

FULL COURT REFERENCE HELD IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA ON 10th APRIL 2026, ON THE OCCASION OF THE RETIREMENT OF HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE K. BABU.

Speech by Sri. K. Gopalakrishna Kurup, Advocate General

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of the High Court of Kerala, Mr. Justice Soumen Sen; The Hon'ble Justice K. Babu; The Hon'ble Judges of the High Court of Kerala; The Hon'ble Former Judges of the High Court of Kerala; The Additional Solicitor eneral 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; 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 Justice K. Babu; Staff of the Advocate General's Office; Advocate Clerks; Ladies and Gentlemen and all other dignitaries joining online.

Today, we all have assembled here to bid farewell to Justice K. Babu, who is demitting office as a Judge of this Honourable Court on the 7th of May, 2026, upon attaining the age of superannuation. A suave and soft-spoken Judge, Your Lordship has always exemplified excellence. Your judicial journey began with distinction, having topped the first-ever Kerala Higher Judicial Examination and entering the Judiciary as a District Judge. Nearly twelve years of distinguished service as a District Judge, followed by over five years as a Judge of this Honourable Court, stand as a testament to your remarkable legal expertise. Your long tenure as the Special Commissioner of Sabarimala Temple and the term as the Chairman of the Administrative Committee of Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple as well as the stints in the Registries of this Honourable Court and the Honourable Apex Court, reflect a rare blend of administrative efficiency, spotless integrity, and selfless dedication. At the very outset, let me place on record my sincere appreciation to all those concerned for convening this reference today, before the Court closes for the annual vacation, thereby enabling the Bar, in its full strength, to offer its befitting tribute to Your Lordship's distinguished judicial journey.

Your Lordship was born on 8th of May, 1964 at Thevannoor, Ayoor in Kollam District, into an agrarian family, to (late) Sri K.K. Karunakaran and (late) Smt. K. Bhavani. Your brother, Sri K. Murukesan, has always been a source of inspiration for you. You had your schooling at the Government High School at Thevannoor. After securing a postgraduate degree in Economics, you turned to the study of law and secured LL.B. degree from Government Law College, Thiruvananthapuram. You later acquired LL.M. degree from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam.

Your Lordship was enrolled as a lawyer in March 1994 and commenced practice at the Courts at Kottarakara and Kollam. Advocate Sri. N. Viswanathan and (late) Advocate Sri. K. Ramachandran Nair guided you with paternal affection through the nuanced pathways of the noble profession of lawyering. You redeemed the trust reposed by them on you by being passionately industrious in the profession. Your assiduous industry earned you rewards and you soon made a name for yourself in the Bars of Kottarakara and Kollam as an erudite and dependable lawyer. You soon commanded substantial practice and, by 2009, had built up an office with junior colleagues and associates. You practiced in all fields of law and was particularly known for your proficiency in civil law. Your public life extended well beyond the confines of the courtroom, as you were an active social worker and a public-spirited citizen, consistently engaging with and contributing to causes of broader societal importance.

One's peers are the best judges of oneself. When this Honourable Court announced the first ever Kerala Higher Judicial Service Examination, some among your brethren in the Kottarakara Bar, who were aware of your insightful knowledge in law, prevailed upon you to appear for the same. You brought pride to the entire Bar in Kollam District, and the Kottarakara Bar in particular, when you topped the said examination.

Your Lordship joined the Kerala Higher Judicial Service as District and Sessions Judge in 2009. You later served as Additional District Judge at Thalassery, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam and Special Judge (SPE/CBI) at Ernakulam. While serving as the Additional District Judge at Pathanamthitta and as the Special Judge (SPE/CBI) at Ernakulam, you also held

the position of Special Commissioner, Sabarimala. Notably, your efficiency and dedication in discharging your duties as Special Commissioner during your tenure at Pathanamthitta impressed the administration of this Hon'ble Court to such an extent that you were continued in that role even after your transfer from the district. To the best of my knowledge, you were the first judicial officer posted outside Pathanamthitta to be entrusted with the responsibility of Special Commissioner, Sabarimala.

Your Lordship subsequently officiated as Registrar (Subordinate Judiciary) of this Honourable Court and as Registrar (Officer on Special Duty) in the Honourable Supreme Court. While in the Registry of this Honourable Court, you played a key role in maintaining harmony and healthy relationship between the Bar and the Registry. You there upon served as the Principal District and Sessions Judge, Thiruvananthapuram. As District Judge, Thiruvananthapuram, you were also the Chairman of the Committee for administration of Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple. You thus had the unique distinction of overseeing the functioning of Sabarimala, the hill shrine with one of the highest seasonal densities of pilgrim footfall in the world, and of leading the administration of the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, widely regarded as the abode of the world's richest deity.

