

Ashwani Kumar

Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court of India and
Parliamentarian



Dr. Ashwani Kumar is an eminent Lawyer, parliamentarian, author and a distinguished Speaker has represented India at the highest forums of politics and diplomacy. He was the youngest designated Senior Counsel of the Supreme Court of India at age 34 in 1986 and at age 37 was one of the youngest Additional Solicitors General of India. He was also one of the youngest non-official members of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation to the UN General Assembly at the age of 33 in 1986. He represented India at the UN again in 1986 and in 2013 when Dr. Kumar addressed the Plenary Session of the UNGA and also the Security Council.

He represented the State of Punjab in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) for an uninterrupted period of 14 years and served in the Union Government as Minister of State in the Departments of Industrial Policy & Planning, Parliamentary Affairs, Planning, Science, Technology and Earth Sciences (between 2006-2012). He later served as the Cabinet Minister for Law & Justice in the UPA II in 2013. In 2010 Dr. Kumar served as Chairman of the Select Parliamentary Committee for finalizing The Prevention of Torture Bill (2010). He also served as a member of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament on different occasions and as Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change from 2014 till his retirement in April 2016. He was also a Member of the National Literacy Mission in 2014.

Dr. Ashwani Kumar was nominated as the accompanying Indian Minister to, (i) Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe (2007) (ii) Prime Minister of U.K., Gordon Brown, (iii) King Albert II of Belgium and President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan during their visits to India between 2006 -2009 in their State visits to India. Accompanying Minister to the President of India Smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil on her State Visit to Spain and Poland in April 2009, to Vietnam and Indonesia in November 2008.

He was appointed as the Special Envoy of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Japan in the rank of Cabinet Minister in connection with preparations for the visit of Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan and of the Prime Minister of Japan to India in Nov-Dec 2013 and in Jan 2014 respectively. Dr. Kumar has engaged with global leaders including President Simon Perez of Israel and President Mbeki of South Africa during his official visits abroad.

He was a Keynote Speaker at an international conference on Global Tax Conflict organized by Les Rencontres Économiques d'Aix-en-Provence in France (July 2014). Dr. Ashwani Kumar represented India at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2007 and 2012. He made a presentation at a panel event organized by the Harvard Law School on the "Constitution and the Executive" on November 13, 2012 as the Law and Justice Minister of India. He was the Keynote Speaker on November 12, 2012 at the USIBC sponsored event at the Harvard Club, New York on "The Legal architecture for consolidating the economic reforms process in India". Dr. Kumar was invited to deliver a Lecture at the MIT, (Cambridge) on India's Quest for Global Leadership in Science, Technology and Innovation and on the case for Indo-US collaboration in the frontier areas of Science (15th June 2012). He was the Keynote Speaker at a function organized by the USIBC at the Harvard Club in New York on India's Growth Story: Challenges and Response (June 14, 2012). He spoke at The Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University on "India's Global Engagement: Challenges of a Pluralist Democracy", in September 2008 and was a visiting Fellow at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington in 2004.

Recent published articles

- *Dignity for All*
The Tribune, 17th August 2015
- *Privacy, A Non-Negotiable Right,*
The Hindu, 10th August 2015
- [Let us Aim for an Age Irrelevant Society](#)
The Hindustan Times, 3rd September 2015
- *Failing the fairness test*
The Indian Express, 20 March, 2015
- *A way to walk the talk on Paris*
The Hindustan Times, 16th December 2015

Dr. Kumar wrote his M'Phil dissertation on "The Legal control of International Terrorism" as 1976 while pursuing an M'Phil in International Law , economics and diplomacy at the JNU , New Delhi .

Dr. Kumar was awarded the Doctorate (Honoris Causa) in Law by the Punjab University, Chandigarh in 2005. Post his retirement from the Upper House of Indian Parliament, Dr. Kumar has resumed active practice of law as a Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court of India. He is currently in the process of finalizing his book containing his published articles and some of his key speeches in the Rajya Sabha, which he believes will be a window on the contemporary Indian politics and the future of its constitutional democracy. He is currently devoting a substantial part of his time to the articulation of his views on the future of liberalism, democracy and freedom in the context of the expanding reach of international terrorism. In the recent past he has spoken at the FMS (Faculty of Management Studies) of Delhi University on 26.7.2016 and at the Plenary Session of the Horasis Conference in Cascais/Portugal, on 3-4 July 2016. He was invited to deliver a Lecture on "The Expansion of Constitutional freedoms in India - The Irish Interface and Future Challenges" at the Long Room Hub, Trinity College, Dublin (May 16, 2016) and is invited by the Oxford Human Rights Hub to deliver a seminar on the advancement of constitutional rights and Public Interest Litigation in India. He is scheduled to speak at the IFRI organised conference in Qatar in November 2016 and at the Annual "[Entretiens de Royaumont](#)" conference scheduled in Paris in December this year .

Dr. Kumar has dealt with the pressing issues of our times in the context of his personal experiences with the functioning and challenges of Indian democracy, management of political economy in a complex democratic polity and India's global engagement as a rising power.