

FULL COURT REFERENCE HELD IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA ON 29TH MAY 2026, ON THE OCCASION OF THE RETIREMENT OF HONOURABLE MRS. JUSTICE M.B. SNEHALATHA.

Speech by Sri. K. Jaju Babu, Advocate General.

Honourable Mr. Justice Dr. A.K. Jayasankaran Nambiar, the Honourable Mrs. Justice M.B. Snehalatha, the Honourable Judges of the High Court of Kerala, the Honourable former Judges of the High Court of Kerala, the Additional Solicitor General of India, the Additional Advocate Generals, the Director General of Prosecution, the Deputy Solicitor General of India, the President, Kerala High Court Advocates Association, Chairman, Bar Council of Kerala, the President, Kerala High Court Senior Advocates Association, the President, Kerala Federation of Women Lawyers, the Mediator-Coordinator, High Court Mediation Centre, Law Officers of the State, Senior Central Government Standing Council (Taxes) and other Law Officers of the Central Government, Law Officers of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, learned Senior Advocates, esteemed fellow members of the Bar, Registrar General, Registrars and Staff of the High Court, Staff of the Advocate General's Office, the President, Kerala High Court Advocates Clerks Association and Advocate Clerks, esteemed family members of the Honourable Mrs. Justice M.B. Snehalatha, all other dignitaries joining online, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Today we all have assembled here to bid farewell to Her Ladyship Justice M.B. Snehalatha who is demitting office upon attaining the age of superannuation and also to place on record our deep sense of appreciation, gratitude and respect.

Your Ladyship hails from Malipuram Village of Vypin Island, which is a place very near to this Court. Born to Late Marakkaparambil Bhargavan and Late Bhama in the year 1964, My Lady did your schooling at Malipuram and Ochanthuruth. After graduating from St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam, My Lady secured Law Degree and Master's Degree in Law from Mahatma Gandhi University. My Lady enrolled as an Advocate in December 1987 and started practice as junior to Late Advocate Viswanathan Mannali who was a doyen of Kochi Bar.

Your Ladyship's service to judiciary began well before your elevation to our High Court. My Lady joined the Kerala Judicial Service as Munsiff Magistrate in the year 1995 and became a District Judge in the year 2014. During the period from 1995 to 2024, My Lady served as Munsiff Magistrate, Sub Judge, Chief Judicial Magistrate, the Presiding Officer of the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal, Additional District and Sessions Judge and Judge at the Special Sessions Court for the trial of

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Marad cases, Enquiry Commissioner and Special Judge for Vigilance Cases and Principal District and Sessions Judge.

Your Ladyship was sworn in as a Judge of this Hon'ble Court on 25.04.2024 after an illustrious tenure of almost three decades in the subordinate judicial service of the State.

Patient hearing, diligent consideration of the lis and rendering just decision coupled with humility are the hallmarks of an efficient and good Judge. Your Ladyship was humility personified as a Judge. My Lady listened to the arguing lawyers patiently, never cut short arguments of either side and was always accommodative of the Bar. My Lady rendered quality judgments expeditiously. My Lady's humility, approachability and genuine concern for the welfare of the members of the Bar and Court staff have endeared to everyone who had the privilege of interacting with Your Ladyship. My Lady have been a Judge who has always remembered that behind every case file lies a human story and justice must not only be done but must also touch the hearts of those who seek it. While dealing with complex questions of law or matters affecting the daily lives of citizens, Justice Snehalatha has brought to bear her vast experience from the District Judiciary and her deep understanding of ground realities. These qualities have earned her the respect and admiration of the entire legal fraternity.

Her Ladyship has written remarkable judgments in Family Law and Motor Vehicle Accident Claims like the one upholding the claim of a wife for return of the gold ornaments given by her parents to her husband at the time of marriage, the judgment declaring that the Insurance Company is liable to pay the eligible compensation to a deceased gratuitous passenger and recover the same from the insured, which are only illustrative.

Your Ladyship is married to Advocate K.K. Shaji and is blessed with a son Alen Krishna.

But for the prefixed time frame for retirement due to constitutional compulsions I am certain that almost all Lawyers of the High Court Bar sitting here would have liked an erudite Judge like Your Ladyship to have continued in office for some time more. Many thanks for your dedication and commitment to the judicial community. Now, My Lady may have a relaxing retirement, knowing that your life's work has made a difference. On behalf of the entire legal fraternity of the State of Kerala, I wish My Lady more and more years of happy and fruitful life ahead.

Thank You all and

Jai Hind.

