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## RAM LALLA COMES HOME, A NEW MASJID TO RISE

### SC calls Babri's demolition a crime, but says Hindus' claim on land is stronger

### 5 judges pronounce unanimous verdict

PRAMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

In an unprecedented case based on faith and belief, the Supreme Court on Saturday “unanimously” paved the way for the construction of Lord Ram’s temple at Ayodhya as it rejected the Muslim claim over the disputed site and handed over the entire 1,500 square yard of the “composite” disputed area comprising the inner and the outer court yard of the now demolished Babri Masjid to a trust that would construct the temple and would be set up by the Central government in next three months.

The disputed land would remain in the custody of the statutory receiver till the Trust is formed and the land handed over to it. The court said that the Central government would be at “liberty to make suitable provisions in respect of the rest of the acquired land by handing it over to the trust” for its management and development.

The verdict was delivered by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi who along with Chief Justice designate Justice S.A. Bobde, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Justice Ashok Bhushan and Justice S. Abdul Nazeer had heard the matter for 40 days starting on August 6 and concluding on October 16 when judgment was reserved.

The hearing was rooted in a batch of petitions challenging September 30, 2010, Allahabad High Court judgment in which the disputed site was divided into three parts with Hindu litigants — the Idol of Ram Lalla and Nirmohi Akhara getting one part each and Muslims’ Sunni Waqf Board the third.

The top court described the High Court judgment as “legally unsustainable”.

Handing over the entire disputed site for the construction of Lord Ram’s temple, the top court ordered giving Muslims a “suitable” five-acre plot either by the Central government out of the acquired 67 acres of land or by the Uttar Pradesh government at a “suitable prominent place in Ayodhya.”

The court said that both the creation of trust and handing over the entire disputed site to it and giving Sunni Waqf Board five acres of land would be done simultaneously.

Justifying the allotment of land to Muslims, the court said, “The allotment of land to the Muslims is

#### INSIDE

#### RAM TEMPLE WORK TO BEGIN IN APRIL

● The RSS is now hoping to lay the temple’s foundation stone on the ‘Ram Navmi’ next April.

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#### RAJIV GANDHI’S BLUNDERS HELPED BJP RISE

● Rajiv Gandhi’s handling of Shah Bano case and *shila nyas* at Ayodhya helped BJP

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#### PEOPLE KEEP CALM, PEACEFUL ON SOCIAL MEDIA

● The offline calm maintained by restrained citizens was palpable on Twitter too.

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necessary because though on a balance of probabilities, the evidence in respect of the possessory claim of the Hindus to the composite whole of the disputed property stands on a better footing than the evidence adduced by the Muslims ...”

“... the Muslims were dispossessed upon the desecration of the mosque on 22/23 December 1949 which was ultimately destroyed on 6 December 1992. There was no abandonment of the mosque by the Muslims,” said the court.

The court said that the Sunni Central Waqf Board would be at liberty on the allotment of the land to take all necessary steps for the construction of a mosque on the land allotted together with other associated facilities.

The court ordered giving Sunni Waqf Board five acres of “suitable” land at Ayodhya taking recourse to its plenary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution.

■ [Page 4: Muslims failed to prove exclusive possession](#)



Five Supreme Court judges — Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi (centre) flanked by Justice Ashok Bhushan (left), Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde (second from left), Justice Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud (second from right), Justice S. Abdul Nazeer (right) — pose for a photograph after delivering the verdict on Ayodhya land case in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ [Judges' profiles: Page 2](#)

### Civil code, Kashi, Mathura next?

SANJAY BASAK  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

“What would the verdict be, if Babri (masjid) had not been razed”, asked Asaduddin Owaisi, leader of the All India Majlis-e-Itehadul Muslimeen.

While the Sangh Parivar and the BJP welcome the Supreme Court verdict, others argued that the Supreme Court has handed over the disputed site to the ruling BJP which continue to have “individuals and leaders responsible for the demolition of the Babri Masjid in its ranks.”

The verdict, described “unjust” by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) not merely paved the way for the construction of the Ram temple” but also legitimised the saffron slogan, which rent the air after the *kar sevaks* demolished the mosque. *Mandir wahi banayenge*.

