

1. **systemic** (adjective) – constructional, organizational.
2. **collegium** (noun) – The collegium system is the one in which the Chief Justice of India and a forum of four senior most judges of the Supreme Court recommend appointments & transfers of judges. There is no mention of the collegium in the Constitution of India.
3. **quite** (adverb) – in every respect, in all respects, without exception.
4. **elevation** (noun) – promotion, upgrading, advancement.
5. **reiteration** (noun) – the process of repeating something (some action) for clarity/emphasis.
6. **oblique** (adjective) – indirect, inexplicit, roundabout/evasive.
7. **thwart** (verb) – stop, prevent, obstruct.
8. **sought** past and past participle of **seek** (verb) – ask for, request, call on.
9. **adverse** (adjective) – unfavourable, disadvantageous, bad.
10. **conduct** (noun) – behaviour, way of behaving, performance.
11. **competence** (noun) – capability, ability, capacity.
12. **integrity** (noun) – honesty, good character, sincerity/fairness.
13. **bound to** (adjective) – certain/sure, very likely, guaranteed.
14. **keen** (adjective) – eager, wishing, ready/determined.
15. **go through** (phrasal verb) – be officially approved.
16. **complement** (noun) – total, aggregate, a number of (people required).
17. **persist** (verb) – continue/carry on, remain/linger/stay.
18. **relative** (adjective) – comparative/comparable, respective, corresponding.
19. **deliberation** (noun) – careful consideration, thought/thinking, contemplation.
20. **collaborative** (adjective) – collective, united, combined.
21. **the executive** (noun) – the executive is a branch of government which enforces the law as written by the legislature and interpreted by the judiciary.
22. **institutionalise** (verb) – set up a standard practice (in an organisation/ culture).
23. **inadequacy** (noun) – insufficiency, deficiency, shortage.
24. **mystery** (noun) – puzzle, question, conundrum.
25. **Memorandum of Procedure (MoP)** – a guideline for selection of high court judges.
26. **in the offing** (phrase) – on the way, coming soon, likely to happen.
27. **empowered** (adjective) – authorized, allowed, entitled.
28. **ought to** (modal verb) – must, should.
29. **revive** (verb) – reintroduce, relaunch, bring back.
30. **processual** (adjective) – functional, operational.
31. **overhaul** (noun) – thorough examination, reorganization/restructuring, rearrangement

For a full bench: on recommendations for judicial appointments

Progress in judicial appointment is welcome, but it is time for systemic change

The government and the Supreme Court collegium seem to disagree on **recommendations for judicial appointments** quite frequently these days. It has become routine to hear that

some recommendations for High Court appointments, as well as elevation to the Supreme Court, have met with disapproval from the government. In such instances, it requires reiteration by the collegium for the names to be cleared. This need not always be a cause for concern if it is a sign of some serious consultation on the suitability of those recommended. However, it acquires the character of a controversy if the government's objections suggest an oblique motive to thwart or delay the appointment of particular nominees. The latest development concerns Jharkhand High Court Chief Justice Aniruddha Bose and Gauhati High Court Chief Justice A.S. Bopanna, who were on April 12 recommended for elevation to the Supreme Court. The government had sought a reconsideration of the two names. The collegium has now repeated its recommendations, emphasising that there is nothing adverse against the two judges in terms of their "conduct, competence and integrity" and that there is no reason to agree with the government. Under the present procedure, the government is now bound to accept the recommendation. The Supreme Court is keen to fill up the current vacancies. It has also recommended two more judges, Justice B.R. Gavai of the Bombay High Court and Chief Justice Surya Kant of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, for appointment to the apex court. If all these four recommendations go through, the court will have its full complement of 31 judges.

While this will be welcome, some issues persist. In systemic terms, the advisability of retaining the collegium system of appointments is a major concern; and in terms of process, the huge number of vacancies in the various High Courts and lower courts is another. The process of filling up vacancies depends on the relative speed with which the collegium initiates proposals for appointments and makes its recommendations after internal deliberations, and the time the government takes to process the names. As on May 1, the total number of vacancies in all the High Courts is 396. It is true that the filling up of vacancies is a continuous and collaborative process involving the executive and the judiciary, and there cannot be a time frame for it. However, it is time to think of a permanent, independent body to institutionalise the process. The known inadequacies of the collegium system and the mystery over whether a new memorandum of procedure is in the offing are reasons why the proposal for a constitutionally empowered council to make judicial appointments ought to be revived — of course, with adequate safeguards to preserve the judiciary's independence. The time may have come for a systemic and processual overhaul.



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