but printed books are very close to the hearts of the Indian readers. The number of people visiting the book fair, shows that books still attracts readers. He also talked about the diverse nature of publishing programme of National Book Trust, India. He said that NBT publishes books in over 40 major Indian languages for readers of all age groups. He hoped that the booklovers will get an opportunity to read books in over 20 Indian languages at the Fair. He remarked that booklovers wait for the New Delhi World Book Fair for whole year as they are able to find out those books which are not easily available.

Later, Shri Prakash Javadekar also presented a copy of book, Exam Warriors, authored by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to the guests from Sharjah.

During the inaugural function, NBT Calendar 2019 based on the theme 'Readers with Special Needs', the Hindi and English editions of the book *Bibi Fatima and Her Sons*, authored by H H Sultan bin Muhammad Al-Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah and published by NBT, and catalogue of Braille books published by NBT were also released.

Mr Ahmad bin Rakkad Al Ameri, Chairman, Sharjah Book Authority; Shri J L Kaul, Padma Shri awardee and Secretary General, All India Confederation of the Blind; Mr Habib Youseff Abdallah Al Sayegh, Authors' representative from Sharjah; Shri R. Subrahmanyam, Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Shri Deepak Kumar, Executive Director, ITPO were also present on the occasion.

The programme concluded with the screening of a video of National Anthem, directed by Govind Nihalini in which Shri Amitabh Bachchan, noted actor performed National Anthem along with differently-abled children. Earlier, the welcome song was presented by the children of Alpana, an NGO.

Later, Shri Prakash Javadekar, Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Qasimi and other dignitaries inaugurated the Theme and Foreign Pavilions at the Fair.

While proposing vote of thanks, Dr Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT said, "Across societies, we all worship words in some way or the other. And wherever the words are worshipped, it becomes the place of worship. She also thanked Sharjah for being the Guest of Honour at the Fair, All India Confederation of Blind, ITPO, Delhi Police, Kailash hospital and banks for their support.

On the first day itself, book lovers showed great interest and as per an estimate more than 50,000 visitors came to buy books in large numbers and see the book fair.