

**SUPREME COURT OF INDIA**

The Collegium of the Supreme Court recommended the name of Smt Manjusha Ajay Deshpande, Advocate, for appointment as a Judge of the High Court of Bombay in the following terms:

The Collegium of the High Court presided over by the then Chief Justice of the High Court made the recommendation for the elevation of Smt Manjusha Ajay Deshpande on 26 September 2022.

The Chief Ministers and the Governors of the States of Maharashtra and Goa have concurred in the recommendation.

On 2 May 2023, the Supreme Court Collegium deferred its decision on the recommendation and decided to seek a report of the Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Bombay in view of the issues which were flagged by the Government in the file.

In terms of the Memorandum of Procedure, Judges of the Supreme Court conversant with the affairs of the High Court of Bombay were consulted to ascertain the fitness and suitability of the candidate proposed for elevation to the High Court.

We have scrutinized and evaluated the material which has been placed on record for the purpose of assessing the merit and suitability of Smt Manjusha Ajay Deshpande for elevation to the High Court. We have perused the observations of the Department of Justice in the file.

By a communication dated 10 May 2023 the Acting Chief Justice submitted a report. The report indicates that before doing so, the Acting

Chief Justice has discussed the matter with his colleagues at the Aurangabad Bench of the High Court.

We have considered the inputs provided by the Government in the file. These inputs have been evaluated by us in conjunction with the report of the then Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Bombay (who has since assumed office as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court). Three consultee-judges of the Supreme Court have opined that Smt. Manjusha Ajay Deshpande is suitable for elevation. The Collegium of the High Court is well-positioned to ascertain her professional competence. Their assessment is affirmed by the consultee judges of the Supreme Court who have served in that High Court and are conversant with the performance of the Bar.

In our assessment, the candidate is a competent lawyer. She has been in practice, since 1991, for over thirty two years. The candidate is well versed in several branches of law particularly in constitutional and service matters. She has been on the panel of the government since 2013. The elevation of the candidate would add to the representation of women on the Bench of the High Court of Bombay particularly amongst women lawyers practicing before the Bench at Aurangabad. Keeping in view the above aspects and on considering the proposal for her elevation, the Collegium is of the considered opinion that Smt. Manjusha Ajay Deshpande is fit and suitable for appointment as a Judge of the High Court of Bombay.

In view of the above, the Collegium resolves to recommend that Smt. Manjusha Ajay Deshpande be appointed as a Judge of the High Court of Bombay.

( Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud ), CJI

( Sanjay Kishan Kaul ), J

( Sanjiv Khanna ), J

18 July 2023

