

**NEWS CLIPPINGS
(ENGLISH DAILIES)**

Relating to

the National Summit

on

National Value Crisis and Redressal

Nation's Thinking and Perception

November 18-19, 2008

India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi



Foundation *for* Restoration *of* National Values

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Metro man's mission: Clean India: TIMES OF INDIA, 18 Nov
2. 'Ethical surveillance will enforce accountability', TIMES OF INDIA, 8 Nov
3. DMRC to impart cultural values to commuters, The Pioneer, 18 November 2008
4. 'Regressive politics threat to statute'- CJI Laments Strategy of Polarising Electorate for narrow gains: The Time of India. 19 Nov 2008
5. CJI Balakrishnan terms agitations on regional ground 'regressive brand', The Pioneer, New Delhi, 19 November 2008
6. 'Regressive brand of politics is threat to law': Hindustan Times, November 19, 2008
7. CJI slams 'regressive brand' of politics: The Indian Express, New Delhi, November 18
8. 'Stir at the drop of a hat is to polarise voters' - Regressive political action threatens to undo constitutional order: Balakrishnan, The Hindu, 19 November 2008
9. Best should join politics: Advani, The Pioneer, 19 November, 2008
10. Aggressive politics a threat: CJI, THE TRIBUNE, 19 November 2008
11. Regressive politics eroding values: CJI, The Asian Age, 19 November 2008
12. Metro man Sreedharan putting India on fast track, The Economic Times, 20 Nov 2008
13. CJI blasts aggressive politics, Deccan Herald, 19 November 2008
14. Conference on 'National Value Crisis', DECCAN HERALD, 17th November 2008
15. CJI quotes Obama, slams "regressive brand of politics", DNA Mumbai, November 18, 2008

Metro man's mission: Clean India

TIMES OF INDIA, New Delhi, 18 November 2008 (Page 1)

New Delhi: He's arguably India's best known technocrat, who became a middle-class household name following the success of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation. But DMRC managing director E Sreedharan now has a new project: to spark a revival of values and ethics among Indians, especially the leadership.

Characteristically, Sreedharan isn't thinking small. He and a group of high-profile citizens have set out to change Indian attitudes towards corruption and graft, no less. To implement this ambitious plan, they have formed the Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV), with Sreedharan as president.

As a first step, the FRNV will hold a summit starting Tuesday. Lending the Metro chief support is a galaxy of heavyweights: Tata group chairman Ratan Tata, former chief justice of India MN Venkatachaliah, former chief vigilance commissioner N Vittal and former NCW chairperson Vibha Parthasarathi, among others.

Fed up with Delhi's "lack of morals", Sreedharan says he has seen the city change for the worse. Citizens here have become extremely selfish and have little respect for the law, he laments. This, along with India's slipping position on indices like Transparency International, is what pushed the technocrat to kickstart a movement of sorts to restore national values and enforce ethical leadership across all walks of life.

MEGA PROJECT

- Sreedharan wants to spark national revival of ethics
- Backed by Ratan Tata, former CJI M N Venkatachaliah, former CVC N Vittal and former NCW chairperson Vibha Parthasarathi
- Wants moral values in national syllabus; ethical surveillance in judiciary, public administration

‘Ethical surveillance will enforce accountability’

TIMES OF INDIA, New Delhi, 18 November 2008 (Page 5)

New Delhi: E Sreedharan, managing director of DMRC, and a host high-profile citizens have formed the Foundation of Restoration of National Values (FRNV) “to revive ethics” among Indians.

As its first step, the FRNV is holding a summit from Tuesday. Over the next two days, the national crisis of values and the remedy will be addressed by a host of speakers drawn from various walks of life, politicians and teachers, bureaucrats and literary persons. APJ Abdul Kalam, Somnath Chatterjee, Justice KG Balakrishnan, Sheila Dikshit and LK Advani will be the prominent voices at the summit.

“We hope the idea will be given direction at the summit. We are looking at introducing concepts like a national education syllabus for moral values and ethical surveillance in the judiciary, public administration and so on. We hope to see change in the next five years,” said Sreedharan.

“Ethical surveillance, read ensuring accountability and integrity at the top levels, will be key to the foundation’s work, said FRNV’s spiritual guide,” Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha.

