

FULL COURT REFERENCE HELD IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA ON 27TH APRIL 2026, ON THE OCCASION OF THE SWEARING-IN-CEREMONY OF HONOURABLE MRS. JUSTICE PREETA A.K. AS JUDGE OF THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA.

Speech by Sri. K Gopalakrishna Kurup, Advocate General

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of the High Court of Kerala, Mr. Justice Soumen Sen; Mrs Justice Preetha A.K., Judge, High Court of Kerala; The Hon'ble Judges of the High Court of Kerala; The Hon'ble Former Judges of the High Court of Kerala; The Additional Solicitor General of India; The President of the Kerala High Court Advocates Association; The Chairman of the Bar Council of Kerala; The President, Kerala High Court Senior Advocates Association; The President, Federation of Women Lawyers, Kerala High Court Unit; Law Officers of the State of Kerala; Deputy Solicitor General, Senior Central Standing Counsel (Taxes) and other Law Officers of the Central Government; Law Officers of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep; Senior Advocates; Esteemed Fellow Members of the Bar; Registrar General, Registrars and Staff of the High Court of Kerala; Family members of Mrs Justice Preetha A.K., Staff of the Advocate General's Office; Advocate Clerks; Ladies and Gentlemen; and all other dignitaries joining online.

Increasing women's representation in the judiciary is not merely a matter of equality; it is indispensable for enhancing the quality of justice itself. A more gender-diverse bench strengthens public confidence in the legal system and ensures that it reflects the society it serves. The inclusion of more women judges brings a wider range of perspectives—perspectives that are vital for fair, balanced, and empathetic decision-making. In this way, women's participation in the judiciary enriches the justice delivery system and makes it more responsive and inclusive. Today, with the swearing in of Justice Preetha A K as an Additional Judge, we have had a worthy addition to the small, but uniquely illustrious, collegium of erudite women, who are and who had been Judges of this Honourable Court.

My Ladyship Justice Preetha A K was born on 11.03.1974 at your maternal home at Kollam District as the one and only child of (Late) Advocate B.R. Aravindan Nair and Smt. S. Krishnamma. As was your mother, your father was also a native of Kollam District. As a young revolutionary socialist activist of Kollam, your father voluntarily chose to take up the arduous task of organising the under privileged and exploited high range estate workers and



settled at Peermade in 1970 along with your mother in the early days of their marriage. Your father later rose on to become a highly revered leader of the high range proletariat and a pioneer labour lawyer of the State. He successfully practised law for more than five decades and also later served as a Member of the Plantation Labour Commission. He was the President of the Peermade Bar Association for very many number of years and played a crucial role in the Court centre therein being conferred with civil jurisdiction also. Nobody traversing to Kumily will miss your house, which carried the boards of a father-daughter lawyer duo, at the picturesque locale atop the heights by the side of Peruvanthanam - Peermade Road, situated immediately before reaching the Peermade Town Centre.

Brought up in Peermade, My Ladyship had your schooling at St. Pius X English Medium School, Kuttikkanam. After completing the secondary school with distinction in 1989, you had your pre-degree education at NSS Hindu College, Changanassery during 1989-1991. It was only natural for the only daughter of a service oriented and socially committed lawyer to follow her father's foot steps and choose law as a profession. You completed your five year LLB course from Kerala Law Academy Law College in 1996. During your college years, you actively participated in both national and international moot court competitions, earning numerous individual and team accolades.

My Ladyship underwent the then mandatory one year pre-enrolment apprenticeship at the office of His Lordship Justice M. Ramachandran, who was then a leading lawyer of this Bar. You enrolled as a lawyer in 1997 and continued as the junior associate of Justice M Ramachandran till His Lordship's elevation in 2000. Thereafter, you continued as the associate of Advocate P. Ramakrishnan and Advocate Preethi Ramakrishnan, who carried forward the rich labour law legacy of (Late) Justice M P Menon and Justice M Ramachandran. I still vividly remember your days as an enthusiastic junior lawyer, rushing from one court to another in the Old High Court Building, efficiently representing cases on behalf of your senior associates and effectively arguing cases, seemingly after exhaustive preparation. The expertise in Labour Law which you inherited from your father and which you honed under your senior associates held you in good stead in those formative years in this Bar as well as in the Labour Courts and Industrial Tribunals. You became an independent lawyer in 2005.