The top court’s decision could also cast a shadow over some other mosques in the country if the BJP’s Hindutva hawk Vinay Katiyar is to be believed. Ahead of the verdict, Mr

Katiyar, also a key accused in the Babri Masjid case had announced: “We are waiting for the Supreme Court verdict on Ayodhya. After that, we will build Ram temple and then move towards liberating Kashi and Mathura temples.”

His remarks are a chilling reminder to the slogan referring to Gyanvapi mosque at Varanasi and Shahi Idgah Mosque at Mathura — *Ayodhya abhi jhanki hai, Mathura, Kashi baaki hai*.

After the verdict, when defence minister Rajnath Singh was asked about the other core issue, the Uniform Civil Code, he said: “Time has come.”

The court’s offer directing the Centre to allot an alternative 5-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a new mosque was flayed by Owaisi.

Clutching at the straws, the AIMPLB is considering going for a review petition, but the Shia Waqf Board supported the verdict and said it was against any review petition.

■ [Page 4: Verdict bolsters Modi's Hindu image](#)

#### RAM LALLA SLEEPS WHILE VERDICT READ

VIKRAM SHARMA  
AYODHYA, NOV. 9

Ram Lalla had just fallen asleep when the verdict was read out — granting permanent resident status to him in the land Hindus believe belongs to him.

Outside in “Ram Nagari”, the roads were deserted, shops shut and anxious locals stayed indoors while in Tedhi Bazaar, green flags and bunting fluttered to mark Milad un Nabi. A police posse positioned themselves all over, many tired and some yawning and whispering “Hey Ram!”

Around 1 pm, after his brief rest, Ram Lalla woke up to songs of “Sita Ram” on the loudspeakers, temple bells, crackers, as well as chants of “Jai Shri Ram”; he comfortably sat on his throne to again give “darshan” to visitors.

■ [Page 4: It's Modi or Yogi everywhere](#)

### Supreme Court is supreme but not infallible, says Owaisi

S.A. ISHAQUI  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 9

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi termed the Supreme Court verdict a “victory of beliefs over facts” and said he will ask the All India Muslim Personal Board (AIMPLB) to seek a review. “The Supreme Court was supreme but not infallible,” he said.

Expressing his dissatisfaction, Mr Owaisi said that the BJP is preparing the roadmap to a Hindu Rashtra through Ayodhya. The MIM leader said he did not know whether the AIMPLB would proceed for a review petition or not,

and whether it would accept land for the mosque or not, but his personal opinion was that the five acres for the mosque should be rejected.

Mr Owaisi told the media that the country is proceeding towards Hindu Rashtra. Starting from Ayodhya, the Sangh Parivar and the BJP will exploit the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizen Amendment Bill.

He said that even those who politically disagreed with him ought to mark his words which would prove true in the future.

“If Babri Masjid had not been demolished in 1992, then what kind of verdict

would the Supreme Court have delivered?” Mr Owaisi wondered.

“Muslims of India have faith in the Constitution of India,” he said. “We were contesting the case for our legal right. Though Muslims are poor and weak and discriminated against, they are not so miserable that they could not buy five acres of land for the Masjid. If I ask the people of Hyderabad, they will donate so much that I can build a mosque in Uttar Pradesh. We don’t need alms from anyone. We don’t need patronage from any corner.”

■ [Full Q&A on the Oped page](#)

### Sidelined Advani: ‘Blessed’

YOJNA GUSAI  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

L.K. Advani, the most prominent face of the 1990s Ram Janmabhoomi movement, whose Rath Yatra to support the VHP’s mandir movement is given credit

for bringing the BJP much political gains, felt “vindicated” over the Supreme Court verdict.

In a statement, Mr Advani “wholeheartedly” welcomed the “historic judgement” and said he “stand vindicated and feel deeply

blessed” that the apex court gave its unanimous verdict paving the way for the construction of a “magnificent temple for Lord Ram in Ayodhya.”