Having demonstrated an enviable work culture in the rollout of Delhi’s Metro rail system, the Metro chief wants the public to imbibe the values of punctuality, integrity and professionalism. “DMRC, today, is a shining example of a government project implemented before time, and well within budget. The same values apply to the nation as well,” he said.

He will start the drill with Metro’s daily commuters on the one hand, and dialogue with bureaucrats and politicians on the other, to simply do their day’s work honestly. ‘Value champions’ are being trained to spread the word, he said.

“There is a lot we have achieved as an organisation but there will always be such a case or two,” he said, referring to the recent accident on Vikas Marg. “What marks the company’s commitment to a value system is our response to the aberration. Never before has an incriminating report like this been released to the public so early,” he asserted.

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ON A MISSION: E Sreedharan is appointed president of FRNV

DMRC to impart cultural values to commuters

The Pioneer, New Delhi, 18 November 2008

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is all set to provide lessons in religious values to its riders. While the nation is boasting of its technological edge over modes of transport, the DMRC Chairman, E Sreedharan, attributes the success of Delhi Metro to “religious, ethnic, national and cultural values” that are said to have “formed the essence of DMRC project.”

Sreedharan explained the need of DMRC's association with such values as a need to inculcate cultural inheritance in its commuters. The summit on 'The National Value Crisis and Its Redressal' was organised under the aegis of Foundation for Restoration of National Values on Monday. Sreedharan said he got associated with the society, formed in June this year as he saw how work culture and organisational values have transformed Delhi Metro. “I thought the same could be applied to transform the nation as well,” he said.

Sreedharan said that the essence of these values would help in generating “national thinking and perception” among its commuters. While the actual objective and the methodology of the entire summit remained vague, the spiritual leader, Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha, who spoke on the concept, also reiterated his wish to involve national leaders in the process.

Speaking in downright English, Swami Bhoomananda Tirthaji cited the need of upholding declining national and cultural values across the nation. Dressed in an orange coloured outfit and sporting a huge vermilion tika on his forehead “symbolising the colour of the national flag,” Swamiji emphasised on the need of value restoration to eradicate flaws persistent in the society. Swamiji reiterated the need of “socialising the industrial efforts.” Interestingly, industry kingpins, including DMRC and Tata Group have joined this foundation to disseminate cultural values among people.

Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee, Leader of Opposition LK Advani and former President APJ Abdul Kalam will be among the speakers at a two-day conference, on Tuesday, on decline in the nation’s value system and ways to arrest it. Chief Justice of India KG Balakrishnan and Sheila Dikshit will also attend the conference.

‘Regressive politics threat to statute’

CJI Laments Strategy of Polarising Electorate for narrow gains

The Time of India. 19 Nov 2008

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India K G Balakrishnan on Tuesday said the recent spate of violence caused by caste, religion, gender, class and regional differences was possibly a strategy to polarise the electorate.

Terming this strategy as "regressive brand of political action", the CJI said it threatened the very foundations of the country's constitutional order, that is respect for 'rule of law', 'equal treatment before the law' and 'due process of law'.

Speaking at a conference for restoration of national values, Justice Balakrishnan was unusually frank in airing his views on the streak of violence that has crept into society with political patronage.

Referring to the violence in several parts of the country in the last few months, the CJI said, "In many instances, such extreme measures are clearly a strategy to polarise the electorate. Agitations are resorted to on the flimsiest of reasons and public order is threatened even in circumstances where an inclusive dialogue is the best solution. Such a regressive brand of political action is threatening to undo the very foundation on which our constitutional order has been built."

On corruption, he was of the view that something more was required to be done over and above the statutory provisions under Prevention of Corruption Act. But, he was pained to explain his position at a time when there had been several instances of corruption in the judiciary.

"In recent months, there has been considerable anxiety on account of allegations of corruption in the higher judiciary. The judiciary is the watchdog of the rights of citizens and these instances have once again raised the question 'who will watch the watchdogs'," he said.

CJI Balakrishnan terms agitations on regional ground ‘regressive brand’

The Pioneer, New Delhi, 19 November 2008

Chief Justice of India KG Balakrishnan on Tuesday termed agitations and protests threatening to divide the country on regional grounds as part of ‘regressive brand’ of politics that could threaten the very foundations on which the country’s Constitutional order is built upon.

Commenting on the law and order situation in the country as part of his speech at the National Summit organized by the Foundation for Restoration of National Values in the Capital here, he said, “It is quite distressing to note that differences based on caste, religion, gender, class and regionalism continue to be the root cause behind organised and often institutionalised violence.”

