

TALE VED ÅPNINGEN AV NEHRU-UTSTILLINGEN I MUNCH-MUSEET
ONSDAG 15. JUNI 1983, kl. 1700

Madame Prime Minister,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to wish you all most welcome to the inauguration of this photo exhibition on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India.

Pandit Nehru is well known in Norway. Our school-children are told in their text-books about the important role that Jawaharlal Nehru played in the birth of an independent India. As Prime Minister, he was instrumental in transforming India into a twentieth-century state, and at the same time preserving a rich and ancient culture. In January 1948, Pandit Nehru gave this description of India as he wanted it: "I am proud of India, not only because of her ancient magnificent heritage, but also because of her remarkable capacity to add to it by keeping the doors and windows of her mind and spirit open to fresh and invigorating winds from distant lands".

This statement also describes the man that made it. Pandit Nehru was himself deeply rooted in India's heritage, but at the same time "open to fresh and invigorating winds". It was only natural that he became one of the founding fathers of the Non-Aligned Movement and played an important role in international affairs.

The present photo exhibition at the Munch Museum gives us a comprehensive picture of Nehru. We meet him as a young student, in his struggle for an independent India together with Mahatma Gandhi; we meet him as husband, father and grand-father.

Of special interest to us is, quite understandably, that section of the exhibition which contains pictures from Mr. Nehru's official visit to Norway in 1957. We know that Nehru made a great impact on all who met him and we are happy to have the opportunity to renew in this way our acquaintance with the first Prime Minister of India.

On India's Independence Day, in 1947, Mr. Nehru was characterized as a "world-renowned leader of courage and vision".

We also today need such courage and vision. Therefore, this is not only an historic exhibition, but it is an exhibition of inspiration.

In concluding, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all who have made this extra-ordinary exhibition possible. We are particularly honoured by the presence of the present Prime Minister of India. I now declare this exhibition officially opened and invite you all to study the pictures here presented.