■ [Page 4: Social media recalls Advani's rath yatra](#)

## When cop joined kar sevaks to shout Jai Shri Ram

SANJAY KAW

Among the hundreds and thousands of *kar sevaks* armed with hammers and shovels, I wormed my way as an undercover for the *Statesman* newspaper to the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid site in Ayodhya way back in December 1992. Before going to the holy town, I was told that all *kar sevaks* were being issued *parichay patras* (letters of identification/introduction). To obtain this, I visited the BJP unit in south Delhi’s Ambedkar Nagar. I convinced the party office-bearer there that I was a Kashmiri Pandit who had to abandon his studies because of militancy in the Valley. He gave me the letter on hearing my story.

For this subterfuge, I took on the

name of Sanjay Kaul. In Ayodhya, I was put through intense grilling to establish my credentials as a *kar sevak*. Several times I had to recite an apocryphal tale of being a Kashmiri migrant who had abandoned his studies because of militant activity. It was terrifying to see the extent to which the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), BJP, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal combine had gone to ensure there was no infiltration. All through my stay in Ayodhya, the BJP’s letter proved to be my sole protection. After I was accepted as “genuine”, I saw first hand the face of religious zealotry that had remained veiled by political hoopla.

I managed to stay with the *kar sevaks* from Delhi and Haryana in a tent at Guru Gobind Singh camp near the disputed site. I was briefed by

#### FLASHBACK



pracharaks of the RSS and “indoctrinated” by the Bajrang Dal.

One early morning (a few days before the December 6 demolition), hundreds of people gathered near my tent. They were carrying boulders and shovels and shouting “Jai Shri Ram”. Out of fear, I too joined the mob, which was led by then BJP MP B.L. Sharma ‘Prem’. Soon, the mob started breaking down three grave-stones. I also carried the debris to a nearby pond, along with other *kar sevaks*. Within no time some makeshift shops were set up at the site to sell tea. All this happened in the presence of the saffron party leader. People called it “chhoti (small) kar seva”. Some Bajrang Dal activists even wanted to build a small temple there, but they were prevented by others because, they said, it would ham-

per the work of Ram temple.

One person who was staying with me in the tent told me that all the arrangements had been made by the RSS. “We have planned the *rann neeti* (war strategy). And the UP police is supporting us. We are sure of our victory,” he said and even took me to a huge *bhojanalaya* for food.

At the site of the then disputed temple, the UP police and the Provincial Armed Constabulary were placed outside the structure, while the Central Reserve Police Force was inside. On the very first evening, I spotted a PAC constable shouting “Jai Shri Ram” slogans along with *kar sevaks* barely a few metres away from the disputed structure.

■ [Page 4: Cops were ready to join kar sevaks](#)

