

PRESS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER & AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA
09, DDU MARG**

**NEW DELHI
22 JULY, 2020**

The following is the text of speech of Comptroller and Auditor General of India Shri Rajiv Mehrishi delivered after unveiling of the statue of Dr. B R Ambedkar in the CAG office, by Honorable Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu here today.

“Sir, on behalf of the entire family of the Indian Audits and Accounts Department, allow me to welcome you, amidst us. These are difficult times; we are about 60 of us here, in keeping with the social distancing norms, but the rest of us are attending this function remotely, as it is being webcast. We are all aware, Sir, that since the first lockdown, this is the first time you have agreed to attend a function, and we are truly humbled that the exception has been made for us. While profusely thanking you, we would also like to assure you that all safety norms, and more, are being followed for this function; including a row-wise exit from this hall, at announced intervals, once this function is over.

Sir, the exception you have made in attending a public function is for commemorating a truly remarkable person: Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar or Babasaheb, as he was popularly known, did not have a very long life; he passed away a few months after his 65th birthday.

But, to these 65 years, he brought value of 130 years, if not more. His list of achievements is long and truly remarkable; he was a social reformer, a jurist, an academic, an economist, an anthropologist, a politician and an author. He had a Masters degree from the University of Bombay, a Ph.D. degree each, from the University of Columbia, and from the London School of Economics. He also qualified as Barrister-at-Law from Gray’s Inn.

Most of us, in spite of over privileged backgrounds, would find it difficult, if not impossible, to match these academic achievements. **But Babasaheb came from a humble background, and a caste that was considered untouchable. We are all aware of the discrimination faced by Babasaheb as a student, from**

school itself, and these stories are too many, and too painful, to narrate here today.

In spite of all the adversity he faced, there was perhaps no more zealous a patriot than Babasaheb; and few were as enlightened and as liberal as him in his legal and economic thinking. Had Babasaheb (and Gandhiji) not had the sagacity to arrive at the Poona Pact (1932), the British might have succeeded in dividing us, apart from religious lines, along caste lines also. The pact, signed by Dr. Ambedkar and Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya also marked the beginning of a unique, and perhaps the world's largest, affirmative action programme. The enlightened and much-lauded Constitution that we have, which gives primacy to the rule of law, and independent institutions, such as the C&AG, is in no small measure, on account of Babasaheb's lerned and wise thinking. In debate after debate in the Constituent Assembly one can see the impact and imprint of Dr. Ambedkar on the values of equity and justice in the Indian Constitution. He is rightly regarded as the Architect of the Constitution.

What is less known about Baba Saheb were his liberal progressive views on the path that the Indian economy should take, but did not. Again, this is not the time or place to discuss the path that was most likely to have hit the bull's eye.

We are gathered here, to remember and celebrate this remarkable person: a man of many parts, and a whole that was more than the sum of his parts.

We originally wanted to unveil this statue on 14th April, Baba saheb's birthday, but the circumstances, created by the pandemic, willed otherwise. Today has been chosen because it, too, was a special day for the Constituent Assembly; On this day, in 1947, the Constituent Assembly adopted the tricolor as the national flag, which is the pride of every Indian today. Dr. Ambedkar was a member of the Flag Committee.

Sir, we thank you once again for being here with us, and for unveiling the statue of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, whom we auditors hold in the highest esteem and regard, not only for his achievements and patriotism, but also because it is he who ensured that India's Supreme Audit Institution is truly independent."

Press Release and photographs will follow

BSC/SS/TT