In an oblique reference to the North Indians being targeted in Maharashtra, the CJI said, “Especially in the last few months, one can recount several instances of senseless violence and disruption of routine life in different parts of the country. In many instances, such extreme measures are clearly a strategy to polarize the electorate.”

Even if there is a strong polarisation of views among certain groups, Balakrishnan said that the method of persuasion needed to be preferred as opposed to methods of confrontation. “Agitations are resorted to on the flimsiest of reasons and public order is threatened even in circumstances where an inclusive dialogue is the best solution. Such a regressive brand of political action is threatening to undo the very foundations on which our constitutional order has been built, namely those of respect for rule of law, equal treatment before the law and due process,” he added.

The CJI emphasised that the differences in democratic societies should be resolved by means of dialogue. “In a pluralist society such as ours, there are bound to be perpetual differences as well as conflicts among the interest of various sections. However, the test for building an inclusive nation is one that pertains to the means used to resolve these differences.”

CJI further expressed anguish at the rising levels of corruption in the society stating that the people’s anxiety has been raised following several instances of corruption in judiciary. With the judiciary acting as watchdog of citizen’s rights, he wondered “who will watch the watchdogs”.

‘Regressive brand of politics is threat to law’

Hindustan Times, New Delhi, November 19, 2008

As the country witnesses increased violence based on regionalism, Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan on Tuesday lambasted the “regressive” brand of politics on divisive issues terming it the biggest threat to the rule of law.

The CJI, who has taken some strong measures to rid the judiciary of the black sheep, also expressed concern over allegations of corruption against judges that raised the question who will watch the watchdog.

“Regressive brand of politics is threatening our Constitution, and the principles that our Constitution stands for. There have been several instances of senseless violence in recent times to polarise the nation on the flimsiest of reasons,” he said addressing a conference on National Value Crisis and Redressal.

Maintaining that in a pluralistic society, there were bound to be differences, the CJI said with maturity of democracy these differences should be resolved amicably through dialogue and not confrontation.

The CJI’s unusually strong remarks come in the backdrop of recent attacks on north Indians in Maharashtra, particularly Mumbai, by the Raj Thackeray-led Maharashtra Navnirman Sena that claimed lives and forced thousands of Hindi-speaking labourers to leave the state.

“In recent months, there has been considerable anxiety on account of allegation of corruption in the higher judiciary. The judiciary is the watchdog of the rights of citizens and these instances have once again raised the question as to who will watch the watchdog,” the CJI said.

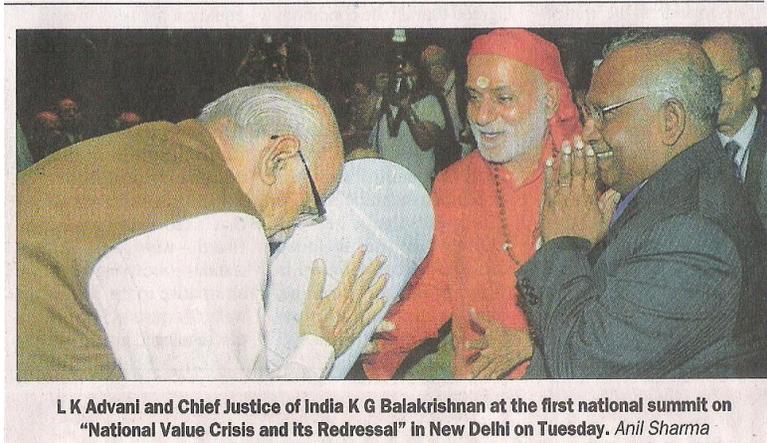
He, however, said disparity in pay scale of public and private sector could be one of the reasons behind corruption that was considered a violation of basic human rights under the international law.

‘Ugly Indian politician’

Speaking at seminar, BJP’s L.K. Advani said encouraging more young people to join politics could help the erase the image of the “ugly Indian politician”. He said the lack of professionalism among politicians was the reason for this state of affairs. “Politics was a noble profession during the freedom movement...After Independence, the spirit of mission got gradually diluted... Unfortunately, in India today politics is seen neither as a mission nor as a profession, but as pure commerce.”

