



## **SUPREME COURT OF INDIA**

The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended the names of the following Advocates for appointment as Judges of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh in the following terms:

- (i) Shri Maheswara Rao Kuncham @ Kuncham,
- (ii) Shri Thoota Chandra Dhana Sekar @ T C D Sekhar, and
- (iii) Shri Challa Gunaranjan.

On 15 May 2024, the Chief Justice of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh in consultation with his two senior-most colleagues recommended the names of the above advocates for appointment as Judges of that High Court.

As the views of the Chief Minister and the Governor of the State of Andhra Pradesh have not been received, the Department of Justice has forwarded the above recommendation by invoking para 14 of the Memorandum of Procedure which provides that if the comments of the State Constitutional authorities are not received within the prescribed time-frame, it should be presumed by the Minister of Law and Justice that the Governor and the Chief Minister have nothing to add to the proposal and proceed accordingly.



In order to ascertain the suitability of the above advocates for elevation to the High Court, we have consulted our colleagues conversant with the affairs of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh. One of the consultee-Judges has not given his views on the suitability or otherwise regarding the candidates.

For the purpose of assessing the merit and suitability of the above 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.

(i) **Shri Maheswara Rao Kuncheam @ Kuncham**

All the four consultee-Judges have given a positive opinion on the suitability of the candidate for appointment as a Judge of the High Court. The candidate has a good practice at the Bar. The inputs in the file indicate that his professional competence is viewed to be good and that nothing adverse has come to notice with regard to his integrity. He has appeared/argued a number of cases which is reflected by his appearance in 136 reported judgments delivered by the High Court.

Bearing in mind all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Collegium is of the considered view that Shri Maheswara Rao Kuncheam @ Kuncham is fit and suitable for appointment as a Judge of the High Court.



(ii) **Shri Thoota Chandra Dhana Sekar @ T C D Sekhar**

One of the consultee-Judges has opined that the candidate did not particularly stand out, in terms of his performance and is mediocre, at best. Three other consultee-Judges have given a positive opinion on the suitability of the candidate for appointment as a Judge of the High Court as follows:

“An advocate having good practice, appointed Government Pleader (Commercial Tax) in 2019. He enjoys good professional image and nothing adverse has come to my notice about his integrity. In my view, he may be favourably considered for appointment as a Judge of the High Court.”

“Based on my assessment and the information available with me, in my considered opinion he can be favourably considered for such appointment.”

“Shri Thoota Chandra Dhana Sekar @ T C D Sekhar has good standing and reputation at the Bar, he is a suitable candidate.”

The candidate has a practice of more than 25 years in the High Court in civil, criminal, Constitutional and taxation with specialization in taxation, revenue laws, land acquisition and civil law. He has been working as a Government Pleader (for Commercial Taxes) in the High



Court of Andhra Pradesh since 2019. The inputs provided in the file also indicate that his professional competence is viewed to be good and that nothing adverse has come to notice with regard to his integrity. Besides, he belongs to a Backward Class.

Bearing in mind all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Collegium is of the considered view that Shri Thoota Chandra Dhana Sekar @ T C D Sekhar is fit and suitable for appointment as a Judge of the High Court.

**(iii) Shri Challa Gunaranjan**

All the four consultee-Judges have given a positive opinion on the suitability of the candidate for appointment as a Judge of the High Court. The candidate has an extensive practice which is reflected in his professional income of Rs. 71.74 lacs per annum and 129 reported judgments delivered in the cases in which he appeared/argued. The inputs provided in the file also indicate that his professional competence is viewed to be good and that nothing adverse has come to notice with regard to his integrity.

Bearing in mind all the relevant facts and circumstances, the Collegium is of the considered view that Shri Challa Gunaranjan is fit and suitable for appointment as a Judge of the High Court.



In view of the above, the Collegium resolves to recommend that S/Shri (i) Maheswara Rao Kuncham @ Kuncham, (ii) Thoota Chandra Dhana Sekar @ T C D Sekhar, and (iii) Challa Gunaranjan, Advocates, be appointed as Judges of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh. Their *inter se* seniority be fixed as per the existing practice.

(Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud), CJI

(Sanjiv Khanna), J

(B R Gavai), J

15 October 2024