

**SPEECH OF HON'BLE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE
ON THE OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF THE
SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS OF
ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT
ON 13TH MARCH, 2016.**

Hon'ble President of India, Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, Hon'ble Judges of Supreme Court, Hon'ble Chief Justice and Judges of Allahabad High Court, eminent Members of the Bar, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I am extremely pleased to be here on the occasion of the inauguration of the Sesquicentennial Celebrations of the Allahabad High Court.

The Allahabad High Court is one of the oldest High Courts in the Country. The High Court seeks its origins from passing of Indian High Courts Act, 1861 by the British Parliament following assumption of responsibility of Government of India directly by the Crown. The High Court has also undergone many changes in its jurisdiction over a period of time. It has been a witness of the rise and fall of the British colonial rule and the trials and tribulations of the freedom movement. The Allahabad High Court can take pride that many of its members were stalwarts in the nation's freedom struggle. It has given to the nation a large number of legal luminaries, constitutional experts, Chief Justices of High Courts and Supreme Court and eminent political thinkers

and leaders. The very fact that an institution is celebrating its 150th year is a momentous occasion and a moment of pride and honour for us all. This High Court has, with the march of time, evolved in a most fluidic manner from its inception in 1866 and continues to set a standard of excellence for all Courts of this nation to follow.

I am happy to note that five Judges of the High Court at Allahabad viz. Sarvshri K.N. Wanchoo, Mirza Hameedullah Beg, Raghunandan Swarup Pathak, Kamal Narain Singh and V.N. Khare have adorned the office of Chief Justice of India. It is also a matter of pleasure that the Allahabad High Court took the lead to enroll women lawyers and Miss. Cornelia Sorabji was the first Indian Lady Vakil of Allahabad High Court on August 24, 1921.

In a democratic country like India, judiciary plays a vital role in governing a welfare society as the custodian of the fundamental rights and freedom of the citizens. To quote Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, ***“Law is the Ruler of the Ruler; No one is superior to Law; The law aided by the might of the State enables the weak to prevail over the strong.”*** The success of democracy depends on an independent and strong judiciary. An independent and impartial judiciary and a speedy and efficient system are a ***sine qua non*** for a civilized society. It is the duty of the legal system to ensure that it becomes easy for the people to do good and difficult for them to do evil. With the advent of socio-economic revolutions and transformations

on a global level, especially the steep rise of science and technology, we observed that the way the world came to work today is starkly contrasted from when we began. Nevertheless, our Courts - including this honourable Court - have grown and evolved accordingly and become acquainted with the tremendous tidal changes in the state of affairs.

While the Court has evolved with the requirements on account of changing socio-economic conditions, time has thrown up many challenges as well. The huge pendency of cases, reducing inflow of cases and hence litigation, recognising the need to have Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanisms, making the justice accessible to poor and marginalised, identifying and removing the archaic provisions of living laws, adopting structural changes for enhanced accountability and improving capacities, are some examples. The pendency of nearly 10 lakh cases in the High Court, out of which more than three lakhs being over ten year old, is no less than a mammoth challenge. I am informed that an Arrear Committee has been set up by the Chief Justice and I hope this Committee will be able to bring about a sizeable reduction in the pendency.

The very core of the rule of law and civilized society is the provision of equitable and timely justice. This must mean that a decision or a verdict is delivered reasonably and promptly. India's legal and judicial system, including the investigation and prosecution, must keep pace with the changing times arising

from increasing population, diverse and rapid industrial activity, environmental concerns, and other socio-economic changes resulting in inordinate delay in disposal of cases, in spite of the changes which have been made in the law.

I am happy to inform that Central Government has partnered with the States in improving the infrastructure of the Judiciary with a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) under which an amount of Rs. 125.31 crores in 2014-2015 and Rs. 50.00 crores in 2015-2016 has been sanctioned to the Government of Uttar Pradesh. I am sure that this financial assistance will go a long way in ensuring adequate facilities to the Judicial Officers/Judges of District and Subordinate Courts.

The Allahabad High Court has successfully maintained and preserved its traditions and values, and at the same time has adopted and adapted to requisite changes for modernisation. I understand the High Court is on its way to complete digitization of its entire 150 years old record. I am told that from 2009, copies of Judgments & Orders are being uploaded on the Internet immediately after their delivery. A mammoth task of digitalization of all the files has been undertaken by the High Court. The High Court is proposing to make its entire work paperless by adopting e-filing and also by running e-courts.

This is the time to restore the faith of good people of this great nation in the Judicial system. This faith must guide us on

the path of illumination and allow us to see the greater good as against convenience, and stand in the path of any injustice that may peril the common man.

I am reminded of a verse from a great poet from this city:

तू न थकेगा कभी	You will never stop,
तू न थमेगा कभी	You will never halt,
तू न मुड़ेगा कभी	You will never turn,
कर शपथ! कर शपथ!	Take this oath, take this oath,
कर शपथ!	take this oath
	(Walk on the) Path of Fire,
अग्निपथ! अग्निपथ!	(Walk on the) Path of Fire.
अग्निपथ!	

In the end, on this auspicious occasion, I extend my greetings and felicitations to all those associated with the Allahabad High Court and wish it success in its future endeavours.

Thank you and Jai Hind.