CJI slams 'regressive brand' of politics

The Indian Express, New Delhi, November 18



L. K. Advani and Chief Justice of India K. G. Balakrishnan at the first national summit on "National Value Crisis and its Redressal" in New Delhi on Tuesday. Anil Sharma

Worried over rising instances of corruption in higher judiciary, Chief Justice of India K G Balakrishnan on Tuesday expressed hope that an understanding must be reached in India, like in international law, to see corruption as a violation of basic human rights.

Significantly, the CJI also drew attention to regionalism being played out in Indian politics. "It is quite distressing to note that differences based on caste, religion, gender and regionalism continue to be the root cause behind organised and often institutionalised violence," he remarked while speaking at a function here.

"The rule of law is under threat by a regressive brand of political action," he said. Especially in the past few months, one can recount several instances of senseless violence and disruption of routine normal life, he said, adding that "such extreme measures are clearly a strategy to polarise the electorate".

"Agitations are resorted to on the flimsiest of reasons and public order is threatened even in circumstances where an inclusive dialogue is the best solution. Such a regressive brand of political action is threatening to undo the very foundation on which our constitutional order has been built, namely the respect for rule of law," he said.

‘Stir at the drop of a hat is to polarise voters’

Regressive political action threatens to undo constitutional order: Balakrishnan

The Hindu, 19 November 2008, New Delhi



Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan (left) with Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee at a conference in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Special Correspondent

New Delhi: Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan on Tuesday decried the tendency of political parties and politicians to resort to agitations and threaten the public order on the flimsiest of reasons when a dialogue could be the best solution.

“In many instances, such extreme measures are clearly a strategy to polarise the electorate. Such a regressive brand of political action is threatening to undo the very foundations on which our constitutional order has been built, namely those of respect for ‘rule of law,’ ‘equal treatment before the law’ and ‘due process [of law].’”

Justice Balakrishnan was speaking on “Restoration of national values,” at a conference organised by the Foundation for Restoration of National Values here.

“State is given a monopoly over the use of violence in the form of the military, police powers and the criminal justice system. This means that all other group interests in society — whether they are in the form of political parties, caste groups, linguistic groups or business concerns must respect the legitimacy of the state. That is a precondition for ensuring a climate where constitutionally guaranteed rights are respected and promoted.”

The Chief Justice said: “It is quite distressing to note that differences based on caste, religion, gender, class and regionalism continue to be the root causes behind organised and often institutionalised violence. Especially in the last few months, one can recount several instances of senseless violence and disruption of routine life in different parts of the country.”

He said: “In a pluralist society such as ours, there are bound to be perpetual differences as well as conflicts among the interests of various sections. However, the test for building an inclusive nation is one that pertains to the means used to resolve these differences.”

Expressing concern over deterioration of moral values, he said corruption was identified with any person or institution which misuses the power and discretion conferred on it. “Ordinary citizens face unnecessary problems in their routine interactions with governmental agencies. Practices such as acceptance of favours or misappropriation of public funds have actually come to be described as ‘perks’ of holding public office and employment.”

He said: “In recent months, there has been considerable anxiety on account of allegations of corruption in the higher judiciary. The judiciary is the watchdog of the rights of citizens and these instances have once again raised the question of ‘who will watch the watchdogs.’ Legal and judicial measures for deterring corruption are only part of the solution. The long-term solution lies in the realm of education at all levels — whereby the importance of personal integrity and the spirit of public service will be imbibed by our citizens.”

The Chief Justice said: “Even if there is a strong polarisation of views among certain groups, the ‘methods of persuasion’ need to be preferred as opposed to ‘methods of confrontation.’ As U.S. President-elect Barack Obama repeatedly urged during his campaign, it is when we learn to reason with those who disagree with us, that we actually learn more about ourselves.”

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Best should join politics: Advani

The Pioneer, 19 November, 2008, New Delhi

Underlining the need for changing the image of the ‘ugly Indian politician’, senior BJP leader LK Advani on Tuesday emphasised on prodding youth to join politics so that they have greater hope and faith in our political system. “I tell my fellow politicians, particularly those belonging to my own party, that it is our duty to erase this image of the ‘ugly Indian politician’. It is necessary for the best and the brightest among the youth to join politics and serve the nation,” Advani said. He was speaking at a seminar on “National Values Crisis and its Redressal” organised by the Foundation for Restoration of National Values.

