

9 January 2016

New Delhi

### Press Release

#### Smt Smriti Zubin Irani Inaugurates New Delhi World Book Fair 2016

“We believe in *Athithi Devo Bhavaa* and we worship the guests. We hope that the Chinese will feel at home in India,” said Smt Smriti Zubin Irani, Hon’ble Minister of Human Resource Development, while welcoming China as the Guest of Honour country at the the 24<sup>th</sup> edition of New Delhi World Book Fair at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi to be held from 9 to 17 January 2016. The Fair is being organized by the National Book Trust, India in collaboration with the India Trade Promotion Organisation.

Talking about the India-China relationship sine ancient times, she said that there is a mention of Chinese silk dress in *Arthashastra* which shows how Indian history finds resonance of relationship with China. She hoped that both the countries will not only exchange culture and but also knowledge and strengthen ties.

Smt Irani appreciated efforts undertaken by the NBT to bring out 16 new titles under the Navlekhan series and hoped that NBT would publish books in 22 major Indian languages. She also said that the children from various states of India including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Manipur, Assam among others with select photographers would be sent as *shodh yatris* to foreign countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and their memoir will be published in the form of books. She also appreciated that for the school children, senior citizens and people with special needs, the entry to the book fair is free. She also said that the children’s pavilion will attract more and more children .

“The Vedas are the first record of culture not only of India but also the world,” said Shri S L Bhyrappa, eminent author at the inaugural function. Elucidating the role that the epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have played in enriching the culture of India, Shri Bhyrappa said, “The poets, writers, artists and scholars have been inspired heavily from the scriptures. Indian

dance forms like Kathakali, Bharatnatyam, Odissi rely on these scriptures for theme. They have become the criteria of dance and music.”

Shri Bhyrappa also felt that efforts should be made to make Sanskrit a language of communication, administration and science & technology.

Mr Sun Shoushan, Vice Minister, SAPPFRT, China said that New Delhi World Book Fair 2016 has set up an important platform for the cultural exchanges and mutual understanding all of the world. As Guest of Honour country we are pleased to get together with the publishers of India. He remarked that the publishing exchanges between china and India have played an important role in cementing the relationships between peoples and promoting cultural exchanges.

Shri Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Chairman, NBT said that on the lines of inspiration from Smt Smriti Zubin Irani, the Hon’ble Minister of Human Resource Development, the Trust has come up with a new Navlekhan series for young writers under the age of forty and has brought out 16 new titles. He also informed that the theme pavilion will display books beginning from *bhoj patra* to ebooks and will also display ancient scripts.

Shri L C Goyal, CMD, ITPO hoped that the New Delhi World Book Fair will go a long way in disseminating the culture of India.

Mr Liu Zhenyou, eminent Chinese author; Mr Le Yucheng, Chinese Ambassador to India and Shri VVinay Sheel Oberoi, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development also spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, Dr Rita Chowdhury, Director, NBT welcomed the guests present on the occasion. She hoped that through books, booklovers especially the young will get an opportunity to connect with the cultural heritage of India.

Later, Smt Irani inaugurated the Theme Pavilion and the China pavilion.