Although initially your area of practice was labour law, your industry and enterprise enabled you to expand into other fields, including constitutional, service, administrative, and Special Economic Zone laws. You have appeared for



and advised major information technology companies such as Wipro and Cognizant, as well as statutory institutions and public sector undertakings including Madras University, GAIL India Ltd, Kochi Metro Rail Ltd., Kochi Water Metro Ltd., the ESI Corporation and Labour Welfare Fund Boards. You also served as Standing Counsel for Customs and Central Excise, and as a Special Economic Zone consultant to GAIL India Ltd., GAIL Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd, and ONGC Petro Additions Ltd. You served as one among the two Project Co-ordinators of the Research Project, under the auspices of Commonwealth Legal Education Association, on the framework for implementation and regulation of water metro systems in our country.

As a lawyer, you showed unwavering commitment to pro bono causes—standing with labourers and marginalized communities, supporting survivors of sexual violence, challenging instances of authoritarian excess, and advocating for students in distress. Your work has also safeguarded the right to privacy of individuals’ medical records, upheld the rehabilitation rights of coastal communities, and advanced the dignity and equality of sexual minorities. Your interventions have consistently reflected a deep constitutional conscience—defending civil liberties, ensuring access to justice for those without means, and amplifying voices that are often unheard within formal legal systems. I am confident that your vast experience across diverse fields of law will greatly contribute to the effective dispensation of justice as a Judge of this Honourable Court.

You secured second rank in the selection process for the post of Presiding Officer of the Industrial Tribunal, Idukki, in 2016. However, the appointment did not materialize, certainly as destiny had greater plans in store for you.

My Ladyship’s endeavours were not confined to courtrooms and law books. You have been equally active in public life as you have been immersed in the intricacies of law. You served as the President of the Temple Advisory Committee of the Peermade Sri Krishna Swamy Temple, becoming the first woman to hold such a position in any Temple under the Travancore Devaswom Board.

Settled at South Chittoor, My Ladyship is married to Dr. Giri Sankar. S.S., a renowned legal academician, who retired as Associate Professor from Government Law College, Ernakulam and is currently the Principal of St. Dominic’s College of Law, Kanjirappally.

I share the joy of this momentous occasion with My Ladyship’s family, for whom this day will be etched in their memory for ever. I am sure that your



father will be watching this reference with pride from his heavenly abode. On behalf of the entire lawyer fraternity of the State, I felicitate and wish you all the best in the judicial career. May you have the strength and courage to discharge the solemn judicial duties.

Jai Hind

Speech by Sri. Peeyus A. Kottam, President, Kerala High Court Advocates' Association.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Soumen Sen, Chief Justice, of the High Court of Kerala; Hon'ble Judges and Former Judges of the High Court of Kerala; Learned Advocate General, Sri. Gopalakrishna Kurup; Adv Sreekumar P, Additional Solicitor General, Adv Asok M Cherian Addl Advocate General Director General of Prosecution, Sri. T.A. Shaji; Deputy Solicitor General, Smt. O.M. Shalina, President, Senior Advocates' Association, Sri. N. Nandakumara Menon Smt. Nima Jacob; Secretary, Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, Executive Committee members of Kerala High Court Advocates' Association; Vice President Smt. Parvathi Menon, Kerala Federation of Women Lawyers Sri. R.V. Sreejith; Legal Retainer and Senior Central Government Counsel for Lakshadweep Administration, Co-Ordinator, High Court mediation Centre. Respected Senior Members of the Bar; Registrar General and Registrars of this Hon'ble Court; Court Officers, Advocate Clerks; Esteemed family members and friends of Hon'ble Justice AK Preeta, My esteemed colleagues at the Bar; My dear brothers and sisters;

Namaste and a very warm good morning to one and all.