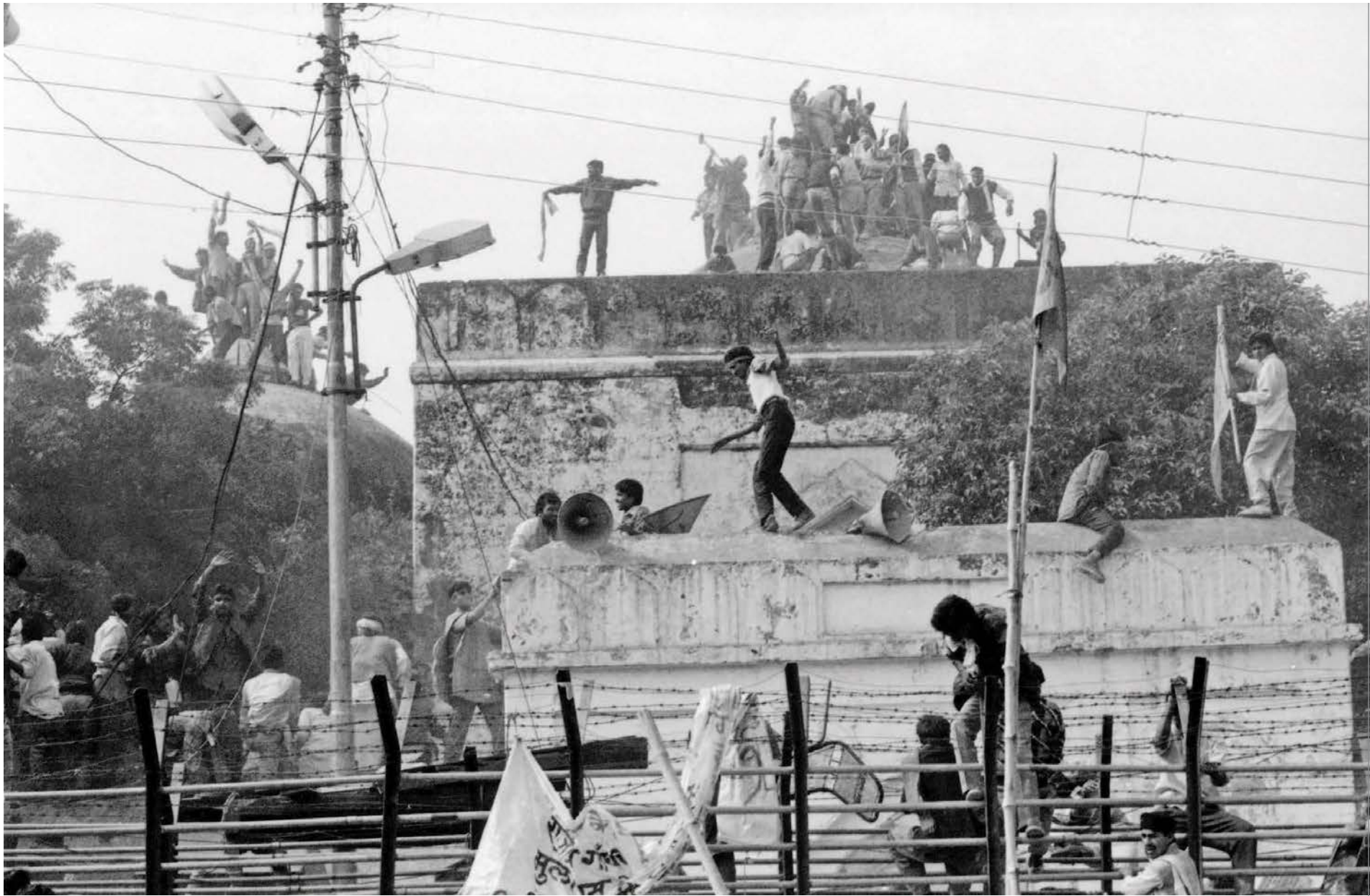
### MAHA GOVERNOR OFFERS FADNAVIS SECOND CHANCE

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 9

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari on Saturday evening asked BJP leader and acting Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to indicate his willingness and ability to form a government in the state.

In a statement, the Raj Bhavan said, “As no party had come forward to form the government, the governor decided to explore the possibility of formation of government.”

■ [Full report on Page 15](#)



When kar sevaks brought down Babri

Hindu activists climb up the dome of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya which was quickly demolished by end of the day.

— SONDEEP SHANKAR

# The five

At 10.30 am on Saturday, November 9, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court delivered a unanimous verdict in the Ayodhya title suit case after a 40-day marathon daily hearing on the matter. Meet the five.



Ranjan Gogoi,  
Chief Justice of India

The 46th Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi, born in 1954, joined the Bar in 1978, and was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court in 2012. In October last year, he was appointed Chief Justice of India. He has heard several landmark cases, including one pertaining to National Citizens Register. In an unprecedented move in January 2018, he along and other Supreme Court judges held a press conference to express their displeasure with CJI Dipak Misra. On April 19, 2019, a former female Supreme Court employee accused CJI Gogoi of sexual misconduct. In response, he convened an extraordinary hearing and denied the charges. Many jurists and lawyers were shocked at the “procedural impropriety” shown by him. He was later issued a clean chit by a SC inquiry panel.



