

Reference Speech on appointment of Hon'ble Justice Shri.Ashish J.Desai, as Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of this Court, Sri.Justice Ashish J Desai, my esteemed Sister and Brother Judges of this Court, Hon'ble Judges of the Gujarat High Court who are present today, members of the family of our Chief Justice, distinguished former Judges of this Court who are present, learned Advocate General, Presidents of the Bar, Senior Bar and Women's Bar, Chairman of the Bar Council of Kerala, distinguished law officers of the State and the Union, esteemed members of the Bar and the Senior Bar, members of the Registry and the staff of this Court and its allied organizations, Advocate Clerks, Ladies and Gentlemen;

2. It is indeed a great honor and privilege conferred on me to address all of you today on this great occasion, as we gather here to welcome, felicitate and congratulate the Hon'ble Sri.Justice Ashish Jitendra Desai, on his appointment as the Chief Justice of this Court.
3. The role of a judge is pivotal in upholding the principles of justice, ensuring fairness, and safeguarding the rights of every citizen. It demands impartiality, integrity, and an unyielding commitment to the rule of law. The position of a Chief Justice carries additional responsibility, as it requires the individual to lead the court and the legal fraternity with wisdom, vision, and a steadfast commitment to justice.
4. Moreover, the Chief Justice plays a crucial role in enhancing public confidence in the judiciary. They must actively engage with the legal community, civil

society, and the public at large to promote awareness of the law, address concerns, and foster trust in the judicial process. Their words and actions carry immense weight and influence, impacting not only the legal profession but also the lives of countless individuals seeking justice.

5. Our new Chief Justice, Justice Ashish Jitendra Desai, was born on 5th July, 1962 at Vadodara, Gujarat, to a family of Judges and Lawyers. His father, late Hon'ble Mr. Justice Jitendra Punyavantrai Desai, was a permanent judge of the High Court of Gujarat from 1983 to 1989. Justice Desai graduated in B.A (Economics) from St. Xaviers' College, Ahmedabad and obtained his Law Degree from Sir L.A. Shah Law College, Ahmedabad. He started his practice as an advocate at the City Civil & Sessions Court, Ahmedabad and later moved on to practice in the High Court of Gujarat. He has represented the government in various roles, including as the Assistant Government pleader, additional Public Prosecutor, Central Government Standing Counsel and was also on various panels, like the Gujarat Electricity Board as well as the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited. Justice Desai was elevated as an Additional Judge, High Court of Gujarat on 21st November, 2011 and confirmed as a permanent Judge on 06.09.2013. Later, on 26th February 2023, he was appointed as the Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Gujarat. Even during this short tenure as the Acting Chief Justice, Justice Desai has brought in a number of changes in various arenas in the High Court of Gujarat. As the Executive Chairman/Patron-in-Chief of the Gujarat State Legal Services Authority, he was able to carry out various facets of legal service activities, like the

establishment of 24 hours legal aid clinics at Daffnala, Shahibaug, Ahmedabad, establishment of the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel in all the 32 districts of Gujarat, making it the 3rd State in India to complete the above task. Justice Desai also created history in the National Lok Adalat organized on 13th May, 2023 wherein a record break of 3.90 lakhs cases were disposed off under his guidance. Justice Desai also held the post of Patron-in-Chief of Gujarat State Judicial Academy and also headed various Committees constituted for the purpose of resolving administrative issues and was also the Chairman, I.T. Committee, where he has brought in a number of radical changes in the working of the judiciary at the District and State level.

6. Till date, the Gujarat High Court benefited from the leadership and guidance of Hon'ble Justice Ashish J Desai, who has contributed to the development of jurisprudence and the efficient functioning of the court. Now, the Kerala High Court, renowned for its rich history and legal acumen, receives an exceptional leader, who will guide the court towards new heights.
7. The appointment of the Hon'ble Chief Justice Ashish J Desai from Gujarat to preside over the Kerala High Court also exemplifies the unity and shared values that bind our nation together.
8. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Hon'ble Chief Justice on his appointment to this esteemed position. May he bring forth his wisdom, knowledge, and fair judgment to serve the people of Kerala with the same level of sincerity and dedication he displayed in the Gujarat High Court. I have no doubt that under his leadership, the Kerala High Court will continue to uphold

justice, protect the rights of the citizens, and contribute significantly to the evolution of our legal system.

9. We are blessed that our new Chief Justice is from Gujarat, the land of Gandhiji, the father of our Nation. On this occasion, as we honor our new Chief Justice today, on behalf of the entire judicial fraternity of the State, including the Judges of this Court and on my personal behalf, I extend a warm welcome to the Hon'ble Sri. Ashish J Desai, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of this High Court and may almighty God continue to shower his blessings on him.
10. On behalf of everyone present here, I also wish your Lordship a very comfortable stay in this God's Own Country and a successful and rewarding tenure as the Chief Justice of this High Court.

Thank you all.

Jai Hind.