

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

This file relates to the proposal for appointment of following seven Judicial Officers as Judges of the Punjab & Haryana High Court:

1. Shri Satish Kumar Aggarwal,
2. Shri Ashok Kumar Verma,
3. Shri Sant Parkash Phutela,
4. Shri Karamjit Singh,
5. Shri Vivek Puri,
6. Mrs. Meenakshi I. Mehta, and
7. Mrs. Archana Puri.

The above recommendation made by the then Chief Justice of the Punjab & Haryana High Court on 14th March, 2019, in consultation with his two senior-most colleagues, has the concurrence of the States of Punjab and Haryana.

In order to ascertain suitability of the above-named recommendees for elevation to the High Court, we have consulted our colleagues conversant with the affairs of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Copies of letters of opinion of our consultee-colleagues received in this regard are placed below.

For purpose of assessing merit and suitability of the above-named recommendees for elevation to the High Court, we have carefully scrutinized the material placed on record. We have taken note of the observations made by the Department of Justice in the file as well as complaints received against some of the above-named recommendees. Apart from this, we considered it appropriate to invite all the recommendees for interaction with the Collegium. On the basis of interaction and having regard to all relevant factors, the Collegium is of the considered view that S/Shri (1) Ashok Kumar Verma, (2) Sant Parkash Phutela, (3) Karamjit Singh, (4) Vivek Puri, (5) Mrs. Meenakshi I. Mehta,

and (6) Mrs. Archana Puri, Judicial Officers are suitable for being appointed as Judges of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

As regards Shri Satish Kumar Aggarwal, having regard to the material on record and all relevant factors, the Collegium is of the considered view that his case deserves to be remitted to the High Court. The Collegium resolves to recommend accordingly.

We have also taken note of the fact that the above proposal involves non-recommendation of one senior Judicial Officer. In this regard, we are in agreement with the justification given by the High Court Collegium in its Minutes for not recommending the senior Judicial Officer.

As regards observations made by Department of Justice for transfer of one of the above-named recommendees, the Collegium is of the view that the same would be considered by the appropriate Collegium after their elevation.

In view of the above, the Collegium resolves to recommend that S/Shri (1) Ashok Kumar Verma, (2) Sant Parkash Phutela, (3) Karamjit Singh, (4) Vivek Puri, (5) Mrs. Meenakshi I. Mehta, and (6) Mrs. Archana Puri, Judicial Officers, be appointed as Judges of the Punjab & Haryana 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.

September 26, 2019.