

‘Assess, don’t judge’ is former RBI Governor YV Reddy’s mantra

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Former RBI Governor YV Reddy is known for his wit and pragmatic approach towards life. On a rather warm Sunday morning here, introducing “Work, Wisdom, Legacy – 31 essays from India”, which he termed as probably his last book project, Reddy said, “This book is for my grandchildren and for all other grandchildren.”

At a time when maximum debates are happening on the number of working hours, this series of essays, written by people of eminence from varied professions and compiled by Reddy along with Ravi Menon, Shaji Vikraman

and Kavi Yaga (Reddy’s daughter), talks about the meaning of work, how values shape life and success, and the impact of technology on work life.

The idea behind the book was to tell “how a generation that began their careers shortly after India’s Independence explain the meaning of work to their twenty-first century grandchildren?” Reddy said. The final essay in the book, “Rear View”, explores the constantly evolving relationship between the state, market and citizens, which have defined our working lives.

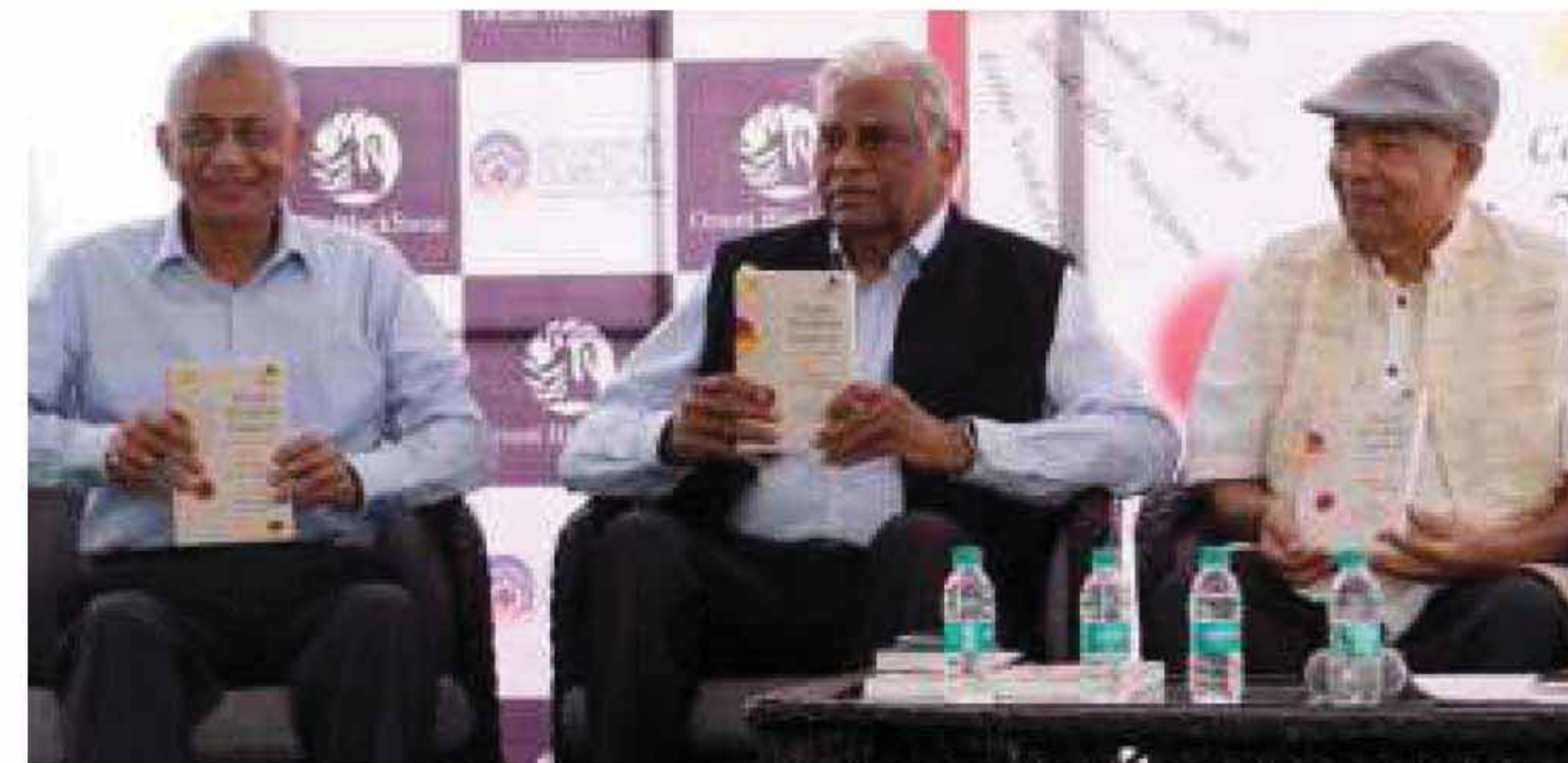
TRADEMARK STYLE

The preface of the book tells us what Reddy is made of —

his grit and dedication to work. The book is a collective effort but done in trademark Reddy style — simple, retrospective and yet of today, without giving any sermons.

The essay, “God laughs and other reflections,” where Reddy’s own journey has been captured, done along with Kavi Yaga, stresses on a term often used by him — “Assess, don’t judge”, a mantra he followed throughout his career. Of course, humour is everyone’s best friend, and Reddy has it in abundance. “Because of the formality of my job in the RBI, public often expected me to be serious. They were constantly surprised that I could be humorous,” he said.

“In my first year as RBI



YET ANOTHER GEM. Former RBI Governor YV Reddy (right) with Ravi Menon, leadership training expert, and K Padmanabhaiah, Chairman of the Court of Governors of the ASCI, at the launch of the book *Work, Wisdom, Legacy – 31 essays from India* in Hyderabad on Sunday

Governor, I was at a press conference when a journalist asked whether I was comfortable with the prevailing exchange rate. I said, I didn’t know. He asked, how I could

intervene in the market if I did not know the desirable exchange rate. I said, I can’t define God, but I can recognise the devil. And whenever I see the devil, I fight,” Reddy

shares in the essay.

The book has essays each from Shankar Acharya, P Chidambaram, Shyamala Gopinath, Venkatraman Anantha Nageswaran, Arun Shourie, NK Singh, Yashwant Sinha, Usha Thorat, KV Kamath, NR Nayarana Murthy, a number of civil servants and journalists.

“India has always been a country of many paradoxes. One can only hope that her innate resilience and the unbreakable spirit of its people, who preserved a way of life through centuries of foreign dominance, will see her through. These aspects must ensure a better world for its citizens to lead lives of improved quality — with or without work,” they say.