

News

The Supreme Court has 34 judges in total, with Justice BV Nagarathna being the only female member of the bench.



Justices Alok Aradhe and Vipul Pancholi have taken the oath of office.

The Supreme Court is now operating at its full authorized number of 34 judges after Justices Alok Aradhe and Vipul Pancholi were sworn in as judges today.

Only one of the 34, Justice BV Nagarathna, is a member of the Supreme Court of India's bench and is expected to become the country's first female Chief Justice.

The Collegium, which included Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, JK Maheshwari, and **BV Nagarathna**, as well as Chief Justice of India **BR Gavai**, recommended that Justices **Aradhe** and Pancholi be promoted to the Supreme Court. On August 27, the Central government approved their appointment.

Given that Justice Pancholi is only ranked 57th in the seniority of High Court judges, his appointment has generated a lot of discussion, particularly in legal circles.

Justice **Nagarathna** dissented from Justice Pancholi's installation as a Collegium member. According to reports, she believed that his appointment would jeopardize the collegium system's credibility in addition to being "counter-productive" to the administration of justice.

Additionally, three female High Court judges—Justices Sunita Agarwal, **Revati Mohite Dere**, and Lisa Gill—preceded Justice Pancholi. The decision by the Center and Collegium to ignore the female judges has also drawn criticism.

Since the appointment of Justices **Hima Kolhi**, Bela Trivedi, and BV **Nagarathna** in 2021, no female judge has been promoted to the highest court.

In addition to becoming the third serving Supreme Court judge whose parent High Court is the Gujarat High Court, Justice Pancholi is currently scheduled to become India's 60th Chief Justice in 2031.

Additional information about the new judges

Alok Aradhe, a judge

Prior to being promoted to the Supreme Court, Justice **Aradhe** was the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court. In 2009, he joined the Madhya Pradesh High Court as an additional judge. In 2011, he was appointed a permanent judge.

In 2016, he was moved to the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, where he spent three months in 2018 as its Acting Chief Justice. He then served as the Karnataka High Court's acting Chief Justice for a few months in 2022 after taking the court's oath of office on November 17, 2018.

He was named Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court in July 2023. In January 2025, he was then moved to the Bombay High Court and appointed Chief Justice.

Vipul Pancholi, Justice

On October 1, 2014, Justice Pancholi was promoted to the rank of additional judge in the Gujarat High Court, and on June 10, 2016, he was confirmed as a permanent judge. July 2023 saw his transfer to Patna.

Following opposition from the Gujarat High Court Advocates' Association (GHCAA), his transfer from Gujarat to the Patna High Court became embroiled in controversy. The GHCAA had stated in a letter to the Chief Justice of India at the time that Justice Pancholi possessed every trait a good judge ought to have. Additionally, they emphasized that Justice Pancholi has resolved more than 35,000 cases.

The move was made in spite of the resistance, and he was Chief Justice of the Patna High Court until being appointed to the Supreme Court.