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

Hon'ble Dr. Justice A. K. Jayasankaran Nambiar Judge of the High Court of Kerala; Hon'ble Judges and Former Judges of the High Court of Kerala; Learned Advocate General, Sri. K. Jaiju Babu, Adv. Sreekumar P., Additional Solicitor General, Adv. Mohammed Shah, Addl. Advocate General, Adv. K.C. Vincent, Addl. Advocate General, Director General of Prosecution, Sri. Asaf Ali, President, Senior Advocates' Association, Sri. Nandakumar Menon; Smt. Nima Jacob; Secretary, Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, Executive Committee members of Kerala High Court Advocates' Association; President, Kerala Federation of Women Lawyers Adv. Karthika Sukumaran, 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 Mrs. Justice Snehalatha My esteemed colleagues at the Bar; My dear brothers and sisters; Good evening to all.

Today, we gather with deep respect and heartfelt gratitude to honour Her Ladyship Mrs. Justice Snehalatha, whose wisdom, dignity, and gracious presence have left an enduring mark on the Bench, the Bar, and the justice delivery system.

Her Ladyship Mrs. Justice Snehalatha is truly one among us. Despite her vast experience and distinguished career, she never carried herself with any air of superiority. Though the Bar had the opportunity to interact with Her Ladyship for only a short period since her appointment as an Additional Judge of this Hon'ble Court on 25.04.2024, that brief period was enough for all of us to recognise her remarkable judicial qualities.

Having entered judicial service in 1995, Her Ladyship devoted nearly 31 years to the cause of justice, rendering fearless and impartial service with unwavering dedication. From the perspective of the Bar, Justice Snehalatha was always calm, approachable, smiling, and courteous. She never exercised judicial power with aggression towards members of the Bar. Instead, with patience and a pleasant smile, she was always prepared to hear every argument and address every submission with fairness and composure.

As members of the Bar, what we primarily expect from a Judge is a willingness to listen to hear us with patience and consider our submissions with an open mind. Fortunately for us, Her Ladyship embodied those very qualities. Within a short span as a Judge of the High Court, Justice Snehalatha earned the confidence and admira-

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tion of both the Bench and the Bar and distinguished herself in handling Constitutional and other important matters with grace, balance, and clarity.

Retirement from the judiciary is never the end of an innings; rather, it is the beginning of another meaningful chapter of service. Society still expects much from Your Ladyship's wisdom, experience, and compassion for the benefit of future generations.

We are confident that Your Ladyship's second innings after retirement will be bright, purposeful, and a guiding force for many, especially for those in need of support and justice.

On behalf of the Bar, we extend our heartfelt wishes for good health, happiness, and great success in every endeavour Your Ladyship undertakes hereafter. We are certain that Mrs. Justice Snehalatha will always be remembered with respect and affection by the Kerala High Court Bar and the legal fraternity.

We wish Your Ladyship all the very best.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.

Speech by Honourable Dr. Justice A.K. Jayasankaran Nambiar:

The Hon'ble Mrs. Justice M.B. Snehalatha, Brother and Sister Judges of this Court, the learned Advocate General Sri. Jaju Babu, Sri. Peeyus A Kottam, President of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association, Former Judges of this Court present here, Mr. K.K. Shaji, the husband and family members of Justice Snehalatha, Registrars and staff of this Court, the Law Officers of the Union and State Government, Advocate Clerks, esteemed members of the bar, Ladies and Gentlemen.

We are gathered here today not merely to formally mark the retirement of a Judge, but to honour and celebrate the distinguished judicial journey of our esteemed sister Judge, Justice Snehalatha, who demits office today. Her tenure on the Bench has been defined not simply by the passage of years, but by an abiding commitment to justice, unwavering integrity, scholarly excellence, and deep compassion for those who sought justice before this Court.

During her brief but distinguished tenure as a Judge of this Court, Justice Snehalatha rendered several remarkable judgments marked by compassion, balance, and deep constitutional commitment. Her judgments reflect a humane understanding of matrimonial cruelty, recognising the continuing nature of suffering within abusive

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marriages and the realities faced by victims. At the same time, they also demonstrate a balanced approach to public law, carefully reconciling individual hardship with larger public interest in matters such as land acquisition. Equally significant has been her emphasis on the majesty of law, judicial discipline, and institutional integrity, reinforcing the fundamental values that sustain public confidence in the justice delivery system.

Beyond her judicial work, Justice Snehalatha has been a gracious colleague and a source of encouragement to many within this institution. Her humility, balanced temperament, and gracious conduct enriched the collective spirit of this Court and strengthened the dignity of the institution she served with distinction. As she steps down from judicial office today, we are reminded that while a Judge may retire from the Bench, the values, principles, and legacy of service that she leaves behind continue to endure. The contribution made by Justice Snehalatha to the administration of justice will remain an enduring part of this institution's history.