Terming the event as a ‘unique’ endeavour in the direction of restoring national values, Advani said that the crisis in politics gets highlighted the most because it remains in constant media limelight. “The degradation of values exists in every sphere of national life. It is seen even in the media, which highlights corruption in politics and Government,” remarked Advani. “Thus, it is intrinsic to promote right leadership in every profession, in every institution, and in every walk of life,” he added.

The 81-year-old leader also cited the Transparency International’s annual reports where India ranks high in the corruption index and in the United Nations report India ranks low in the human development index. He held responsible the lack of professionalism among politicians as the reason for this state of affairs. “Politics was a noble profession during the freedom Movement. After Independence, the spirit of mission got gradually diluted. Unfortunately, in today India politics is seen neither as a mission nor as a profession, but as pure commerce,” Advani lamented.

However, the senior leader pointed out that it was not just in politics that the values had gone down. “The lack of integrity and professional ethics is seen among lawyers, judges, doctors. And even security personnel. It is seen even in the media,” Advani said. BJP’s Prime Ministerial candidate said though the intelligence quotient of an individual could develop lifelong, his emotional, moral and spiritual quotient developed mostly between the age of 15 and 25 years. “It is necessary for the young to join politics and serve the nation,” he said.

Other eminent personalities that spoke on the first day of the two-day national seminar were Suresh Prabhu, former Union Minister, former Chief Justice of India JS Verma and Kiran Bedi.

Aggressive politics a threat: CJI
THE TRIBUNE, 19 November 2008

New Delhi, November 18

Expressing serious concern over senseless violence in different parts of the country, Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan today warned that aggressive politics on divisive issues and degradation of moral values in judiciary were threatening the very foundation of the country's Constitutional order.

In a strongly worded speech on the current political and law and order situation, he said agitations were being launched for flimsy reasons without even considering the option of dialogue.

It was quite distressing that differences based on caste, religion, gender, class and regionalism continued to be the root cause of organised and often institutionalised violence, he noted in his address at a conference on National Value Crisis and Redressal.

Especially in the last few months, there have been several instances of senseless violence and disruption of routine life, he pointed out.

In a pluralistic society, differences were bound to be there, but these should be resolved amicably, the CJI said.

Acknowledging the allegations against higher judiciary in recent days, he said this had raised question on "who would watch the watchdog," he said. He regretted that national values were deeply getting eroded.

In his valedictory address, Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee said it was sad that personal success had become the primary concern of a large section of people, including politicians and legal experts.

Unfortunately, this section had begun to think that values and principles were dispensable attributes and was therefore giving primacy only to personal successes and achievements, he felt.

"Public service, including politics and other society-oriented vocations, are no longer seen as noble activities for the benefit of the people...Politics, in particular, today is seen as all about the art of the possible, which signifies that neither the means nor the end matters," Chatterjee said.

Further, the country was faced with intolerance, divisiveness, corruption, violence, conflict and disrespect for democratic dissent, which were seriously vitiating the political life, as well as social cohesion, he pointed out.

Regressive politics eroding values: CJI

The Asian Age, 19 November 2008, New Delhi

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Nov. 18: Chief Justice of India K. G. Balakrishnan on Tuesday expressed serious concern over "organised and institutionalised violence" being resorted to settle differences and corruption becoming a "perk of holding public office".

Addressing a conference on "National Value Crisis and Redressal", the Chief Justice said: "It was quite distressing to note that the differences based on caste, religion, gender, class and regionalism continue to be the root cause behind organised and, often, institutionalised violence." Justice Balakrishnan added that regressive brand of political action was threatening to undo the very foundation on which the constitutional order has been built.

The CJI said that in the last few months one could recount several instances of senseless violence in different parts of the country. "In many instances, such extreme measures are clearly a strategy to polarise the electorate," he said. Further, the CJI added that in a pluralist society, there were bound to be perpetual differences among various sections. But the test for building a nation was the means adopted to resolve these differences. Talking about corruption, the Chief Justice said practices such as acceptance of favours or misappropriation of public funds have actually come to be described as perks of holding public office. Referring to recent instances of corruption in judiciary, the Chief Justice said the question to be asked was who will watch the watchdog. He added that the extent of corruption may have a link with disparity in pay scales of public and private sectors.

However, the Chief Justice added that international law saw corruption as a violation of basic human rights. "If this understanding is adopted in India, then there will be a case for the judiciary to grant constitutional remedies over and above the statutory remedies envisaged under the Prevention of Corruption Act," said the CJI.