Sharad Arvind Bobde,  
CJI-designate

Born in 1956 in Nagpur, Justice S.A. Bobde got his BA and LLB degrees from Nagpur University and enrolled in the Roll of the Bar Council of Maharashtra in 1978. Justice Bobde practised law at the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay high court with appearances in Bombay before the principal seat and also before the Supreme Court for over 21 years. Justice Bobde was designated a senior advocate in 1998 and was elevated to the bench of the Bombay high court as additional judge in 2000. He was sworn in as the Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh high court in 2012 and elevated as a judge of Supreme Court next year. His retirement is due in April 2021. Justice Bobde will be the next CJI, taking charge on November 18, after Justice Gogoi demits office.



Ashok Bhushan,  
SC judge

Justice Ashok Bhushan, born in 1956 in Jaunpur, UP, obtained a law degree from Allahabad University in 1979 and was elevated as a permanent judge of the Allahabad high court in 2001 and as a judge of the Supreme Court in 2016. Justice Bhushan joined the bench dealing with Ayodhya matter months after delivering a relatively important judgment on September 27, 2018, in which a three-member bench refused to refer to five-judge Constitution bench a 1994 verdict which held that mosque was not integral to offering prayers in Islam. Writing for himself and then CJI Dipak Misra, he declined the request that the 1994 judgment be sent to a larger bench as it would have a bearing in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri masjid land dispute.



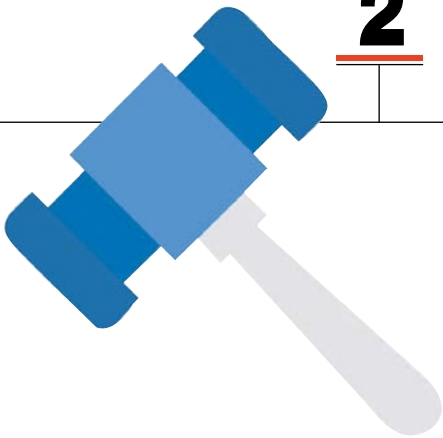
D.Y. Chandrachud,  
SC judge

In May 2016, Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court. Previously he was the Chief Justice of the Allahabad high court. Justice Chandrachud, born in 1959, was appointed as the additional solicitor-general in 1998. He practised law at the Supreme Court and the Bombay high court. A Delhi University graduate, Justice Chandrachud obtained his LL.M degree and a doctorate in juridical sciences from Harvard Law School. He is known to have overturned several rulings believed to have turned obsolete with time. Some such verdicts, including those on the adultery law and the right to privacy, were handed down from his father, Y.V. Chandrachud, the longest serving Chief Justice of India.



S. Abdul Nazeer,  
SC judge

Justice S. Abdul Nazeer practised in the Karnataka high court for 20 years after he enrolled as an advocate in February 1983. Born in 1958, Justice Nazeer was appointed as an additional judge of the Karnataka high court in 2003 and as a permanent judge in 2004. He was elevated as Supreme Court judge in 2017. He is one among a very few in India who became a Supreme Court judge without becoming chief justice of any of the high courts in the country. Justice Nazeer was part of the five-judge bench in the “triple talaq” matter but had delivered a minority verdict along with then Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar. They upheld the validity of the practise of Triple Talaq based on that fact that it is permissible under Muslim Sharia Law.



## SC: No basis for HC to trifurcate site

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

The Supreme Court on Saturday found faults with the Allahabad high court verdict by which it had on September 30, 2010 trifurcated the disputed site in three parts, giving one each to idol of Ram Lalla and Hindu sect Nirmohi Akhara and one part to Muslims.

The Allahabad high court judgment partitioning the disputed site in three parts was pronounced on September 30, 2010.

Noting that the high court was called upon to decide the question of title particularly in the declaratory suits, the top court constitution bench headed by the Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said, “The high court has adopted a path which was not open to it in terms of the principles” that top court had set-out in the judgment.

“There was no basis in the pleadings before the high court and certainly no warrant in the reliefs, which were claimed to direct a division of the land in the manner that a court would do in a suit for partition,” top court said, taking a dim view of the high court judgment by which it partitioned the disputed site in three parts.

