

**FULL COURT REFERENCE HELD ON 21st APRIL, 2022 AT 3:45P.M.
ON THE SAD DEMISE OF JUSTICE JAGDISH KUMAR MEHRA AND
JUSTICE ANIL KUMAR {FORMER JUDGES OF THIS COURT}**

My Esteemed Sister and Brother Judges;

Mr. Chetan Sharma, Additional Solicitor General of India;

Mr. Murari Tiwari, Chairman (Enrolment Committee), Bar Council of Delhi;

Mr. Mohit Mathur, President, Delhi High Court Bar Association;

Mr. Jatan Singh, Vice President, Delhi High Court Bar Association;

Mr. Abhijat, Secretary, Delhi High Court Bar Association;

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

Standing Counsels of the Central and State Government;

Executive Members of the Delhi High Court Bar Association;

Office Bearers of Bar Council of Delhi and other District Bar Associations;

Senior Advocates:

Members of the Bar;

Family members of Late Justice Jagdish Kumar Mehra;

Family members of Late Justice Anil Kumar;

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with immense sense of sadness; we have assembled today to condole the sad demise of Mr. Justice J K Mehra and Mr. Justice Anil Kumar former Judges of this court.

Justice Jagdish Kumar Mehra was born on 06.11.1935 in undivided India. In 1947, his family migrated from Rawalpindi to Delhi, while he was barely 10 years old. His family stayed in tents put up in open area where the present building of Supreme Court stands. He lost his father early, and from being an heir to a highly successful business family in Rawalpindi, he became a struggling student staying in tents. He struggled to finish his basic education and took up a job to help his widowed mother get her daughters and sons married off. He studied B.L., LL.B. On 23.02.1952, he was enrolled as an Advocate and, thereafter, he was enrolled as a Pleader on 11.09.1960.

His area of practise was wide, and it covered Labour and Service Laws; Trade Marks and Copyright Law and; Civil Commercial Laws. He and several of his friends from the famous 'Scandal Point' of Tis Hazari Court Complex met regularly for lunch. He was a part of a group that was fondly called the 'Friday Club', which existed till nearly all its members were elevated.

He was appointed as an Additional Judge of this Court on 19.3.1991, and thereafter, as a Permanent Judge on 03.09.1991. He retired on 06.11.97. During his tenure as a judge of this Court, he rendered several judgments on a variety of subjects. He was appointed as a Member of the NCDRC (National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission), and served there for a period of 5 years. He was also designated as a Senior Advocate by the Supreme Court on 13.02.1998.

Post retirement, Justice J.K. Mehra acted as an Arbitrator in several domestic and International commercial matters, and continued to do so till even a day before his demise on 20th May 2019. He also acted as the patron-in-chief of an NGO – The Delhi Citizen Forum for Civil Rights. He was also made the Chairman of the Fare Fixation Committee of the Delhi Metro Rail Service, which assignment he completed well before the 90 days allotted therefor. He was a tough task master with a pleasant demeanour. He will always be remembered for his smiling face and prompt disposals. His ability to grasp the main issue in a dispute before him, and focus on getting the matters either settled, or disposed off, at the earliest was appreciated by anyone who appeared before him.

I remember arguing several matters in his Court, particularly when he was sitting on the Original Side.

He came a long way from where he started, and by dint of his hard work, he earned respect and goodwill on his own merit.

Justice Mehra was an avid sportsperson. He played Cricket and Hockey till inter-university level. Justice Mehra continued to play cricket for the Delhi High Court Bar Association in matches against other Bar Association(s), as well as for the Chief Justice's Eleven. He rarely missed an international match played at the DDCA's Feroze Shah Kotla ground. He was fond of eating good food and

used to adore street food a lot. He was a highly spiritual person and was a very loving, caring and supportive father and grandfather.

Justice J K Mehra left for the heavenly abode on 21.05.2019. Justice Mehra was survived by his wife, Mrs. Kamini Mehra who too has passed away in the meantime, and his sons - Advocate Dalip Mehra, his wife Sheetal Mehra – who too unfortunately passed away due to COVID, his second son Vinish Mehra, and his daughter in law Sonali Mehra – wife of Vinish Mehra, his daughter Mrs. Anjali Gogia, and grandchildren Advocate Shikha Mehra, Gunit Gogia, Kunal Mehra, Mudit Gogia and Nikhil Mehra. His sad demise has created a void not just for his family and friends, but for the entire Legal Fraternity at large.

I, on behalf of my Sister and Brother Judges and on my own behalf convey our heartfelt condolences to the members of the bereaved family, and pray to Almighty to give them strength to bear this irreparable loss. May the Almighty bestow peace upon the departed soul.