Metro man Sreedharan putting India on fast track

The Economic Times, 20 Nov 2008, New Delhi

NEW DELHI: Eleven years ago, Delhi's chief secretary, PV Jayakrishnan, was in a bind. The search committee set up to find a managing director for the proposed Delhi Metro was making no headway.

Set a deadline of 120 days to find a man for the job or forgo the Japanese loan of Rs 6,000 crore for the project, Jayakrishnan made frantic calls to his old time friend E Sreedharan, with whom he had closely worked for the Konkan Railway project.

Mr Sreedharan, who was working on the last leg of the Konkan project as part of a special assignment, was invited to join the search committee. Little did he know that a trip to Delhi to help an old associate would mark the beginning of a new chapter in his life. After all, at 66, Sreedharan was well past retirement age and was looking forward to pursue other interests once the Konkan Railway was completed.

The then Lt Governor of Delhi Tejendra Khanna asked Sreedharan to take over the Delhi Metro project immediately. That was a tall order indeed as the Konkan Railway was in its final phase and Sreedharan needed to monitor it personally to meet the deadline. Little wonder that he was reluctant to take up the new responsibility.

Naturally, the bureaucracy was not happy with the Delhi government's decision to appoint Sreedharan as MD of the Metro project but Sreedharan had some dedicated backers as well. His ability to provide on-site innovative solutions and take up challenges was by then almost folklore in railway corridors. The then cabinet secretary TSR Subramaniam is understood to have said, "If the country can have a prime minister (Narasimha Rao) at 70, Delhi Metro can surely have a 66-year-old MD."

Sreedharan is often referred to as India's metro man as he has rewritten India's urban transport script. His story of developing metrorail systems in India started almost 42 years ago in 1966 when he was selected by the railways as India's candidate for the Colombo plan, a fellowship for engineers, offered by the British government.

Sreedharan, who rushes from country to country if not city to city creating networks for people to move faster, got his first lesson on underground trains when he worked on the Victoria line in London as part of his fellowship.

Sreedharan was one of the founding members of the Kolkata metro project in 1970 and was involved with the designing and planning in the initial four years. So Sreedharan's "innovative skills" to find local solutions at project sites are now almost textbook references for any bright rail engineer.

Born in Chattanur, a small village near Palakkad in Kerala, Sreedharan was a topper throughout. "The railway service was my first choice. Those days, railways was the first choice for any bright engineer and I was no different. It was challenging and prestigious," says Sreedharan.

It didn't take long for the challenge to unfold. In 1963, disaster struck the Rameshwaram island when tidal waves washed away the Pamban bridge connecting it with mainland Tamil Nadu. A passenger train was swept away, killing hundreds of people.

The Southern Railway decided to restore the bridge and set a target of six months. General manager BC Ganguly advanced the deadline by three months and the Railway Board assigned the task to a 31-year-old executive engineer, Sreedharan. It was a tough task as it was an old bridge, built by the British in late-19th century, with 146 spans and a scherzer, a steel girder which opens up for large vessels to pass under the bridge.

Sreedharan took up the challenge and advanced the deadline by a month, making the task tougher. He made the bridge functional in 46 days. Instead of waiting for fresh rail girders to be transported from various parts of India, Sreedharan used pontoon cranes to lift out the girders from the seabed.

“It was tough and needed grit. We started by lifting one girder in three days. By the last day we were moving seven girders per day,” he says with a nostalgic smile. “The bridge is operational even today and holds a special corner in my thoughts. I travelled back to Rameshwaram along with my grandchildren a few years back, just to relive those moments which had a great bearing on my career,” Sreedharan says.

It's no surprise that he doesn't have much of a social life. “Once in a while I go to classical music concerts,” he says. He also makes it a point to visit Kerala to meet relatives. “Very often, he travels by lower class,” says a colleague. A favourite journey is, of course, through the Konkan rail stretch, which he can watch with proprietary pride.

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CJI blasts aggressive politics

Deccan Herald, Bangalore, 19 November 2008

Chief Justice K G Balakrishnan on Tuesday said that aggressive politics on divisive issues is threatening the very foundation of the Constitution.

