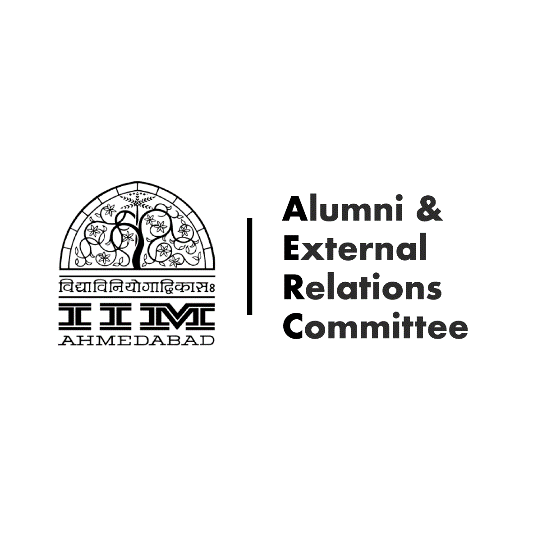
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Masterclass Speaker Series - Interactive session with Akhilesh Tilotia**

**August 23, 2018 | Ahmedabad**

Alumni External Relations Committee, with an initiative to deliver career-focused lectures featuring stalwart alumni who have achieved great success in their careers, began its Masterclass Speaker Series with the much talented Mr. Akhilesh Tilotia, currently the Officer on Special Duty with the Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Government of India. A graduate of the 2002 batch of IIMA, Mr. Tilotia is a man with a deep interest in public policy, capital markets, strategy consulting and entrepreneurship. He has worked with union cabinet ministers, senior bureaucrats, large fund houses, investors and organizations. A keen writer and a socio-economic analyst with a best-selling book, “The Making of India – Game Changing Transitions”, Mr. Tilotia also dons the hat of a prolific columnist and commentator in the business media. He is fascinated by math, mythology and human nature and is happiest chasing curiosities.

Mr. Akhilesh Tilotia began his talk with his fondest memories in the institute and then went on to explain how he decided his choices in his life: “They might not be the right choices but the time and way those choices are made matters”. His first major choice was whether to take up science or commerce in his high school. Irrespective of having good grades, he went against the then conventional path and took up commerce. He believes he was influenced by the people around him and he merely “wanted to earn money and make a name for himself”. But, the willingness to stick out of what the herd was following stuck with him since then. Mr. Tilotia urged everyone to make peace with one’s choices once they’re made and see where it takes one.

His next major choice was choosing between pursuing CA or MBA. Had the deferment option been available then, he would have worked for a few years and gained some experience before joining IIMA. Another decision he took up was opting for the exchange program against applying for a foreign internship. Though both were equally lucrative to him, they were mutually exclusive. Brightening up the session with his exchange memories, Mr. Tilotia mentioned the significance of travelling outside; the more one tours around the world, the more one realizes what great a position one occupies in India in terms of growth opportunities or career prospects, etc. Also, travelling gives a man a variety of experiences and assists him in making conscious choices. Reminiscing about his internship experience at BCG, Mumbai, he pointed out the importance of developing a personality, referring to the popular LAX test that if one is stuck in an airport with his/her employer, the latter will want to have an interesting time with the employee than see the person busy with his excel sheet.

Mr. Tilotia’s fourth dilemma was his choice between consulting and investment-banking and he ended up choosing the former one. He soon left his consulting job after 15 months of what he calls an “incredible experience that shaped him”. He attributes his contrasting career roles to an open mind and an attitude to not constrain oneself to a particular option. If what one is doing is not working out well for him/her, one should build more options for him(/her) self. His next major decision was whether to open his own venture or continue in his job. Mr. Tilotia mentions how entrepreneurship, in the outside world, is not an obvious choice, unlike the trend of today’s youngsters jumping into the idea of start-ups. He regrets that the management institutes in India do not teach how to grapple with risks in the practical world. But he also urges everyone to create something of their own and “never think of opportunity costs, because they’re all sunk costs”. He built his own financial services company on a business model that was very unique then. When the Great Recession hit, he eventually sold his company under great pressure without realizing how important the company was becoming in the industry.

The last part of Mr. Tilotia’s talk was interestingly titled “Life lemons”, referring to his present role in the civil aviation sector that came to him quite abruptly. An acquaintance of him offered an opportunity for him to join the ministry of finance, which he joined after much thought, only to quit after a month. The same ministry soon after changed to the ministry of civil aviation, which intrigued him so much that he re-joined because he wanted to do “something different”. And the rest, he says, is history. Ending the talk on a high note, Mr. Tilotia stresses on the importance of developing good relationships with one’s colleagues and acquaintances. He mentions, when one hits the age of 30, jobs won’t come to people because of his/her CV points but based on the relationships he/she has built across the years. When the dais was thrown open for questions, the packed auditorium was brimming with queries about the various situations that the students struggled with to which Mr. Tilotia very patiently answered.

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**About Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA)**

*Established in 1961, the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) is recognized globally for excellence in management education. One of the top management schools in the world, IIMA educates leaders of the enterprises. The Institute’s strategic priorities include: strengthening connection with its various constituencies, including academics, practitioners, alumni, and the community; nurturing a high-performance work environment of stretch, autonomy, and teamwork; and strategic growth while maintaining emphasis on quality.*

*The flagship Post Graduate Programme (PGP) is ranked 21st in the Financial Times Masters in Management Ranking 2017. As per the Financial Times’ Global MBA Ranking 2017, IIMA’s Post Graduate Programme for Executives (PGPX) is ranked 29th in the World. The postgraduate program in food and Agri Business (PGP-FABM) is ranked 1st in the Eduniversal Masters Ranking 2018. IIMA has been ranked as #1 Management institute as per the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.*

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