

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE
WEST ZONE-II: REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON “CONTEMPORARY JUDICIAL
DEVELOPMENTS AND STRENGTHENING JUSTICE THROUGH LAW & TECHNOLOGY”
ON FEBRUARY 24, 2024 AT JODHPUR

My brother Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Sandeep Mehta of the Supreme Court,

Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava, Chief Justice, Rajasthan High Court and Patron-in-Chief, Rajasthan State Judicial Academy

Brother Justice Sujoy Paul, Director, National Judicial Academy

Brother Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati, Chairperson, Rajasthan State Judicial Academy

My brother and sister judges of the Rajasthan High Court and other High Courts

All resource persons including brother Justice Akil Kureshi, former Chief Justice of Rajasthan.

Judicial Officers

Ladies and Gentlemen,

National Judicial Academy, Bhopal in collaboration with Rajasthan State Judicial Academy had organized a Regional Conference on the same

theme/topic last year also at Jodhpur when I was the Chief Justice here in Rajasthan. It is a matter of great pride that National Judicial Academy, Bhopal has again chosen Rajasthan State Judicial Academy to host this Conference. Incidentally, the infrastructure of the Academy at Jodhpur provides State-of-the-art facilities and I suppose it is the best place for holding this colloquium.

We have in our midst very learned and expert Resource Persons who would be presiding over the various sessions in these two days. I welcome all the Resource Persons who all are endowed with rich experience of guiding many such academic discourse and providing useful inputs for enhancement of judicial excellence.

When the Constitution of India was adopted, major nations in the world were wonderstruck by the ideas and ideals of framers of the Constitution who wanted India to be carried forward with it. The ideals were lofty and were felt to be a distant reality for a nascent republic. We lived through the testing times and marched forward from strength to strength. But, with the passage of time, we dwindled in our resolve and faltered in following the core constitutional principles. The governance of the country strayed away from the path shown by Gandhi ji, to quote "I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be

of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melt away.”

The Constitution has not failed us so far; rather it has held us together, constantly reminding us of our unique characteristic - Unity in diversity. The Constitutional Courts have contributed enormously to strengthening the Constitutional resolve of creating an egalitarian democracy and developing scientific tempers. Realistic interpretations by the Constitutional Courts have allowed the Constitution to retain its dynamic character. After all, the Constitution is what the judges say.

We are standing at the cusp of history as far as the institution of judiciary is concerned. Many real challenges are staring at us and time is running out fast. We should find a way forward without losing much time. Our glorious past should not detain us from thinking out of the box yet within constitutional and lawful means. We need to take stock of the things and events of the past in judicial history and make course corrections for the situations that have not gone well. We shall have to take tough measures to see that the judicial institution lives up to the trust and confidence reposed in it by the citizens of this great nation. The Supreme Court and the National Judicial Academy are shouldering an onerous responsibility and I am very much confident that they will lead a way forward. Contemporary

developments taking place in the judicial institution are of far-reaching consequences and would decide the future course of history.

When it comes to technological advancements, the judiciary cannot keep itself aloof. We need to reap the dividends of the developments in Information and Communication Technology and apply the technological advances in earnest. ICT is making the flow of information unbelievably fast and lives smooth by applying the knowledge effectively in all walks of life.

To rise to the practically achievable heights, it is requisite that we make progress by leaps and bounds. It would be possible to do so only if we all put our heads together and devote our time and energy to it. The task is herculean but not beyond our capabilities and abilities. Once we have decided to tread the path of judicial excellence, the problems of Himalayan magnitude shall not be too difficult to overcome. In the words of Swami Vivekanand - awake, arise and stop not until the goal is reached.

I thank the Director of the National Judicial Academy for inviting me in this Inaugural Session and giving me an opportunity to preside one of the sessions. I admire his capacity to organize such conferences and to shoulder the responsibility of the academy simultaneously discharging his judicial functions as the Judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

Thank you,

Jai Hind, Jai Bharat