Delivering a talk on 'A new national order grounded on values', Justice Balakrishnan said: "Agitations are resorted to on the flimsiest of reasons, and public order is threatened even in circumstances where an inclusive dialogue is the best solution. Such a regressive brand of political action is threatening to undo the very foundations on which our constitutional order has been built, namely those of respect for the rule of law, equal treatment before the law and due process."

Strong speech

In an unusually strong speech on the current political and law and order situation, he said: "Even if there is a strong polarisation of views among certain groups the method of persuasion needs to be preferred as opposed to methods of confrontation."

The conference aimed at enhancing the national value and educating people on value system was organised by a non-governmental organisation promoted by Delhi Metro chief E Sreedharan.

He emphasised that the differences in democratic societies should be resolved by means of dialogue.

"In a pluralist society such as ours, there are bound to be perpetual differences as well as conflicts among the interests of various sections.

"However, the test for building an inclusive nation is one that pertains to the means used to resolve these differences.

"With the maturing of our democracy, one would expect that social, economic and political differences are increasingly being resolved through means such as rational and constructive dialogue between groups with competing interests," he said.

Senseless violence

"It is quite distressing to note that differences based on caste, religion, gender, class and regionalism continue to be the root cause behind organised and often institutionalised violence.

"Especially in the last few months, one can recount several instances of senseless violence and disruption of routine life in different parts of the country.

"In many instances, such extreme measures are clearly a strategy to polarise the electorate," he said.

Justice Balakrishnan expressed his concern over the degradation of moral values in judiciary, even though it is known as the watchdog of society.

Conference on 'National Value Crisis'

DECCAN HERALD (Monday, 17th November 2008)

Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee, Leader of Opposition L K Advani and former President A P J Abdul Kalam will be among the speakers at a two-day conference starting from Tuesday on decline in the nation's value system and ways to arrest it.

The summit on 'The National Value Crisis and Its Redressal' was being organised under the aegis of Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV), its President and Delhi Metro MD E Sreedharan said.

Sreedharan said he got associated with the society, formed in June this year, as he saw how work culture and organisational values have transformed the Delhi Metro.

"I thought the same can be applied to transform the nation as well," he said.

Chief Justice of India K G Balakrishnan and Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit will also attend the conference.

"The nation is undergoing a crisis of values. The anti-corruption laws have proved ineffective and now is the time to bring 'thought leaders' together to discuss how to inculcate eternal values like love for the nation, truthfulness among the individuals," spiritual leader Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha said.

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CJI quotes Obama, slams “regressive brand of politics”

DNA Mumbai, November 18, 2008

NEW DELHI: Coming down heavily on senseless violence and disruption of life in different parts of the country, chief justice of India KG Balakrishnan on Tuesday slammed the proponents of what he termed “regressive brand of politics”, saying it was a “clearly a strategy to polarise the electorate”.

In an unusually strong speech on the current political and law and order situation, he said, “Even if there is a strong polarisation of views among certain groups the method of persuasion needs to be preferred as opposed to methods of confrontation.”

“Agitations are resorted to on the flimsiest of reasons and public order is threatened even in circumstances where an inclusive dialogue is the best solution. Such a regressive brand of political action is threatening to undo the very foundations on which our constitutional order has been built, namely those of respect for rule of law, equal treatment before the law and due process,” he said.

Delivering the keynote address at the National Summit of the Foundation for Restoration of National Values, the CJI recalled Obama’s election campaign speeches urging that “it is when we learn to reason with those who disagree with us, that we actually learn more about ourselves.”

On the recent violence in some states, the first Dalit CJI expressed “distress” at the differences based on caste, religion, gender, class and regionalism.

Observing “we all are Indians,” he said it was bizarre that citizens hailing from one state were subjected to assault and forced to flee a place because they were not the sons of soil.

He emphasised that the differences should be resolved by dialogue. “In a pluralist society such as ours, there are bound to be differences as well as conflicts among various sections. However, the test for building an inclusive nation is one that pertains to the means used to resolve these differences.

“With the maturing of our democracy, one would expect that social, economic and political differences are increasingly being resolved through means such as rational and constructive dialogue between groups with competing interests,” he said.

In another significant observation, the CJI stressed on the supremacy of the powers vested in the state. Elaborating this contention, he said “all other group interests in society — whether they are in the form of political parties, caste groups, linguistic groups or business concerns — must respect the legitimacy of the state. That is a precondition for ensuring a climate where constitutionally guaranteed rights are respected and promoted.”

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