

**REMARKS BY AMB SIBI GEORGE AT THE CONDOLENCE MEETING ON THE  
DEMISE OF SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE, FORMER PRESIDENT, SEPT 3, 2020**

Good evening ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the Embassy.

We are gathered here today to pay homage to our former President Honorable Late Shri Pranab Mukherjee. While we mourn the passing away of this great son of India, we also celebrate the life of a true patriot and national hero who dedicated his life in service to his people and his nation.

My dear brothers and sisters,

Honorable Shri Pranab Mukherjee led our nation from the front upholding the values and principles of our Constitution. He believed that we, children of Bharat, should ensure that in whatever we do as citizens and in whatever role we play towards building our nation, we should do our duty with integrity, commitment and unflinching loyalty to the values enshrined in our Constitution.

He believed that India should always look forward to meet every challenge head on but to never forget the history through which it was built. He believed that through education, India will be able to reach its next golden age.

As we are celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Constitution this year, let me quote from what Hon'ble Shri Pranab Mukherjee said in his last address to the nation, in his farewell speech at the Parliament on July 25, 2017. He said and I quote: "On 26th January 1950, the Constitution of India came into effect. In a remarkable display of idealism and courage, we the people of India gave to ourselves a sovereign democratic republic to secure to all its citizens justice, liberty and equality. We undertook to promote amongst all citizens fraternity, the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. These ideals became the lodestars of the modern Indian state. The Indian Constitution consisting of 395 Articles and 12 Schedules is not merely a legal document for administration but the Magna Carta of socio-economic transformation of the country. It represents the hopes and aspirations of the billion plus Indians." Unquote. The biggest tribute that we can pay to our founding fathers and heroes like Shri Pranab

Mukherjee is to cherish and uphold the values of our constitution in our words and deeds.

To pay homage to Hon'ble Shri Pranab Mukherjee, I would like to quote from the messages given by our President and our Prime Minister after the passing away of Shri Pranab Mukherjee.

Hon'ble Rashtrapatiji said, I quote:

Shri Pranab Mukherjee's demise is passing of an era. A colossus in public life, he served Mother India with the spirit of a sage. The nation mourns losing one of its worthiest sons.

Endowed with perspicacity and wisdom, Bharat Ratna Shri Mukherjee combined tradition and modernity. In his five decade long illustrious public life, he remained rooted to the ground irrespective of the exalted offices he held. He endeared himself to people across political spectrum.

As the First Citizen, he continued to connect with everyone, bringing Rashtrapati Bhavan closer to the people. He opened its gates for public visit.

Unquote

Our Hon'ble Prime Minister said:

Quote

India grieves the passing away of Bharat Ratna Shri Pranab Mukherjee. He has left an indelible mark on the development trajectory of our nation. A scholar par excellence, a towering statesman, he was admired across the political spectrum and by all sections of society.

During his political career that spanned decades, Shri Pranab Mukherjee made long-lasting contributions in key economic and strategic ministries. He was an outstanding Parliamentarian, always well-prepared, extremely articulate as well as witty.

As India's President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee made Rashtrapati Bhavan even more accessible to common citizens. He made the President's house a centre of

learning, innovation, culture, science and literature. His wise counsel on key policy matters will never be forgotten by me.

Unquote

The State of Kuwait has officially conveyed its condolences to our leadership. The Deputy Emir has conveyed a message to Hon'ble Rashtrapatiji. Now let me quote from the message of the Deputy Foreign Minister of Kuwait His Excellency Mr. Khaled Sulaiman Al-Jarallah wrote in the condolence book when he visited India House yesterday. He wrote and I quote, "On behalf of the government and people of the State of Kuwait, we extend our sincere condolences to the friendly Indian people and to the Indian government on the death of the former President of the Republic of India Mr. Pranab Mukherjee. This leader of this great Nation has always been a supporter of the Arab nation's causes, on top of which is the Palestine issue, and he was a pioneer of the Kuwaiti-Indian friendship throughout his Presidency. So, once again we offer our sincere condolences and ask him mercy.

Unquote

I thank the leadership of the Government of Kuwait and many friends of India in Kuwaiti for the condolences they conveyed to me over phone and mails and letters. I also thank the Ambassadors of various friendly countries who visited India House and conveyed their condolences.

I thank each one of you for joining us today to pay homage to the departed leader.

Thank you.