As she retires from the High Court, we honour not only an accomplished Judge but also a pathbreaker whose presence on the Bench carried a significance far beyond the courtroom. At a time when the importance of gender equality in judicial appointments is being increasingly recognised, her retirement comes as a setback to our High Court through the resultant reduction in the number of those who offer a feminine perspective in the dispensation of justice. Through her intellect, fairness, and quiet strength, she inspired confidence in countless women within the legal profession and affirmed the principle that the judiciary must reflect the society it serves. Her legacy as a Judge in our legal system will endure not only in her judgments, but also in the doors she helped open for future generations of women in the law.

Justice Snehalatha's family is here with us this afternoon. To her husband Shaji and her beloved son Alen Krishna, I say thank you for the love and support you provided to our dear sister throughout her judicial tenure. On behalf of all assembled here, I wish you my dear sister and your family the very best in the years to come.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.

Reply speech by Honourable Mrs. Justice M.B. Snelatha.

Hon'ble Dr. Justice A.K. Jayasankaran Nambiar, my esteemed brother and sister judges, distinguished former judges, Advocate General, Sri. Jaju Babu, Additional Solicitor General Sri. P. Sreekumar, the President of High Court Advocates' Association Sri. Peeyus A. Kottam, Additional Advocate General

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Sri.Mohammed Shah and Sri.K.C.Vincent, the Chairman of Bar Council of Kerala, the Deputy Solicitor General Smt.Shalina, the Director General of Prosecution Sri.T.Asaf Ali, State Attorney, Law Officers of the Union and State Government, Registrar General Sri.Gopakumar.G, and the other Registrars of the High Court, Member Secretary Kerala State Legal Services Authority, Director, Kerala State Mediation and Conciliation Centre, the President of the Senior Advocates Association, the President of Kerala Federation of Women Lawyers, Mediator Coordinator, distinguished members of the Bar, the President of Kerala High Court Advocates' Clerks Association, staff of the High Court, Advocate Clerks, ladies and gentlemen and my dear friends.

A very warm good evening to all.

I stand before you today with a heart filled with gratitude and humility. I bow my head in reverence to the memory of my parents and their love.

I am grateful for the kind words spoken about me by Dr.Justice A.K.Jayasankaran Nambiar, the Advocate General and the President of the High Court Advocates Association. I express my sincere thanks to Hon'ble Chief Justice Mr.Justice Soumen Sen and the former Chief Justices Justice Nitin Jamdar and Justice Ashish Jitendra Desai for the love and affection shown to me.

Whatever little I may have achieved was possible because of the co-operation and support of my learned colleagues on the bench, erudite members of the bar, and the staff of the court. I specially acknowledge the support, love and goodwill extended to me by my learned brother Justice Devan Ramachandran, with whom I had the privilege of sharing the Bench for more than one year.

The judicial journey is unlike any other profession. Every day brings with questions affecting the lives, liberties, rights and aspirations of people. To have been entrusted with such responsibility has been the greatest honour of my life.

Each day on the Bench reminded me of the immense trust that litigants place in the courts. That trust is sacred and I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to uphold it with integrity, patience and impartiality.

Law can be learned from books, but wisdom, patience, and fairness are lessons imparted by great mentors. Whatever balance and restraint I could maintain on the Bench came from the guidance of my senior late Advocate Viswanathan Mannali, who taught me that justice must always be tempered with humanity.

A judge can perform effectively only with the assistance of a responsible and enlightened Bar. The quality of justice delivered by any court depends greatly upon

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the assistance rendered by the legal fraternity. I specially acknowledge the assistance, support and co-operation of the Bar in strengthening the justice delivery process.

Courts function not only because of judges and lawyers but because of the quiet dedication of countless staff members who ensure that the institution moves forward every single day. I wish to offer my heartfelt thanks to the Registrar General and other Registrars of the High Court, the protocol officer, the Public Relations Officer, and each and every staff of this Court who tirelessly work behind the scenes.

I thank my Private Secretary Smt.Ambili T.D, Confidential Assistants Smt.Mydhili, Smt.Seethalakshmi, Smt.Sreelakshmi, Personal Assistants Smt.Lakshmi S.Nair, Smt.Susmitha, Research Assistants Smt.Anjitha, Miss.Angel Theresa, Miss.Akshara Gopan, Escort Sri.Prajosh Kumar, Office Attendant Manjula, Chauffeur Sri.Jify Abraham, Personal Security Officers Sri.Aneesh Kumar and Sri.Subish, Court Officers Sri.Sreejith P.M, Smt.Saritha Somasekharan, Sri.Anoop and listing officer Sri.Shahul Hameed for their sincere services to me. I also acknowledge with deep gratitude the services rendered by Smt.Susmija, Smt.Radhika and Smt.Girija, who assisted me at my residence.

Thank you all for your affection, support and goodwill.

May justice always prevail.

Jai Hind.
