



## **SUPREME COURT OF INDIA**

The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended the names of the following Judicial Officers for appointment as Judges of the High Court of Kerala:

1. Smt M B Snehalatha,
2. Shri Johnson John,
3. Shri G Girish,
4. Shri C Pratheepkumar, and
5. Shri P Krishna Kumar.

On 20 March 2023, the Chief Justice of the High Court of Kerala in consultation with his two senior-most colleagues recommended the elevation of the above judicial officers as judges of the High Court of Kerala. The Chief Minister and the Governor of the State of Kerala have concurred with the recommendation.

In order to ascertain the fitness and suitability of the above-named persons for elevation to the High Court, we have consulted our colleagues conversant with the affairs of the High Court of Kerala.

For the purpose of assessing the merit and suitability of the above-named candidates for elevation to the High Court, we have scrutinized and evaluated



the material placed on record including the observations made by the Department of Justice in the file.

**1. Smt M B Snehalatha**

Both the consultee judges have opined that the officer is suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court. The assessment made by the Government of India in the file indicates that she enjoys a good personal and professional image and nothing adverse came to notice against her integrity. However, it also indicates that the officer faced criticism for two orders granting bail. The Collegium is of the considered view that this observation should not come in the way of the recommendation of the officer for appointment as a judge of the High Court, particularly in light of the fact that the Government has fairly indicated that nothing adverse came to notice against her integrity. Besides being a woman, she is an OBC candidate and is over 59 year old and would have a short tenure as a judge of the High Court. Bearing in mind all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Collegium is of the considered view that the officer is suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court.

**2. Shri Johnson John**

Both the consultee-judges have opined that the officer is suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court. The assessment made by the



Government of India in the file does not indicate anything adverse to the integrity or reputation of the officer. The Collegium has also had due regard to the track record of the officer. Besides, the candidate belongs to a minority community. The Collegium is of the view that Shri Johnson John is suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court.

### **3. Shri G. Girish**

Both the consultee-judges have opined that the officer is suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court. The assessment made by the Government of India in the file does not indicate anything adverse to the integrity or reputation of the officer. The Collegium has also had due regard to the track record of the officer. The Collegium is of the view that Shri G Girish is suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court.

### **4. Shri C. Pratheepkumar**

Both the consultee-judges have opined that the officer is suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court. The assessment made by the Government of India in the file does not indicate anything adverse to the integrity or reputation of the officer. The Collegium has also had due regard to the track record of the officer as well as to the fact that he is an OBC candidate. The Collegium is of the view that Shri C Pratheepkumar is suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court.



## **5. Shri P Krishna Kumar**

Both the consultee-judges have opined that the officer is suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court. The assessment made by the Government of India in the file does not indicate anything adverse to the integrity or reputation of the officer. The Collegium has also had due regard to the track record of the officer. The Collegium has duly considered the observations made by the Government of India on the file. While it is correct that the officer has completed 10 years of qualifying service recently, the Collegium also notes that since he was a direct recruit to the Higher Judicial Service, he would also have experience as an advocate prior to his appointment as a judicial officer. Bearing in mind all the circumstances and the opinion of the consultee-judges and there being no adverse inputs in the file, the Collegium considers Shri P Krishnakumar suitable for appointment as a judge of the High Court.

While considering the above proposal, we have taken note of the fact that the above proposal involves non-recommendation of some senior judicial officers. Cogent reasons have been recorded by the Collegium of the High Court for not recommending their names. We are, therefore, in agreement with the Collegium of the High Court for not recommending their names.



In view of the above, the Collegium resolves to recommend that S/Shri (i) Smt M B Snehalatha, (ii) Johnson John, (iii) G Girish, (iv) C Pratheepkumar, and (v) P Krishna Kumar, Judicial Officers, be appointed as Judges of the High Court of Kerala. Their *inter se* seniority be fixed as per the existing practice.

( Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud ), CJI

( Sanjay Kishan Kaul ), J

( Sanjiv Khanna ), J

10 October 2023