

Hon'ble the Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya, Justice Vibhu Bakhru, Justice Prathiba M. Singh, my esteemed brother and sister Judges,
Mr. Chetan Sharma, Additional Solicitor General of India,
Mr. N. Hariharan, President, Delhi High Court Bar Association,
Mr. Sacchin Puri, Vice President,
Mr. Vikram Singh Panwar, Honorary Secretary,
Mr. Ved Prakash Sharma, Vice Chairperson, Bar Council of Delhi,
Mr. Sameer Vashisth, Standing Counsel (Civil), Members, Bar Council of Delhi,

Members of the family present physically and virtually (Siddhant Sharma and Isheetta).

Distinguished Senior Advocates, Members of the Bar, Standing Counsels, Additional Public Prosecutors, Officers of the Registry, and the wonderful staff of this Court,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

Transitions are an inevitable part of every journey, yet some moments — like today — make one pause not just to look ahead, but also to reflect, with humility, with gratitude, and with a deep sense of connection. This is one such moment for me.

As I stand here today, preparing to take up new responsibilities at the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court, I find it difficult to express the range of emotions I feel. It is a moment filled with profound reflection and sincere gratitude. This institution has given me a lot - in fact, it has given me more than I deserve. It has given me everything - it has shaped my judicial character and has also been my karmabhoomi and my alma mater in the truest sense. As I prepare to embark upon this new chapter, I carry with me a heart full of memories, lessons, and enduring relationships. The love and affection given by everyone here is something I can never forget.

My journey in the judiciary began in the year 1992, when I joined the Delhi Judicial Service. It was a humble beginning — filled with curiosity, nervous excitement, and a deep sense of responsibility. My early years in the trial courts — across Patiala House,

Karkardooma, and Saket — gave me my first real insight into the life of the law. These courtrooms laid my judicial foundations,

As a young judicial officer, I tried to learn that justice is not simply about pronouncing orders. It is about listening — not just hearing, but truly listening — to the stories, struggles, and silences of those who come before us. Whether it was a tenant facing eviction or a victim seeking dignity, each case taught me that behind every file lies a human story. I remember, in the early days of my career, some students were arrested while protesting at Jantar Mantar and were produced before me. I also recall a person who had been caught by Police Station Mandir Marg for allegedly stealing a mug worth Rs. 5. He was behind bars when presented before me, and I had to decide whether to release him on bail. These incidents remain etched in my memory. My tenure as Motor Accident Claims Tribunal judge exposed me to the real adversities of life and gave me deep satisfaction. In every courtroom I sat, I saw the law unfold in a thousand ways — sometimes in the form of passionate arguments, sometimes in the form of silence when words failed the litigants.

My elevation to the Bench of the Delhi High Court in 2022 marked the beginning of a new phase — one that was not only humbling but deeply rewarding. I am extremely indebted to my collegium, Chief Justice D.N. Patel, Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. Murlidhar, Hon'ble Mr. Justice G.S. Sastani, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Siddharth Mridul and Hon'ble Mr. Justice Vipin Sanghi. I am also indebted to Hon'ble Mr. Justice Manmohan with whom I got an opportunity to share the Dias and from whom learnt a lot.

During this tenure, I dealt with a wide variety of matters — criminal, civil, original jurisdiction, labor, matrimonial. It felt as though God had pressed the fast-forward button, giving me a chance to preside over every kind of jurisdiction. From constitutional law to commercial disputes, from criminal law to family jurisprudence, I was constantly reminded of the immense trust that citizens place in the judiciary. It is a trust we must never take for granted. It is what makes our role not just important — but sacred.

I've always held the belief that the role of a judge is not merely to apply the law — it is to apply it with conscience, with clarity, and with compassion. Law, in its best form, is a bridge — between power and people, between rights and remedy, between conflict and resolution. And it is our duty to keep that bridge strong and steady. The respect we show to

every person who enters our courtroom, the patience with which we hear even the weakest voice — that is where the true majesty of the law lies. Early in my career, I learned that a courtroom means courtesy. One must be courteous to all.

I had the opportunity to work briefly with Hon'ble Mr. Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya, Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, and I found him to be a noble, straightforward individual who means business.

I have learned decency and dignity from Justice Vibhu Bakhru, and hard work and a methodical approach from Justice Prathiba M. Singh, Justice C. Hari Shankar, Justice Subramonium Prasad, and Justice Jyoti Singh.

I have had the privilege of forming great friendships with Justice Navin Chawla, Justice Prateek Jalan, Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani, Justice Sanjeev Narula, Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri, Justice Jasmeet Singh (@ Alley), Justice Amit Bansal, Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav and Justice Manoj Jain. Their unwavering support has been invaluable to me, and I have always cherished the leisure time spent with them.

I also express my gratitude to my batch mates Justice Neena Bansal Krishna, Dr. Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma, Justice Shailender Kaur, Justice Ravidender Dudeja, Justice Renu Bhatnagar, and Justice Rajneesh Kumar Gupta — with whom I have spent over 32 year

I have found wonderful sisters in Justice Tara Vitasta Ganju, Justice Mini Pushkarna, Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora.