Today, it is indeed a great honour to be present on this momentous occasion marking the elevation of Her Ladyship, Smt. Preeta A K, to the Bench.

We truly congratulate you. This is a proud moment not only for Her Ladyship, but also for the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, as one among us—one of our own esteemed members—is being elevated to the Bench of this prestigious temple of justice.

Since Her Ladyship's enrolment in 1997, she has been actively associated with, and has contributed immensely to, the affairs of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, earning the respect, admiration, and goodwill of the entire fraternity.

On behalf of the Bar, I may, with the utmost humility, make a small and affectionate submission—that Her Ladyship may continue to carry that ever-gracious smile even



amidst the most demanding and trying moments on the Bench. It is a quality we have always cherished, much like the warmth and composure we had the privilege of experiencing from her esteemed senior, Justice M. Ramachandran.

Allow me to recall one defining moment—a moment that, to my mind, captures the very essence of who Justice Preeta is.

In December 2021, a minor girl aged 8, was subjected to severe humiliation and harassment by a police officer, after being wrongfully accused—alongside with father—of stealing a mobile phone from a Pink Patrol vehicle. Despite her repeated denial, she was treated in an inhuman manner, causing deep mental trauma. It was later discovered that the phone was inside the police vehicle itself, all along. The video of her ordeal went viral.

Yet, despite the clear injustice and directions from authorities, no meaningful action was taken.

At that critical moment, Justice Preeta rose as a true defender of the underage girl, invoking the writ jurisdiction of this Honourable High Court. The Court, appreciating the cause, granted relief—redressing the child's grievances and restoring her dignity and confidence.

This empathy, human touch, and unwavering commitment to justice for the marginalized, truly define Justice Preeta.

Until yesterday, Her Ladyship stood among us at the Bar; today, the nation has, in its wisdom, reposed its faith in her by entrusting her with this high constitutional office and elevating her to the Bench.

The journey from the Bar to the Bench is not merely a change of position, but a transformation of responsibility—one that calls for the highest standards of independence, fairness, and judicial wisdom.

Let Your Ladyship's tenure on the Bench reinforce the faith of the common man in the majesty of law. Your Ladyship will remain a true instrument of justice—for the suffering, the underprivileged, and the voiceless.

As a shining beacon on the Bench, Your Ladyship will uphold the finest traditions of this institution, bringing pride and distinction to the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association.

We the members of Kerala High Court Advocate Association extend our heartfelt best wishes to her lady ship Justice Preeta and look forward to a remarkable and inspiring journey on the Bench.

Thank you.

Jai hind

Reply speech by the Honourable Mrs. Justice Preeta A.K.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Soumen Sen, Chief Justice of High Court of Kerala, Hon'ble brother and sister judges, former judges of this court, learned Advocate General Shri. K. Gopalakrishna Kurup, Additional Solicitor General for India Shri P. Sreekumar, Learned Addl. Advocate General Shri. K.P. Jayachandran, learned Director General of Prosecution, Shri T. A Shaji, Chairman of the Bar Council of Kerala Shri T.S. Ajith, President of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association Sri. Peeyus A. Kottam, President of the Senior Advocates Association Adv. Nandakumara Menon, Vice President of the Kerala Federation of Women Lawyers, Smt. Parvathy Menon, esteemed brother and sister lawyers, all Law Officers of the Central and State Government, Registrar General and other Officers of the Registry, staff of the High Court, advocate clerks, ladies and gentlemen.

Warm Good Morning to one and all.

Providence is the way by which God directs all things seen and unseen, and my presence here today is no exception. It is only because of the abundant blessings showered on me by the Almighty, that I stand before you today.

I express my sincere gratitude to learned Advocate General, Learned Additional Solicitor General for India, and the President of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association for their gracious remarks on this momentous occasion in my professional life.