Your Lordship was elevated as Additional Judge of this Honourable Court on 25.02.2021, and, was, later appointed as Permanent Judge of this Honourable Court on 06.06.2022. As a Judge, you nurtured an atmosphere of mutual respect and openness in the courtroom, ensuring that every counsel was heard with patience and fairness. You listened attentively to the submissions of lawyers, affording them sufficient

opportunity to present their cases without unnecessary interruption or curtailment. No lawyer would have ever left your court room with a feeling that he or she could not present the case they represented to his or her satisfaction. In thus encouraging participatory adjudication process, you promoted clarity, thoroughness, and professionalism in advocacy, which in turn enabled you to arrive at well-reasoned and just decisions. You have consistently adhered to the judicial philosophy that a judge speaks through his judgments. You have rendered lucid, well-structured judgments across a wide and diverse legal spectrum, including constitutional and administrative law, rent control and abkari matters, criminal and civil cases, matrimonial and labour disputes, co-operative society matters, corruption cases, and issues concerning the privacy of victims of sexual assault.

You, on the judicial side, laid down guidelines regarding the measures to be adopted by Law Enforcement Agencies and Courts in handling electronic records containing sexually explicit materials. You held that the non – communication of the grounds of arrest to the arrestee in the language of his or her understanding is violative of the constitutional and statutory mandate and would make the arrest and the consequential remand *non-est* in law. You also held that detention of accused beyond 24 hours without being produced before the jurisdictional Magistrate is violative of Part III of the Constitution. You decided that the Appellate Authority under Section 83 (1)(c) of the Kerala Co-operative Societies Act had power to reconsider all matters considered by the general body of a society. Speaking on the scope and purport of Section 14 of the Notaries Act, you held that unless the foreign country where a power of attorney is executed before a notary public is a reciprocating country, the notarial act done in the

foreign country lacks sanctity. On the scope of Section 24 (3) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, you held that a news item published in a newspaper was not sufficient compliance of the order of dismissal of a workman. I can go on and on referring to such precedential judgments of Your Lordship, for you have rendered scores and scores of such scholarly judgments.

Your Lordship is married to Smt. Sandhya K and have been blessed with two children, a daughter and a son. Your daughter Adv. Vrinda and son-in-law Adv. Sarath M.S., are practicing before this Honourable Court and son Varun is pursuing LL.B at Christ University, Delhi.

On behalf of the legal fraternity of the State of Kerala, I extend to Your Lordship and Your Lordship's family my earnest wishes for good health, happiness, and continued intellectual fulfilment in the years to come. May the next phase of Your Lordship's journey prove to be as distinguished and fulfilling as the one that draws to a close today.

Thank you

Jai Hind.

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

Farewell to Justice K. Babu

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 M, Additional Solicitor General, Adv

Asok M. Cherian, Addl. Advocate General, Director General of Prosecution, Sri. T.A. Shaji; Additional Director General of Prosecution, Sri. Gracious Kuriakose; State Attorney, Sri. N. Manoj Kumar; President, Senior Advocates' Association; Chairman, Bar Council of Kerala, Smt. Nima Jacob; Secretary, Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, Executive Committee members of Kerala High Court Advocates' Association; President, 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 of Hon'ble Mr. Justice K. Babu, My esteemed colleagues at the Bar; My dear brothers and sisters and all other dignitaries joining us.

It is indeed a privilege and a matter of great pride for me to stand before this august gathering and place on record our deep respect, admiration, and heartfelt affection for Hon'ble Mr. Justice K. Babu, as His Lordship brings to a close a truly distinguished and exemplary journey on the Bench.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice K. Babu is known as one of the calmest Judges we have had the privilege to appear before. We have never witnessed His Lordship lose his temper or display harshness. From morning till evening, he sat on the Bench with the same composure and the same reassuring smile.

Before His Lordship, every lawyer felt at ease to advance arguments without hesitation, for he was always patient, receptive, and supportive in the conduct of court proceedings. His court was marked by dignity, discipline, and an atmosphere of quiet encouragement.

Mr. Justice Babu has, in every phase of his career, stood out as a personality of rare distinction. He was not merely respected—he was genuinely liked and admired by all who had the privilege of interacting with. Mr. Justice KBabu became a rock—firm in principle, unwavering in conviction, and steadfast in the pursuit of justice.

Your tenure as judge, will forever remain a golden era. The grace with which His Lordship handled matters, the clarity in his approach, his impeccable temperament, and his remarkable patience—especially towards young lawyers—made his courtroom not just a place of adjudication, but a space of learning and growth.

