

**Speech delivered by Hon'ble Mr Justice Badar Durrez Ahmed on
13th February, 2014 on the elevation of Hon'ble Chief Justice Mr
N.V. Ramana as a Judge of the Supreme Court of India**

Hon'ble Chief Justice N. V. Ramana, my colleagues on the Bench,
Mr Rajeeve Mehra, Additional Solicitor General of India, Mr
Siddharth Luthra, Additional Solicitor General of India, Mr J.P.
Sengh, senior advocate and vice-president of the Delhi High Court
Bar Association, Mr Mohit Mathur, Secretary of the Delhi High Court
Bar Association, Executive Members of the Delhi High Court Bar
Association, Mr R.S. Chauhan, Chairman, Bar Council of Delhi, Mr
Murari Tiwari, Secretary Bar Council of Delhi, Ms Zubeda Begum,
Standing Counsel (civil), Government of NCT of Delhi, Mr Dayan
Krishnan, Standing Counsel (criminal), learned members of the Bar,
family members of Chief Justice Ramana, ladies and gentlemen:-

A little over five months ago, on the 2nd of September, 2013, Justice
Ramana took the oath of office as the Chief Justice of the Delhi High
Court. Today, we have assembled here, in Court No.1, to bid him

farewell. But, with mixed feelings. On the one hand we shall miss him in this court while, on the other, we are happy that in a few days time (on 17th February, 2014, to be precise), he shall be taking oath as a Judge of the Supreme Court of India.

Chief Justice Ramana was born on 27th August, 1957 in Poonavaram, a small village in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh. His father, late Shri Nuthalapati Ganapathi Rao, was an agriculturist. His schooling was mostly in the village. He graduated from Nagarjuna University. He enrolled as an Advocate on February 10, 1983. Initially, he started his law practice at Vijaywada but, to fulfil the wishes of his father, he shifted to Hyderabad. There, he practiced in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh and the Central and Andhra Pradesh Administrative Tribunals. His law practice spanned across all kinds of Civil, Criminal, Constitutional, Labour, Service and Election matters. However, he specialized in Constitutional, Criminal, Service and Inter-State River laws. He also functioned as a panel Counsel for various Government Organizations. Thereafter, he became an Additional Standing Counsel for the Central Government and Standing Counsel for the Railways in the Central Administrative

Tribunal at Hyderabad. Subsequently, he functioned as an Additional Advocate General of Andhra Pradesh. During his career as an advocate, he had appeared before the Supreme Court on numerous occasions including the opportunity he had of representing his State of Andhra Pradesh in the Almatti Dam case.

After 17 years at the Bar, Justice Ramana was appointed as a permanent Judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court on June 27, 2000 at the early age of 42 years and 10 months. During his tenure as a Judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, he handled a wide range of cases and delivered several landmark judgments. His orders and judgements reflect his compassion for the poor and needy and his desire to do justice. He had participated in several National and International Conferences held in India and abroad and presented papers on various topics of law. Before he came to Delhi as Chief Justice of this Court, he had also functioned as the Acting Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court from 10th of March, 2013 to 20th May, 2013.

While his tenure as Chief Justice of this Court has been of about five months, various important developments have taken place under his leadership. The e-filing facility in the tax and company jurisdictions was inaugurated by the Chief Justice of India. This was a first for any court in India. So was the on-line gate-pass facility. Both these ventures have proved to be highly successful. The e-filing facility will shortly be extended to other jurisdictions as well in a phased manner and the day is not far when all filings in this court would be electronic.

Recently, on the 3rd of February, 2014, the Union Communications and Law Minister and Chief Justice Ramana launched the pilot project of speed post service of summons and notices with proof of delivery and on-line tracking. The reports received so far, indicate that it is proving to be a very popular service and that it is working very well with the proof of delivery being received by the registry in as little as three days. If this pilot proves successful, of which I have no doubt, it will go a long way in cutting down the life-spans of cases and thereby providing speedier justice.

Another recent event which took place under the guidance of Chief Justice Ramana was the inauguration of the Delhi Judicial Academy building in the integrated complex at Dwarka by the Chief Justice of India. The Delhi Judicial Academy was hitherto functioning from the limited space available to it at the Karkardooma Courts.

Earlier in this speech I had mentioned about Chief Justice Ramana's concern for the poor and needy and his desire to do justice and to uphold the cherished human values and constitutional rights. A very recent example would make this clear. Day before yesterday, the Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Ramana took *suo moto* notice of the unhappy plight of people from North-East India in Delhi and issued several directions. In the order passed in that matter, the Bench observed:-

"..the recent incidents, in our view, are indicative of a disturbing trend, which threatens the integrity of the country, of intolerance to movement of people within the country when the Constitution of India, in Article 19(1)(d)

& (e) recognises and confers on all citizens the right to move freely throughout the territory of India and to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India..”

“No native of any State of India can be allowed to, by harassing, offending and by other criminal acts, prevent people from another State to settle and carry on business or vocation therein. Today, when the boundaries between countries and restrictions on movement internationally are disappearing, it is unfortunate that a small cross section of society is attempting to put up barriers to movement within the country. The Constitution of India does not provide for India as a confederation of States, broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls but as a Union of States. There are bound to be cultural differences between people of different States of India. Such differences are the essence of humanity. The said differences, rather than becoming a source of hatred or conflict and separating us, should be respected and harnessed to bring a collective strength that can benefit the entire country. If this country is to survive

and to be at peace, each of us has to respect the rights of others and cultivate the ability to live together. Tolerance, is a requirement for survival. Mahatma Gandhi said – "No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive"."

These words and sentiments are a clear reflection of the fact that love for the country and desire to uphold the Rule of Law as per the dictates of the Constitution are engrained in the psyche of Chief Justice Ramana.

I would also like to say something about Chief Justice Ramana's functioning on the administrative side which is by and large invisible to the members of the Bar and the public. He has the excellent quality of humility and of being very down-to-earth in approaching any problem. I have had the opportunity of interacting with him on a daily basis and I have found him always willing to listen and to accept another's view point. He is always ready to solve any problem. He also has the knack of quickly assessing who is good at what and then of delegating that task to him. This is a quality 'which any good

administrator must possess. And, he has it in bountiful measure. Perhaps its stems from his basic nature of humility and lack of ego. These are traits of a good man. A man from whom one is sure to get justice. And, this is the greatest tribute one can give to a judge.

While we bid farewell to you Chief Justice Ramana, and although we shall miss you in this Court, I, on my behalf and on behalf of my colleagues on the bench and on behalf of the entire court, extend congratulations and best wishes to you for a very successful tenure as a Judge of the Supreme Court of India and for higher glory.

I end with an Urdu couplet, which you, Chief Justice, coming from Hyderabad, would appreciate:-

Jahan vahega waheen voshni lutayega

Kisi chiraagh ka apna makan nahin hota
