

## **Japanese Emperor Felicitates Dr. Ashwani Kumar**

NEW DELHI, JULY 28: Former Union Minister for Law and Justice, Dr. Ashwani Kumar, has been conferred with the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, by His Majesty the Emperor Akihito, in recognition of his exemplary contributions towards strengthening bilateral relations and promoting friendship between Japan and India.

The Presentation Ceremony for the Investiture was held at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on 9th May. Dr. Kumar attended the presentation ceremony and was given an audience with His Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

To celebrate the conferment of the Imperial Decoration, Ambassador of Japan to India, Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu organized a reception at his residence in New Delhi on July 28.

Lauding the efforts of Dr. Kumar in strengthening the bilateral relations between India and Japan, Ambassador Hiramatsu said, "The relationship between Japan and India has reached new heights, and I am not exaggerating when I say that it has never been so good. We owe this to architects like Dr. Kumar, who laid the foundation stone and built bridges for this relationship to flourish."

"Dr. Kumar has always stood by us, through both happy and difficult times," Ambassador Hiramatsu said, adding, "This (award) is a symbol of our gratitude for the invaluable role he has played in bringing Japan and India together."

Ambassador Hiramatsu also urged the younger generation to take a leaf out of Dr. Kumar's efforts and "help elevate this best (bilateral) relationship ever, to an even higher level."

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Kumar said that he was overwhelmed by the honour conferred upon him and added that the India-Japan engagement was a defining relationship for peace, security and prosperity in Asia and the

world. He paid tributes to the inspiring leadership in both countries whose vision has ensured a 'Special, Global and Strategic Partnership' between the two countries.

Leaders from different political parties, former Chief Justices of India, captains of industry, media personalities and eminent citizens attended the function.

The other Indian who has received this highest category of decoration among the Orders of the Rising Sun is Mr. Ratan N. Tata.

Several dignitaries from all walks of life attended the function. Prominent among them included Dr. Karan Singh (Member of Parliament)-Rajya Sabha (INC), Dr. Farooq Abdullah (Former J&K Chief Minister and incumbent MP)-Lok Sabha (J&K National Conference), Mr. B. S Hooda (Former Chief Minister Haryana-Cong), Mr. Murli Manohar Joshi (Member of Parliament)-Lok Sabha(BJP), Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav (Member of Parliament)-Lok Sabha (SP), D. Raja (Member of Parliament)-Rajya Sabha (CPI), Mr. Bhartruhari Mahtab (Member of Parliament) -Lok Sabha (BJD), Mr. Anand Sharma (Member of Parliament- Rajya Sabha- Cong), Mr. B.J. Panda (Member of Parliament-Lok Sabha- BJD), Mr. Kuldip Nayyar (Former Member of Parliament-Nominated), Justice T. S. Thakur (Former Chief Justice of India), Justice A H. Ahmedi (Former Chief Justice of India), Mr. Fali Nariman (Eminent Jurist), Ms. Pinki Anand (Additional Solicitor General), Mr. Ram Jethmalani (Former Union Minister and Senior Advocate) and Mr. Rupinder Singh Suri (President Supreme Court Bar Association and Senior Advocate).





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