Justice K. Babu embodied a rare combination—deeply accessible to the Bar yet firmly disciplined, fearless yet balanced, impartial yet warm, and authoritative without ever losing his gentleness.

Today, in bidding farewell, we are not merely seeing off a Judge—we are parting with an institution, a steady guiding light, and a comforting presence on the Bench.

With utmost respect and gratitude, we acknowledge a legacy that will continue to inspire generations of lawyers. Your absence will be felt, not just in these halls, but far beyond them.

Thank you, My Lord.

Speech by the Honourable Chief Justice Mr. Soumen Sen.

Brother Justice K. Babu, My Esteemed Sister and Brother Judges, Former Judges of this Court, Learned Advocate General, Learned Additional Solicitor General of India, Learned Deputy Solicitor General of India, Law Officers of the State, Union of India and Union Territory, Chairman, Bar Council of Kerala, President, Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, President, Senior Advocates' Association, President, Kerala Federation of Women Lawyers, Senior and Junior Members of the Bar, Registrar General and Members of the Registry, Smt. Sandhya K., wife of Brother Justice Babu, and his family members, Members of the Advocates' Clerks' Association, Staff of the High Court, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon to all.

We are gathered here to bid an affectionate farewell to one of our esteemed colleagues – Brother Justice K. Babu, a distinguished Judge of this Court. After about twelve years of impeccable service in the District Judiciary and more than five years on the Bench of this High Court, Justice Babu demits the office upon attaining the age of superannuation.

2. One of the most cherished moments in a person's life is when one steps away from one's vocation with a sense of fulfilment, carrying with him the sweet memories of dedicated and arduous work and begins a new phase of life with pride in one's accomplishments, both professional and personal. We are certain that Brother Justice Babu exemplifies this experience.

3. Justice Babu was born on 8 May 1964 at Thevannoor, Ayoor, in Kollam District, to late Sri K. Karunakaran and Smt K. Bhavani, who were farmers. After his early education at the Government High School, Thevannoor, he pursued his postgraduate degree in Economics from the University of Kerala. Thereafter, he obtained his LL.B. from the Government Law College, Thiruvananthapuram, and later completed his LL.M. from the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. He enrolled as an Advocate on 20 March 1994 and commenced practice at Kottarakkara and Kollam under the tutelage of Advocate Sri. N. Viswanathan and late Advocate Sri. K. Ramachandran Nair. He handled cases across diverse branches of law, with a predominant focus on civil law. His years at the Bar were marked by diligence, sincerity and a deep understanding of legal principles, which stood him in good stead on the Bench.

4. In 2009, he was appointed as a District and Sessions Judge by direct recruitment. During his tenure, he served as the Additional District Judge at Thalassery, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam, and also as the Special Judge (SPE/CBI) at Ernakulam. While serving in these capacities, he was also entrusted with the responsibility of Special Commissioner, Sabarimala. In each of these assignments, he discharged his duties with remarkable efficiency and fairness.

5. His administrative acumen was evident when he served as the Registrar (Subordinate Judiciary) from 8 July 2016 and later as the Registrar (Officer on Special Duty) in the Supreme Court of India. These assignments stand testimony to his capability and the confidence reposed in him by the institution. As the Principal District Judge, Thiruvananthapuram, a position he held till 24 February 2021, he ensured the smooth functioning of the district judiciary and

undertook responsibilities of great importance, including serving as the Chairman of the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of the Sree Padmanabha Swami Temple.

6. In recognition of his merit and dedication, he was sworn in as an Additional Judge of this Court on 25 February 2021 and became a Permanent Judge on 6 June 2022.

7. During his tenure on the Bench, he has dealt with matters, particularly in Civil and Criminal laws. Sitting in Single and Division Benches, he has, with exceptional diligence and keen judicial acumen, disposed of more than 8,400 cases. His judgments, many of which have been reported in law journals, bear testimony to his strong sense of justice and reflect the manner in which he has discharged his onerous duties in true fidelity to the oath he took. He has left a lasting contribution at every stage of his professional life.

8. After serving in various capacities and at different stations, Justice Babu now completes a full circle by retiring as a Judge of this High Court. What may appear to be a long journey is, in reality, a steady and well-earned progression, marked by merit and consistent dedication. His work speaks eloquently of his personality and commitment.

9. Drawing upon his experience as Registrar (District Judiciary), Justice Babu made valuable contributions on the administrative side as well. He served as a Special Invitee to the Administrative Committee and the High Power Committee to monitor the development of Judicial City at Kalamassery, based on the agenda concerning District Judiciary. He was also a member of several committees, viz., Rule Committee under Section 123 C.P.C., High Power Committee to look into the amendment of Special Rules and modification of Scheme/procedure for the selection of Munsiff-Magistrates,

Committee to make recommendations before the Administrative Committee to reduce long delay in Murder cases, Committee for Juvenile Justice and to regulate and monitor progress of trials under the POCSO Act, Committee for performance evaluation and mentoring of judicial officers in the District Judiciary – South Zone, etc.

