

NATIONAL

# Former Attorney General of India Soli Sorabjee passes away

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**He appeared in several historic cases, including the Kesavananda Bharati case or the Basic Structure Doctrine case.**



Eminent jurist and former Attorney General of India Soli Sorabjee passed away on Friday due to **COVID-19** complications.

Mr. Sorabjee was born on March 9, 1930 in erstwhile Bombay to a Parsi family. He was a product of the St. Xavier's College and the Government Law College. He was admitted to the Bar in 1953.

He appeared in several historic cases, including the Kesavananda Bharati case or the Basic Structure Doctrine case. He received the Padma Vibhushan for championing free speech and human rights. Even recently, **he raised his voice** against students of Jawaharlal Nehru University being slapped with sedition for expressing their dissent.

He worked for the Sikh community *pro bono* after the 1984 riots. He was appointed an Honorary Member of the Order of Australia.

He was twice appointed Attorney General of India.

In his autobiography *Before Memory Fades*, senior advocate Fali S. Nariman, remembers Mr. Sorabjee's entry into the chambers of the then doyen of the Bombay Bar, Sir Jamshedji Kanga, as a young lawyer.

"For a long while we were rivals, later un-friendly rivals, but now, in the evening of our lives, we are friends," Mr. Nariman wrote.

The book referred to Mr. Sorabjee's distinguished career, going on to become India's Attorney General (first in 1989 for a year and again in 1998 for five years).

## **Jazz aficionado**

But Mr. Sorabjee was much more than a lawyer. He wore many hats. He was a jazz aficionado: a visit to his Neeti Bagh residence saw rows and rows of vinyl records of jazz.

"Do you like jazz? Do you want me to play you one?" he had asked after an interview.

Mr. Sorabjee was an avid reader of the essays. He said it suited his style. Short and crisp. The novel took too much patience.

"The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do just as one pleases... We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences," one of his favourite essayists, William Hazlitt wrote *On Going a Journey*.

## **Humane approach: CJI**

In his condolence, CJI Justice N.V. Ramana said: "Shri Soli J. Sorabjee served the office of Attorney General of India twice with great distinction. His humane and compassionate approach defined his legal work. His body of work, spread over nearly seven decades, in

defending the fundamental rights and human rights is of international repute. He will be remembered as a legend who added strength to the pillars of democracy. I pay my deep respect to the departed soul. Condolences to the family, friends and fans.”

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