

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

This file relates to the proposal for appointment of following four Advocates as Judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court and three Advocates as Judges of the Telangana High Court:

- 1 Shri R. Raghunandan Rao (A.P.),
- 2 Shri T. Vinod Kumar (Telangana),
- 3 Shri Battu Devanand (A.P.),
- 4 Shri D. Ramesh (A.P.),
- 5 Shri A. Abhishek Reddy (Telangana),
- 6 Shri N. Jayasurya (A.P.) and
- 7 Shri K. Lakshman (Telangana).

The above recommendation was made by the then Chief Justice of the erstwhile common High Court for the States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh on 9th October, 2018, in consultation with his two senior-most colleagues. We have taken note of the views of the Chief Minister and the Governor for the State of Telangana placed in the file.

While the above proposal was under process, two separate High Courts viz., Andhra Pradesh High Court and Telangana High Court, came to be constituted. The seven recommendees are accordingly being considered for elevation in the High Courts as indicated above in terms of the recommendation made by the High Court Collegium.

In order to ascertain suitability of the above-named recommendees mentioned at Sl. Nos.2, 5 and 7 above, for elevation to the Telangana High Court, we have consulted our colleague conversant with the affairs of the Telangana High Court. A copy of his letter of opinion received in this regard is placed below. As regards recommendees mentioned at Sl. Nos.1, 3, 4, and 6 above, there is no sitting Judge in the Supreme Court outside the Collegium for being consulted for purpose of ascertaining their suitability.

For purpose of assessing merit and suitability of the above-named recommendees for elevation to the High Court Bench, we have carefully scrutinized the material on record. We have also perused the observations made by the Department of Justice in the file as well as complaints received against the above-named recommendees. We do not find any substance therein. Apart from this, we considered it appropriate to interact with all the recommendees. On the basis of interaction, material on record and having regard to all relevant factors, the Collegium is of the considered view that S/Shri (1) R. Raghunandan Rao, (2) T. Vinod Kumar, (3) Battu Devanand, (4) D. Ramesh, (5) A. Abhishek Reddy, (6) N. Jayasurya and (7) K. Lakshman (mentioned at Sl. Nos.1 to 7 above) are suitable for being elevated to the High Court Bench.

In view of the above, the Collegium resolves to recommend that:

- (i) S/Shri (1) R. Raghunandan Rao, (2) Battu Devanand, (3) D. Ramesh and (4) N. Jayasurya (mentioned at Sl. Nos.1, 3, 4 & 6 above) be appointed as Judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Their *inter se* seniority be fixed as per the existing practice; and
- (ii) S/Shri (1) T. Vinod Kumar, (2) A. Abhishek Reddy and (3) K. Lakshman (mentioned at Sl. Nos.2, 5 & 7 above) be appointed as Judges of the Telangana High Court. Their *inter se* seniority be fixed as per the existing practice.

(Ranjan Gogoi), C.J.I.

(S.A. Bobde), J.

(N.V.Ramana), J.

July 25, 2019.