It is indeed a moment of pride for me that today I am assuming the office of a judge of a Constitutional Court. I am fully conscious about the responsibilities and duties bestowed on me by the Constitution of India. I am also aware of the expectation that the legal fraternity as well as the society at large place on a judge of a constitutional court and I can only assure that I am fully committed to discharging my duties diligently and conscientiously to the best of my ability.

I thank the Collegium of the High Court of Kerala headed by then Chief Justice Hon'ble Mr. Justice Nitin Madhukar Jamdar, Hon'ble Mr. Justice A. Muhamad Mushtaq, presently the Chief Justice of the High Court of Sikkim and Hon'ble Dr. Justice A.K. Jayasankaran Nambiar which reposed confidence in me and recommended me for being appointed as a Judge of the High Court of Kerala. I



sincerely thank the Collegium of the Supreme Court which had acted upon the recommendation from the Collegium of the High Court of Kerala.

I count it among the foremost blessings of my life to have been born the daughter of two extraordinary individuals: my late father, Adv. B.R. Aravindan Nair, an advocate of remarkable dedication who devoted more than half a century of his professional life to labour and civil law; and my mother, Krishnamma, whose entire world I had the privilege of being.

I hail from Peermade in the district of Idukki, the spice district of Kerala where the air is filled with fragrance of spices, where the people live as one with the nature and also battling hard to eke out a living. I did my schooling at St. Pious X English Medium School, Kuttikkanam, and pursued my pre degree course at N.S.S. Hindu College, Changanacherry. The values instilled in me during my school years — in particular by Reverend Sr. Bruno, Sr. Jain and Mrs. Rosy Morris — have left a lasting and profound impression upon me, one that endures to this day and continues to inform both my personal conduct and my professional life.

I pursued my law degree at Kerala Law Academy Law College, Thiruvananthapuram. Those five formative years opened new horizons of legal inquiry for me and for many of my classmates, a number of whom honour me with their presence here today. The College's strong emphasis on moot court participation afforded me invaluable opportunities to explore the finer dimensions of advocacy. I record my deep and abiding gratitude to the late Dr. N. Narayanan Nair, then Director of Kerala Law Academy, whose singular vision and stewardship laid the foundations of our professional identity long before we crossed the threshold of practice. I am equally indebted to Prof. Dr. K.C. Sunny, former Vice Chancellor of NUALS, whose mentorship instilled in us a rigorous engagement with the Constitution of India and sharpened our skills as legal practitioners. My gratitude extends, without reservation, to all the teachers and mentors of my alma mater who guided my earliest steps.

After graduating, I joined the illustrious office of Justice M.P. Menon at Ernakulam — nearly three decades ago — where my father entrusted me to Adv. M. Ramachandran, who later became a Judge of this Court and who continues to bless me with his presence here today. From my pre-enrolment training in 1996, through my active practice, until he was elevated to the Bench, Ramachandran Sir instilled in me strong fundamentals — not only in practice, but in the professional etiquette and ethics that a lawyer must hold as non-negotiable. His training on drafting, articulation, and court craft remain my lodestar to this day. I am deeply honoured and moved that my guru is here with me at this defining moment.

After Ramachandran Sir's elevation, I was fortunate to be guided by the lawyer couple Advocates P. Ramakrishnan and Preethi Ramakrishnan, under whose watchful mentorship I continued to grow, until I established my own practice in 2005.

I need not have a second thought in saying that my professional journey till this moment would not have been realized had I not joined the Lawyers Office of Justice M.P. Menon where I got nurturing from generations of lawyers. I thank Advocates Paulson C. Varghese, A. Jayasankar, T.C. Krishna, C. Anilkumar, Asha, Manu Govind and Prathap Abraham, for their unreserved co-operation, care and affection towards me. At this moment, I remember with gratitude our seniormost Advocate clerk late Damodara Menon who had opportunity to work for 3 generation of lawyers in the office. I also thank the valuable assistance given clerks, Sri. Katju, Sri. Sudhakaran during my days at the office.

