# FAREWELL REFERENCE ADDRESS BY HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE D.K. UPADHYAYA, CHIEF JUSTICE, HIGH COURT OF DELHI ON THE ELEVATION OF JUSTICE V. KAMESWAR RAO AS CHIEF JUSTICE, PATNA HIGH COURT

Brother Justice V. Kameswar Rao, Chief Justice designate, Patna High Court,

Gracious family members of Justice Rao,

My esteemed sister and brother Judges at the High Court,

Mr. Chetan Sharma, Additional Solicitor General of India & Chairman, Bar Council of Delhi,

Mr. N. Hariharan, President, Delhi High Court Bar Association,

Mr. Sachhin Puri, Vice-President, Delhi High Court Bar Association,

Mr. Vikram Singh Panwar, Honorary Secretary, Delhi High Court Bar Association,

Mr. Sanjay Lao, Standing Counsel (Criminal), Govt. of NCT of Delhi,

Mr. Samir Vashisht, Standing Counsel (Civil), Govt. of NCT of Delhi,

Standing Counsels of the Central and State Government,

Executive Members of the Delhi High Court Bar Association,

Members of Bar Council of Delhi and other District Bar Associations,

Senior Advocates,

Members of the Bar,

Members of the Registry,

Members of Print and Electronic Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very warm good afternoon to all and Namaskar.

We have assembled here to bid farewell to Justice V. Kameswar Rao, as he is set to commence an illustrious professional journey as the Chief Justice of the Patna High Court.

Reciting an introduction to this august gathering is, though, not needed but I take this responsibility as customarily I am expected to do so.

Justice Rao was born on 7th August, 1965. After completing his school education, he enrolled in B.A. (Honors) Geography at the University of Delhi and graduated in 1987. In graduation, he was awarded with the Certificate of Merit for standing second in the college. Thereafter, he enrolled himself in the LL.B. course and completed the same in 1990 from University of Delhi. Justice Rao enrolled with the Bar Council of Delhi in the following year in 1991 and started practicing before different forums in Delhi, including the Supreme Court, Delhi High Court and Central Administrative Tribunal. He also appeared before other High Courts of the country, such as the Madras High Court and Calcutta High Court. Justice Rao had a diversified practice covering the fields of service law, labour law, arbitration, constitutional law and administrative law, and appeared for various public sector

undertakings, banks and other autonomous bodies. He also served as a Member of the Executive body of the Bar Association of Central Administrative Tribunal, New Delhi. His brilliant advocacy received the formal acknowledgement of this Court in 2010, when he was designated as a Senior Advocate. Soon thereafter, Justice Rao was elevated to the bench of this Court on 17th April, 2013. He served on the bench of this Court till 1st June, 2024 when he was transferred as a Judge of the Karnataka High Court. During his tenure in Karnataka, Justice Rao also served as Acting Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court with effect from 30th May, 2025. He could not stay away from Delhi for long and on 21st July, 2025, he came to this Court and ever since, he has been serving this institution.

As a Judge of this Court, Justice Rao worked as a true all-rounder and excelled in all areas. He always carried a forward looking and pragmatic approach to issues that found their way to him. His decisions have been marked by great clarity of expression and reflect a purposive approach. Litigants and bar have always known Justice Rao as a no non-sense Judge with an unparalleled commitment towards the cause of justice. He is a soft-spoken man with very few expressions on his face, but he is firm in his decision making. *Ladies and gentlemen,* foresight is one of the least acknowledged attributes of a Judge. A Judge with a good foresight is able to foresee the law in action and it always enables him to lay down law in a more stable and comprehensive sense. Justice Rao's judicial philosophy reflects great foresight and often resonates with societal

conscience. As a Judge, Justice Rao is also known for his ethical and disciplinary standards, and I am certain that members of the bar would second that view.

On the administrative side as well, Justice Rao took keen interest in the issues concerning this Court and the District Courts of Delhi, and was always willing to work beyond the court hours for their resolution. In the High Court, we are confronted with multiple issues which are not limited to the judicial work assigned to us. For the proper administration of justice, it is essential that administrative tasks are performed in a smooth and time-bound manner. It is only possible when Judges are inclined to commit for the same beyond court hours, and Justice Rao has always shouldered the administrative responsibilities in an effective manner.

Whatever the task was, Justice Rao did it effortlessly. Brother, you are always creative when it comes to ideas and how to execute them and because of that, many projects which were under you have been successful and I hope many people have learnt from it.

You are a mentor and an inspiration to whosoever comes in your contact. The way you have contributed to this institution cannot be put into words. We will surely miss you as you got your job done, and now embark on a new journey.

Justice Rao is not only a good colleague, but also a very good friend to all of us. You are always kind and treated everyone with respect. In addition to your professionalism, you have a set of enviable personality traits that many wish to have. I, having worked with you on so many issues, acknowledge that you are always productive and can be trusted to get the job done. In your experience, camaraderie and warmth which I felt cannot be described as I fall short of words.

We are grateful for your contributions not just in the Court but in the friendship we have built around you. Your presence has always brighten this institution and your legacy will stay with us for years to come.

Today, we celebrate Justice Rao and his move to a higher assignment. It is very difficult to see you leave this Court but, at the same time, we feel so proud of the new path you have earned. You have always shown incredible dedication, sharp skills and a great work ethic.

I remember many difficult and tricky situations when I looked up to you and at the end found solutions in your counsel and advice.

Brother Rao, it is very very hard for me to believe that I will miss you, your brilliant counsel which was always laced with sincerity and purpose. Nonetheless,

I pray to God that you will always brighten us, this Bar and High Court of Delhi as an institution alike.

As you proceed to write a new chapter in your journey, we pray and hope that your tenure in Patna is deeply fulfilling and wholesome. We are certain that during your time in Patna, you would experience a completely different part of our beautiful country from close quarters. At the same time, we are equally hopeful that you would continue to cherish the memories of the time spent in this Court. In the life of a Judge, you never know where destiny might take you, but what we do know is that this institution shall always remain grateful for your services.

On behalf of this Court, I wish you a fulfilling time ahead. We pray for your good health for all times to come.

Thank you and Jai Hind!