We have also assembled here to condole the passing of Mr. Justice Anil Kumar. Justice Anil Kumar was born on 12.07.1950. He was the son of Late Mr. Justice Sultan Singh – a judge of this Court. He did his M.Sc. in Physical Sciences (Quantum Mechanics), and was awarded the LL.B. degree by the University of Delhi. He enrolled as an Advocate with the Bar Council of Delhi in 1974, and started law practice in the same year.

For many years, he represented the Central Board of Secondary Education, National Institute of Open Schooling, and National Institute of Education, Planning and Administration in Delhi High Court. He was on the panel of senior lawyers for the State of U.P., in Supreme Court of India. He was also a counsel for Airport Authority of India, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, apart from representing a number of private individuals and private companies in Delhi High Court. While appearing for the State instrumentalities, he exhibited a very fair and just approach.

He was appointed as an additional judge of the High Court of Delhi on 16.07.2004, and a permanent judge on 20.02.2006. I remember, when his turn came to head a Division Bench, I was chosen to sit with him on the Bench. I thoroughly enjoyed teaming up with him, and learnt a lot from him. He was a very good host. Practically every day after finishing the Court, we would have a cup of tea in his Chamber, and I enjoyed the choicest of snacks during those gossip sessions. He retired on 11.07.2012 and, immediately he took over as the Chairman of the Appellate Tribunal for Forfeited Property, and held the position for three years. Thereafter, he started practicing before the Supreme Court of India. He was designated as a Senior Advocate by the Supreme Court of India on 31.08.2016.

Justice Kumar was a multidimensional personality. He was a fluent French speaker. He did Diploma in French from JNU and later on, an Advance

Diploma in French from the University of Delhi. In 1975, he was elected to the Governing body of Alliance Francaise. He used to brew his own wine – which he continued to do till his father became a Judge of this Court. He loved to travel, and covered remote and not easy to access areas in the hills. At the age of 59 years, he joined dance classes to learn Salsa, Cha Cha, Foxtrot etc. all South American Dance Forms. He was also a member of - President Estate Polo Club, and was fond of horse riding. Since his school days, he was associated with a music band as a drummer. He was also a member of the gliding club, and did about 78 launches. In his early days of practice, he formed an association in Tis Hazari called ‘Association of Tired Young Lawyers’ and also became the President of the same.

He was also the Executive member of International Law Association, and the Executive President of Asia Pacific Jurist Association. He was appointed as the President of Delhi chapter of International Democratic Lawyers Association. He continued to take part in various conferences held in India, as well as Abroad.

Justice Kumar was the epitome of integrity in all walks of life. He was known to deliver justice within the framework of law, while being sensitive to the rights of the ordinary persons. He used to give patient hearings to all the litigants.

On a personal note, I had the good fortune of moving into the Bunglow vacated by him, and I have continued to reside there, even though other larger Bungalows

came my way – I guess, due to the good vibes that he infused and left in that house.

In his farewell reference Speech, read out by the then Acting Chief Justice A.K. Sikri, he read, and I quote:

“During graduation he read extensively and used to visit American Library and British Council Library at least twice a week. Became a disciple of a German Philosopher ‘Karl Popper’ and got extremely influenced by his ‘Theory of Objectivism’. Firmly believes that there cannot be any absolute and final truth. Every proposition and idea can be refuted to reach or arrive at better and Higher truth. This virtue of finding the truth generated another quality in him. He listened with patience. He gave due respect to the arguments advanced before him. But those arguments never came to a conclusion without Justice Anil Kumar having in substance found where the truth lies. And in that he is fiercely independent. At the same time, he is open to frank and analytical discussion and would get persuaded if there is a merit in what others say. It is this characteristic which gives him ability to come to a clear conclusion. Once the decision is reached, with compelling sense of righteousness, he rarely changes his mind.”

Unquote

Justice Anil Kumar left for his heavenly abode on 22.04.2021. He is survived by his wife Smt. Anita Sahani, Advocate, who was his junior before their marriage, his two daughters - Advocate Taneesha Sultan Singh and Tanima Sultan Singh, and his brother - Advocate Atul Kumar. With the passing of Justice Anil Kumar, the judicial profession has been left poorer as one of its most prolific minds has moved on, and left us for his heavenly abode.

I, on behalf of my Sister and Brother Judges, and on my own behalf convey our heartfelt condolences to the members of the bereaved family and pray to

almighty to give them strength to bear this irreparable loss. May the Almighty bestow peace to the departed soul.

(AFTER REFERENCE BY LAWYERS IS OVER)

As a mark of respect to the departed souls, we shall now observe silence for two minutes. (The Hon'ble Judges will take their respective seats for a moment after the silence, and it will be announced by Hon'ble the Acting Chief Justice as under).

“As a mark of respect to the departed souls, the working in the Court is adjourned for the rest of the day.