I thank my past and present junior colleagues — Advocates Sabarinath, Jithin Varghese, Devika Mohan, Reshma R. Krishnan, and Devadath G.— with whom I have worked purposively, always striving to maintain the quality of our work. I also thank Prasanth B. Menon, my clerk of the past two decades, for his productive and steadfast contribution to the office. Advocates M.R. Rajesh, V.T. Raghunath and Arun James Mathew with whom I shared a close and enduring professional association, occupy a place in my life that transcends the bounds of professional connection — they are, in every true sense, family to me.

I was privileged to be mentored by the judges before whom I have appeared during my professional days as well as guidance and unreserved cooperation from the Senior Lawyers of this Court which has decisively helped me in my profession and I sincerely pay my gratitude to all the respected judges and senior lawyers.

I had travelled only through the roads set for me by my seniors, mentors and my father and close to 30 years my life revolved around this Universe, the High Court of Kerala. I should also conspicuously place on record that my clients were my foremost educators as their life experiences traversed statute books and other learning materials. and I acknowledge with deep gratitude the faith reposed in me by each of them over the years. I also thank the institutional clients for whom I served as Standing Counsel — including IT majors, GAIL India Ltd., Customs and Central Excise, the ESI Corporation, Kochi Metro Rail Ltd., and Water Metro Ltd. — for entrusting me with opportunities that broadened my legal acumen immeasurably.

The realization that a lawyer is always a learner was further fortified when I got an opportunity to associate with CLEA – the Commonwealth Legal Education Association through its several national and international platforms. I had the opportunity to gain nuanced understandings of a spectrum of areas and I should be

thankful to the CLEA especially the President of CLEA Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar, Senior Professor, Indian Law Institute and Dr. Ruchi Sharma, Joint Secretary, CLEA.

I was extremely privileged to have Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar as my teacher and mentor during my learning days itself and indeed under his strict regimen only we the mooters at Kerala Law Academy Law College could sweep competitions at national and international level. I respectfully and with immense gratitude acknowledge the ways in which he touched my life as a student, as a lawyer and continuously thereafter grooming me through continuing legal education making me capable enough to stand in good stead in the spaces that I occupied.

If for one moment I feel emotional, that is when the memories of my father comes flooding and inundates me. All my cherished moments till date as a lawyer has been the outcome of grooming that I got from him even hours before his demise three and half years back. You cannot have asked for a better person as father, friend, philosopher and guide. I am bound to rise up to his expectations about me in my present capacity which I need to demonstrate through my actions.

My mother Krishnamma under whose careful nurturing I grew was a strict disciplinarian but she was also a loving companion and the sacrifices at her end is beyond comprehension. I am immensely happy to have her here witnessing this momentous occasion.

My uncle Rajan and his family have always been with us and their unreserved love and affection is a privilege for me.

My father-in-law late R. Sukumaran Nair always longed to see me excel in my profession and I am sure that he will be relishing this moment from his heavenly abode. My mother-in-law Dr. Saraswathy Bai, who is in her early 90s have always been supportive and will be watching these moments virtually as she cannot travel all this distance and will be immensely happy. My sisters-in-law and family, all of whom are present have only prayers for me and that love adds immeasurable strength to my life. My friends and well-wishers were a constant source of inspiration to me all along and I sincerely thank each and every one for their affectionate gesture towards me.

I also wish to place on record, with special warmth, the contribution of Adv. Devadath, who has been part of our family for more than five years — with bonds thicker than blood. The relentless care with which he supports our lives cannot be easily defined or measured.

They say that behind every successful man there is a woman — in my case, it is the reverse. I am truly fortunate to have my husband, Dr. Giri Sankar S. S., who

is husband, mentor, friend, and role model all rolled into one — a person who settles for nothing less than excellence. His continuous encouragement and support helped me bring work life balance. Without his support and belief in me, I would not have reached where I stand today.

To my friends and well-wishers who have been a constant source of inspiration — thank you, each one of you.

Thank you all.

Jai Hind
