



SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

Re: Filling up a vacancy of judge in the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court of India has operated almost throughout last year with full strength of thirty-four Judges and, therefore, could achieve the distinction of recording an unprecedented rate of disposal by disposing of 52191 cases in the calendar year 2023. A vacancy has arisen on retirement of Mr Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul on 25 December 2023. Bearing in mind that the workload of judges has increased considerably, it has become necessary to ensure that the Court has full working judge-strength at all times. The Collegium has, therefore, decided to fill up the sole existing vacancy by recommending a name.

The Collegium deliberated on and discussed the names of Chief Justices and senior puisne Judges of the High Courts eligible for appointment to the Supreme Court. The Secretariat has prepared a compilation of relevant background material to assist the Collegium.



While recommending appointments to the Supreme Court, the Collegium has taken into consideration the following aspects:

- a. The seniority of Chief Justices and senior puisne Judges in their respective parent High Courts as well as overall seniority of the High Court Judges;
- b. The merit, performance and integrity of the judges under consideration; and
- c. The need to ensure diversity and inclusion in the Supreme Court by:
 - (i) representation of High Courts which are not represented or are inadequately represented, in the Supreme Court;
 - (ii) appointment of persons from marginalized and backward segments of society;
 - (iii) gender diversity; and
 - (iv) representation of minorities.

After carefully evaluating the merit, integrity and competence of eligible Chief Justices and senior puisne Judges of the High Courts and also accommodating a plurality of considerations, the Collegium finds Mr Justice Prasanna Bhalachandra Varale to be a deserving and suitable candidate in all respects for being appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court of India.



Mr Justice Prasanna B Varale was appointed as a Judge of the High Court of Bombay on 18 July 2008. He was elevated as Chief Justice of the High Court of Karnataka on 15 October 2022 and has been performing very well there. Mr Justice Prasanna B Varale has acquired considerable experience as a Judge of the High Court of Bombay and as the Chief Justice of the High Court of Karnataka for more than a year. The judgments authored by him deal with variety of issues in every field of law. He is a competent judge with unimpeachable conduct and integrity and has throughout maintained high standard of professional ethics. Before his elevation as a Judge of the High Court, he practised at the Bar for over 23 years in civil, criminal, labour and administrative law matters in District and Sessions Court and in Constitutional matters at the High Court Bench at Aurangabad. Mr Justice Varale stands at SI No.6 in the combined all India seniority of High Court Judges. In the seniority of Judges of the High Court of Bombay, he is the senior-most Judge.

While recommending his name, the Collegium has taken into consideration the fact that among the High Court Judges he is the



senior-most Judge belonging to a Scheduled Caste and the only Chief Justice belonging to a Scheduled Caste among the Chief Justices of High Courts across the country. We are also conscious of the fact that at present, there are three Judges from the High Court of Bombay on the Bench of the Supreme Court.

The Collegium, therefore, unanimously resolves to recommend that Mr Justice Prasanna B Varale be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court of India.

(Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud), CJI

(Sanjiv Khanna), J

(B R Gavai), J

(Surya Kant), J

(Aniruddha Bose), J

19 January 2024