

Hon'ble the Chief Justice, my esteemed brother and sister Judges, President of the Bar Association and other office bearers of the Association. Mr.P.P. Malhotra, Additional Solicitor General of India, distinguished senior advocates, members of the district judiciary, members of the Delhi High Court Bar Association, Ladies & Gentleman !

We have assembled today to bid an affectionate farewell to our esteemed and beloved Chief Justice on his appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court of India. We all know that Justice Dr. M.K. Sharma hails from the State of Assam. Born in a highly respected and literary family, his lordship has to his credit a Masters degree in Law and a doctorate in Sanskrit from the Gauhati University. Dr.Sharma joined as an Advocate under the Bar Council of Assam and Nagaland and within a short span of time, gathered a flourishing practice in almost all branches of law. He has the rare distinction of having been the Advocate General for two different States, one after the other. On account of his outstanding professional caliber, Dr. Sharma was elevated as a Judge of the High Court of Assam in January, 1994. The transfer policy, then prevalent, saw Justice Sharma transferred out of Assam to the High Court of Patna, where his lordship served for a short while to be eventually transferred to the High Court of Delhi where his Lordship assumed office on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1994. What was thus a ~~loss~~ to Assam and Patna High Courts, turned out to be a gain for the High Court of Delhi.

As a Judge of the High Court of Delhi for nearly 12 years and as its Chief Justice for a year and a half, Justice Sharma has made remarkable contribution to the development of law. There is no branch of law which has remained

untouched by Justice Sharma during his long tenure. Be it cases involving ticklish questions in the field of Intellectual Property Rights or complicated issues in the realm of Civil, Criminal and Constitutional law, Justice Sharma was at ease dealing with them all. His lordship was equally comfortable with Service, Labour and Taxation matters. Law reports bear an eloquent testimony to his lordship's deep knowledge and scholarship in practically all branches of law. The decisions rendered by his lordship stand out for their brevity of expression and clarity of thought.

This Court, ladies and gentlemen, has produced many great judges who have left an indelible imprint on the judicial landscape. Judges who are respected long after they have demitted office or departed. But Justice Sharma would stand out among them as one of the most popular judges of our times. A judge who was a gentleman and has remained so, untouched by the immense and heady judicial power that he has wielded during his long tenure. A judge who was so polite and courteous and full of judicial rectitude that no controversy ever came close to him. A judge who commanded the respect of his colleagues and the bar alike and at all times, regardless of the differences, if any, in their perceptions on any issue that confronted the institution. A judge who remained steadfast in his resolve to prove true to the oath of office taken by him. It was, therefore, natural that no one had to look beyond Justice Sharma when it came to making a choice for the appointment of a Chief Justice of this premiere Court in the country. After assuming office as Chief Justice of this Court, Justice Sharma has made a lasting contribution even on the administrative side as much as he has done on the judicial side. He has, during the short period of a year and

a half, made significant strides in the matter of improvement of infrastructure in the Courts, streamlining judicial administration inculcating discipline and punctuality among judicial officers and other staffs, increasing efficiency and reducing the pendency both in the High Court as also in the District Courts. A National Law School, a full fledged Judicial Academy for training of judges and an International Conciliation Centre at Dwarka at a cost of few hundred crores is a reality today only because of the untiring efforts made by Justice Sharma. Similarly, multi crore Court complexes at Saket and Rouse Avenue will be soon added to our infrastructure, thanks to the vision of Dr. Justice Sharma. Upgradation of Mediation Centre in the High Court and setting up of new centers at Karkardooma and Rohini are today realities because of the unstinted support of Justice Sharma for those projects. The medical unit building in the High Court, mechanized parking across Sher Shah Suri Road for the members of the Bar and the litigants and the additional land which the Government have placed at the disposal of the High Court for its expansion plans are all significant contributions to the infrastructure in the High Court that became possible only because of personal interest which Chief Justice Sharma has taken by involving himself in the deliberations of the concerned committees at different levels. Computerization in the High Court and the lower Courts, digitization of the records in the High Court, timely recruitment in the subordinate Courts, creation of additional vacancies in the High Court and the supporting staff are also noteworthy contributions which Justice Sharma has made during his tenure as Chief Justice of this Court. I must, in particular, acknowledge the support, guidance and patronage of Dr. Sharma to the Delhi Legal Services Authority in

all its programmes, in his capacity as the Patron-in-Chief of the Authority. I had an occasion to work very closely with his lordship and benefit from the advice received from him. It was on account of his vision and support to all our programmes and schemes that Delhi Legal Services Authority and Delhi High Court Legal Services Committee were able to arrange disposal of over one lakh twenty five thousand cases of different categories during the calendar year 2007, an all time record in the history of the Authority.

Justice Sharma's appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court comes as a logical culmination of a distinguished and satisfying judicial career. While we shall miss Justice Sharma as an amiable friend, philosopher and guide among us, we shall have the satisfaction of making yet another contribution to the Supreme Court of India. We are sure that like other distinguished Judges and Chief Justices of this Court, Justice Sharma will, on account of his deep scholarship, knowledge and erudition have an extremely satisfying tenure even in the Apex Court. We also look forward to his lordship's continued association with this Court and its affairs. While Justice Sharma may hold the exalted position of a Judge of the Supreme Court of India, we shall while maintaining a respectful distance always treat him as one from among us. On behalf of my brother and sister judges of the High Court of Delhi and on my own behalf, I bid farewell to Hon'ble Dr. Justice M.K. Sharma and wish him a good, healthy and long life and a fulfilling tenure as a judge of the last and final Court of this Country.

Thank You and Jai Hind.