

## Collegium to take call on 40 names for HC judges

Ravi Shankar Prasad

The Supreme Court collegium would take a call on appointing 40 judges to nine courts, a senior functionary said even as 106 judges had been appointed to the constitutional courts this year.

The Law Ministry forwarded recommendations from nine High Courts to the collegium to appoint 40 judges.

The High Courts from where the recommendations had been received include Karnataka, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madras and Tripura, the functionary said.

### Law Ministry figures

By Law Ministry data, as on September 1, while the approved strength of judges in the 24 High Courts was 1,079, there were 413 vacancies and these High Courts were functioning with an effective working strength of 666 judges.

As per the procedure, a three-member High Court collegium recommends a name to the Supreme Court collegium.

The recommendation is initially sent to the Law Ministry, which attaches an Intelligence Bureau (IB) report about the candidate's record and forwards it to the SC collegium for the final call.

The collegium had recently said the judiciary and not the IB was a better judge of who should be part of the judiciary.

Commenting on the appointment of judges, Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said that 126 judges were appointed in 2016 which was a record since 1989.

He said on an average 82 judges were appointed annually.

"As of now, 106 judges have been appointed in 2017. By December 31, we will surpass the 126 figure," Mr. Prasad said on Thursday at an event attended by Chief Justice Dipak Misra.

***126 judges were appointed in 2016, which was a record since 1989***

***Ravi Shankar Prasad***

***Union Minister***

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