I am deeply indebted to Justice Vikas Mahajan, Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, Justice Sachin Datta, Justice Amit Mahajan, Justice Saurabh Banerjee, Justice Anish Dayal, and Justice Amit Sharma, Justice Girish Kathpalia, Manoj Jain who have always been very supportive and friendly,

My special bond with Justice Amit Sharma is well known to all — he has always been like a brother and Justice Dharmesh Sharma has also always shown me brotherly affection. Though I had limited interaction with Justice Ajay Digpaul, Justice Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar, and Justice Tejas Karia, I am certain that they will become distinguished judges. Throughout this journey, the support, insight, and camaraderie of my esteemed

colleagues of the bench have been my pillars. I will always carry with me the integrity, discipline, and compassion that define this Court.

I had the opportunity to conduct the proceeding under UAPA for PFI in which I got rich assistance from Sh. Tushar Mehta, Solicitor General and Sh. S.V. Raju, Additional Solicitor General.

To my dear friends at the Bar — seniors and juniors alike — thank you for enriching the judicial process. Your arguments, your preparation, and above all, your unshakeable belief in the Constitution have kept the flame of justice burning bright. To the young advocates — let me say this: be fearless, be curious, and never lose sight of why you chose this noble profession. Your perseverance will shape the future of the judiciary.

I want to acknowledge and thank the Delhi High Court Bar Association and the Bar Council of Delhi and all the Bar Associations of District Court — institutions that have stood as strong custodians of the Bar's excellence and independence. The doyens of the Bar, late Sh. N.S. Mishra, Sh. Siddharth Luthra, Senior Advocate, Sh. Kapil Sibbal, Senior Advocate, Mr. Mukul Rohtagi, Mr. Abhishek Singhvi, Senior Advocates have been source. My gratitude to my batch mates and friends, Registrar General Mr. Kanwaljeet Arora, Registrar Vigilance Mr. P.K. Jain. I must record my appreciation for Ms. Aditi Chaudhary and Mr. Reetesh who worked as my team during my tenure as Registrar General. Your commitment to the cause of justice has always inspired me. I must offer my deepest gratitude to entire legal fraternity for so much love and affection. From here I will like to assure the Bar Associations at Kolkata that I will serve the institution to the best of my ability and intentions.

I acknowledge and thank the Delhi High Court Bar Association for upholding tradition and always keeping the flag high, as well as the bar associations of the district courts of Delhi, where I spent over 30 years. The Bar Council of Delhi has always been a great institution. We are fortunate to have Mr. Vikas Sharma as Vice Chairperson of the Bar Council of India — his presence strengthens us. Though I had less interaction with the stalwarts of the bar at the High Court, I remember fondly the legends I saw in the district courts: late Shri R.K. Mittal, Shri Satya Pal Jain, Shri Kapil Sibal, Shri Mukul Rohatgi, Shri Abhishek Manu Singhvi, and Shri Maninder Singh. It was always a privilege to hear and learn from them.

To the registry and my administrative team — Registrar Kamaljeet Singh, Registrar General Kamaljit Kaur, Registrar Vigilance P.K. Jain, Pawan Kumar Jain — thank you. My appreciation also goes to Mr. Nishit Chadha and Mr. Mahesh, who worked as a team with me when I served as Registrar General.

To the staff members and law researchers — I could not have asked for a more dedicated and efficient team. Thank you for your quiet strength and for the countless hours spent helping me do justice to my role.

And above all, to my family — To my family — my father, Shri Sajjan Sharma, who is in his 100th year and has been my lifelong source of inspiration; my elder brother Shrikesh Sharma; my younger brother Jaideep; my wife Vishakha; my son Anirudh and his wife Manisha; my younger son Siddhant and daughter-in-law Ishita — and our heart and soul— you have all been my anchor. Here I am also deeply grateful to Justice V.S. Agrawal and Justice R.K. Gauba who guided me throughout.

As I prepare to move to the Calcutta High Court — an institution rich in legacy and legal tradition — I do so with humility and home and carry with me your love, your affection, and your faith.

In conclusion, I leave you with a thought that has guided me all these years — the robe we wear may signify the role, but it is the person underneath who must live up to the responsibility. We must remain humble, we must remain just, and above all, we must remain human.

I thank each and every one of you for your affection, your support, and your blessings. I look forward to continuing this journey — in service of the Constitution, in service of the law, and in service of the person standing at the end of the queue. Whatever happens, I firmly believe, is predestined.

Lastly, though it has nothing to do with present context, but something that always inspire me

क्या हार में क्या जीत में

किंचित नहीं भयभीत मैं

संघर्ष पथ पर जो मिले यह भी सही वह भी सही

वरदान नहीं माँगूँगा

हो कुछ भी पर हार नहीं मानूँगा

I firmly believe, whatever happens, it is predestined. पहले लिखा प्रारब्ध फिर डाली जान.

As my mother used to say: *"Whatever you are today is because of me."* When I appeared for my interview, the then Chief Justice asked, "Why are you joining as a Magistrate when you are a gold medallist?" I said, "Because my mother wants me to be a judge."

And so, with that, I carry her blessings forward into the next chapter.

Thank you.