

# Amdavad recalls Kalam's ability to charm all

Kalam was a people's president who enjoyed immense goodwill from varied sections of the society

Mansi Mulani and Harita Dave

Indians are mourning the demise of India's former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. Kalam was a people's president who enjoyed immense goodwill from varied sections of the society.

**dna** takes you down the memory lane of people who had the privilege to meet him during his several visits to Ahmedabad. There is one common refrain that emerges out of every remembrance. Meeting with APJ Abdul Kalam left every single one of them feeling amazed at his tremendous zest and child-like fervour.

He donned many hats. He was not only a scientist but also a teacher. He died doing what he loved the most, ie teaching. Amdavadis remember him a day after his death by recollecting those moments and pay tribute to 'The Missile Man'.



Late APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India with Rajiv Vastupal, Pankaj Patel and Mahendra Patel during his visit to Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA) on May 17, 2002.

Recalling Dr Kalam's 2002 visit to Ahmedabad Rajiv Vastupal, Chairman - FICCI Gujarat State Council said, "While Dr Kalam was delivering his lecture, he got a message of being nominated for the post of president of India. Even after getting such a big news, he continued addressing the session normally." Vastupal recalled that Dr Kalam told him, 'Life is a journey and we should do whatever it takes to reach our destination.'



**Anil Gupta**  
Padma Shri and faculty at IIMA

Of the innumerable memories that I share with Dr Kalam, I recall one of his interactions with students on 'Public Policy Challenges' held at IIMA in 2010. Unfortunately his flight got delayed by three hours for the lecture scheduled at 6:30am. He started the lecture at 10:30pm that continued till 2am. The incident is not only unforgettable for me and the students but also exemplary for teachers across the country. Also, he attended the award function of National Innovation Foundation in 2002 and since then the network has been recognised by the presidents who followed his tenure. He connected presidency with people and students. If every teacher's dedication is as creative, collaborative and compassionate as him, his message stands delivered.



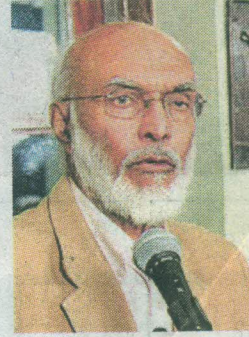
**Dr Sunil Shukla**  
director, EDI

The institute is indebted to Dr Kalam for his presence in EDI for the inauguration of 'Aashray - Promotion of Social Enterprises Foundation' on June 20, 2015. During his interaction at the institute he stated that entrepreneurship should be a part of formal education as it is a tool for empowering a country. He inspires me like none.



**Vikram Desai**  
director, DECU, ISRO

I first met Dr APJ Abdul Kalam at the space application research exhibition held in 2007. His approach of carrying out the exhibition as 'state of art' inspired me and has been considered for the upcoming exhibition. My next interaction with him was at 'Edusat' programme at Bangalore where some 15 schools were connected via video conferencing.



**Prafull Anubhai**  
chairman, board of management, AMU

"Yesterday our nation lost one of its greatest heroes it has seen in recent times. Dr Abdul Kalam had graced Ahmedabad University with his presence at the university's first Foundation Day in 2010." Prafull Anubhai, in a statement issued to the press, fondly remembered the visit and grieved the sudden demise of the former president. He said, "The AMU parivar is deeply saddened at Dr Kalam's passing away. As the chief guest at our first Foundation Day in 2010, he left beautiful memories for us with the deep affection he showed for our students and the instant rapport he built with them. His friendly nature and intellectual curiosity combined with humility made a deep impression on the entire parivar."



**Dushyant Raval**  
photographer

Dushyant Raval, 23, had met the former president three years ago during Kalam's visit to IIMA in 2012. "I could not contain my excitement and in a crowd of around 100 people I welcomed him by saying, 'Hello sir, and welcome to Ahmedabad! After this he asked me as to what I was doing at that time. And my answer was 'I am a wildlife photographer'. To this he jokingly asked me to click photos of all present there. He said that we all are wild, you can click a picture."

"He questioned me as to how I wished India to be in 2020. And my answer to his question was 'I wish to see India without any borders.' Raval found him to be very humble. He felt that Kalam never lost his eye contact, was a great listener and was full of depth and meaning.



**Malti Mehta, teacher**

Malti Mehta had met Kalam three times on his three separate visits to Ahmedabad. Recalling her interaction with him she said, "Our interactions were always focussed on innovations and students. One thing I admire about him is that he always looked upon everyone with high regards and never ignored even the smallest of questions. He even appreciated me for being a teacher." Mehta remembers his child-like smile.