

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER,
DR. MANMOHAN SINGH**

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): *My esteemed friend and Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus sahib; Respected Vice-President of India, Hamid Ansari sahib; Respected Mera Kumariji, Speaker, Lok Sabha; Respected Soniaji; Respected Advaniji; Respected Arun Jaitleyji; Governors; Members of Parliament; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:*

I am delighted to be here today on the occasion of the Second Professor Hiren Mukerjee Memorial Lecture. I welcome and greet Professor Muhammad Yunus who will deliver this highly prestigious address.

Professor Yunus is truly an exceptional human being and it is really a privilege to be in his company. He has been a Professor of Economics, a civil servant, and a social worker. His work demonstrates the great power of ideas. In his case, his path is best described by an Urdu couplet: *õMain Akela Hi Chala Tha Janebe Manjil, Magar Log Milte Gaye Aur Caravan Banta Gaya!ö*

Professor Yunus is one of those exceptional human beings who has applied his knowledge of economics and society for reducing the poverty of millions and millions of men and women. In this, he has indeed been a great visionary of our times. We have much to learn from the recipient of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize and I once again applaud and salute his work and his presence here amidst us.

I also congratulate Smt. Meira Kumar, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, for having invited Professor Yunus to address us. The Professor Hiren Mukerjee Memorial Lecture was instituted by the previous Speaker Shri Somnath Chatterjee. Though he is not present here today, he deserves special thanks for this initiative. I am sure this annual event will continue to inform and educate us greatly in years to come.

The speaker last year was another Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen. While welcoming him I had mentioned about his passion for inclusive growth which should

improve the lives of the poorest and the most underprivileged sections of our society. This is a passion which today's speaker Professor Yunus shares with Professor Amartya Sen. Their work is different but there is so much in common in the motivation that drives both their works.

Professor Yunus has revolutionized the idea of micro-credit and made it accessible to the poorest of the poor. With his declaration that, "Credit is a human right; it is a powerful expression of what he believes in", he has brought about a paradigm shift in reaching out to the dispossessed and the disinherited. His work has especially touched poor women and empowered them. Indeed, Professor Hiren Mukerjee would have been very happy today were he to listen to Professor Yunus, for Professor Yunus embodies in himself many of the ideals that Professor Mukerjee lived for.

The title of today's Lecture, "Social Business – A Step Toward Creating a New Economic and Social Order" would have appealed to both the communist and liberal in Professor Mukerjee because it is a subject that explores the possibility of a more egalitarian society through the power of new ideas.

As we pay tribute to the memory of an outstanding scholar and parliamentarian, a man whose life was one of tireless service to the cause of the poor, a great son of our country, I will not take more of your time. Like all of you, I look forward to the Lecture by Professor Yunus which, I am sure, is going to be both exciting and enlightening.

Thank you.

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