10. A Judge must embody integrity, impartiality and a deep commitment to justice at all times. Brother Justice Babu's professional journey has been marked by a steadfast adherence to the finest traditions of the Bench and the Bar. His work has been characterised by restraint and a deep sense of responsibility, reflecting the true spirit of judicial office. The manner in which he has carried himself has reinforced the values of propriety and commitment that are integral to this institution. Justice Babu can be described in three words – the quality of three C's: Calm, Cool and Composed. In his calmness, one can find firmness as well.

11. On this occasion, I extend our warm wishes and congratulations to Smt. Sandhya K., wife of Justice Babu; their daughter, Smt. Vrinda, a practising Advocate of this Court; and their son, Sri. Varun, who is pursuing his LL.B., as well as to other members of the family, for the support and strength they have extended to him throughout his judicial career. Though Justice Babu parts our company as a sitting Judge of this Court, he will always remain in our highest esteem.

12. While bidding farewell to Brother Justice Babu, on behalf of my brother and sister Judges and on my own behalf, I place on record our sincere gratitude for your unstinted support and co-operation. After years of distinguished service and steadfast commitment to justice, may this next phase of life offer you the time and freedom to pursue

long-cherished interests, personal passions and meaningful engagements. Wish you great success and contentment in all your future plans and endeavours.

Thank you.

Reply speech by the Honourable Mr. Justice K. Babu

Hon'ble the Chief Justice Shri Soumen Sen, my esteemed Sister and Brother Judges, distinguished former Judges, Shri.K.Gopalakrishna Kurup, Advocate General, Shri.P. Sreekumar, Additional Solicitor General of India, Shri.Peeyus A Kottam, President of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, The Chairman of the Bar Council of Kerala, Law Officers of the Union and State Governments, distinguished Senior Advocates, President of the Kerala Federation of Women Lawyers, Adv.Balbir Singh Poswal, my dear brothers and sisters of the Bar, Officers and Staff of this Court, advocate clerks, friends, family, ladies and gentlemen.

I am deeply obliged to Hon'ble the Chief Justice, the Advocate General, the Additional Solicitor General, and the President of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association for their kind words. I am fully conscious that I do not deserve the compliments bestowed upon me and I believe that they are extended only as a matter of courtesy.

I remain deeply indebted to my parents and my elder brother, whose unwavering love and care have shaped my path and instilled in me the strength to walk forward with purpose and integrity.

At this moment, I recall with deep gratitude my mentors, Advocate Sri N. Viswanathan and the late Advocate Sri K.

Ramachandran Nair, whose guidance and encouragement have profoundly shaped my journey. I am also reminded of the luminous presence of the late Mr. Justice Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan, whose memory continues to inspire and guide me.

The true strength of our High Court lies in its exceptionally efficient and erudite Bar. It is heartening to see a new generation of promising young lawyers, including many accomplished women, who enrich its vitality. They deserve our continued encouragement, support, and protection. I consider myself truly fortunate to have received the unwavering assistance, support, affection, and cooperation of the Bar.

The Registry of this Court stands among the best in the country. Under the able leadership of Shri G. Gopakumar, the Registrar General, the members of the Registry have been immensely helpful to me. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Registrars, Protocol Officers, Public Relations Officers, and all other officials of the High Court who have supported me in the discharge of my official duties.

I recall with deep gratitude the services rendered to me by my Private Secretary Smt. T.K. Sreelatha; my Personal Assistants, Jily, Sherina, and Vrinda; my Court Officers, Sri. Sujith, Smt. Anjali and Smt. Jiji; my Escort Attendant, Sri Jenson Joseph; my Office Attendant, Smt. Jyothi; Sevak Shri. Tony Tomy, and other staff members at my residence, for their sincerity and unswerving commitment in the discharge of their duties. I also place on record my sincere appreciation for my Research Assistants, Smt. Surya and Aksha, for their devoted and diligent work.

I also acknowledge with deep gratitude the dedicated

and protective services rendered by my chauffeurs, Shri Ramjith and Santhosh. I further extend my sincere thanks to my Personal Security Officers, Shri. Ajith and Shri. Shine and the Residence Guards for their steadfast support and for all that they have done for me and my family.

My family is not to be thanked, for they are an inseparable part of my life, standing by me through my ups and downs, joys and sorrows.

As I take your leave, I carry with me cherished memories and profound appreciation for each one of you, and I convey my best wishes for your progress and prosperity.

Thank you

Jai Hind.
