

arise in any year in the Office of a Judge, the Chief Justice will as early as possible, but at least six months before the date of occurrence of the vacancy, communicate to the Chief Minister of the State, his views as to the persons to be selected for appointment.

Appointment of Judges

1222. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any progress has been made in reaching an understanding with the Supreme Court on selection/promotion/ transfer of Judges in the higher judiciary, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the stumbling blocks in quickening the filling up of vacancies in High Courts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY): (a) The Supreme Court pronounced its Order on improvement in the "Collegium System" on 16.12.2015. *Vide* this order they have decided that the Government of India may finalize the existing Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) by supplementing it in consultation with the Supreme Court Collegium (SCC). The Supreme Court has indicated broad categories under which existing MoP can be supplemented such as eligibility criteria, transparency in the appointment process, Secretariat and complaint mechanism etc. The Government of India after due deliberations, proposed changes in the draft MoP's which were sent to the former Chief Justice of India *vide* letter dated 22.3.2016.

The response of the former Chief Justice of India was received on 25.5.2016 and 01.07.2016. The SCC has agreed with some of the suggestions made in the revised MoP while it has not accepted some other provisions. The views of Government were conveyed to the SCC on 3.8.2016.

(b) Filling of vacancies of Judges in the High Courts is a continuous and collaborative process of the Judiciary and Executive. As the process of finalization of the revised MoP was likely to take some time, on the initiative of the Government of India the matter was taken up with the Supreme Court and the process of appointment of Judges was resumed, pending finalization of the revised MoP. During 2016, 131 Additional Judges have been made permanent and 126 fresh appointments of Judges have been made in the High Courts. During the current year, as on 1.3.2017, 9 fresh appointments of Judges have been made in the High Courts and 16 Additional Judges have been made permanent.