In assessing the correctness of the decree of the high court, the top court today said, “It must be noted at the outset that the high court was not seized of a suit for partition. In a suit for partition, it is trite law that every party is both a plaintiff and defendant.” The top court further noted that high court granted reliefs, which were not the subject matter of the prayers in the suits before it and in the “process of doing so, it proceeded to assume the jurisdiction of a civil court in a suit for partition, which the suits before it were not.”

Having pointed to the flaws in the high court judgment of September 30, 2010, the top court said that the high court was hearing a suit by a worshipper seeking the enforcement of the right to a suit by Nirmohi Akhara, asserting Shebaiti rights to the management and charge of the temple, a declaratory suit on title by the Sunni Central Waqf Board and Muslims, and a suit for a declaration on behalf of the Hindu deities in which an injunction has also been sought restraining any obstruction with the construction of a temple.

**THE ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT JUDGMENT PARTITIONING THE DISPUTED SITE IN THREE PARTS WAS PRONOUNCED ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2010**

Wondering where were the basis for trifurcating the disputed site, the top court today said, “The high court has completely erred in granting relief which lay outside the ambit of the pleadings and the cases set up by the plaintiffs” – idol of Ram Lalla, Nirmohi Akhara and Sunni Central Waqf Board.

Having said this, the top court said that there was “another serious flaw” in the entire approach of the high court in granting relief of a three-way bifurcation of the disputed site as it went ahead partitioning the disputed site in three parts, even though it had decreed that suit of Nirmohi Akhara and Sunni Waqf Board was time barred.

“Having come to the conclusion that Suit 3 (filed by Nirmohi Akhara) and Suit 4 (filed by Sunni Central Waqf Board) were barred by limitation, the high court proceeded to grant relief in Suit 5 (by idol of Ram Lalla) to the plaintiffs in Suits 3 (Nirmohi Akhara) and 4 (Sunni Central Waqf Board). This defies logic and is contrary to settled principles of law”, said that top court.

The three judges of the Allahabad high court – Justices S.U. Khan, Sudhir Agrawal and Dharam Veer Sharma – took concurring and divergent positions on the issues before them in 2010.

On Sunni Central Waqf Board’s claim over the Babri Masjid, Justice Khan had said that till 1934, Muslims were offering regular prayers and since 1934 till December 22, 1949, they were offering only Friday prayers in the premises in dispute. The offering of only Friday prayers was also sufficient for continuance of possession and use.

However, Justice Agrawal said that the Muslim parties have failed to prove that the property in dispute was constructed by Emperor Babur or by Mir Bai.

The question as to when disputed structure was built and by whom, Justice Agrawal said it cannot be replied with certainty since neither there is any pleading nor there is any evidence/material to arrive at a concrete finding on this aspect.

However, applying the principle of informed guess, he had said that it appears that the building in dispute may have been constructed, probably between 1659 to 1707 A.D. during the regime of Aurangzeb.

Justice Dharam Veer Sharma in turn had said that the mosque if adversely possessed by a non-Muslim will lose its sacred character as a mosque and the Sunni Central waqf Board were not in possession of the Babri Masjid and had filed a suit for recovery of possession.

He said that there was no reliable evidence to show that Muslims offered prayers from times immemorial.

While Justice Khan had said that it is not proved by direct evidence that premises in dispute, including constructed portion belonged to Babar or the person, who constructed the mosque or under whose orders it was constructed. However, he said that the disputed was constructed as mosque by or under orders of Babar.

Holding that no temple was demolished for constructing the mosque, Justice Khan had said that the mosque was constructed over the ruins of temples, which were lying in utter ruins since a very long time before the construction of mosque and some material thereof was used in construction of the mosque.

Justice Agrawal had held that the matter “mounts to delving into some kind of conjectures but since it is a case which necessarily goes in history and particularly when for sufficiently long time, the things are in dark in the absence of anything to the contrary, the present matter would fall within the domain of preponderance of probability.”

## ‘Respect judgment, but verdict holds no value for us’

Zafaryab Jilani — secretary All India Muslim Personal Law Board and lawyer representing the Sunni Waqf Board in the Ayodhya land dispute case

**Q1. Are you satisfied with the verdict of the Supreme Court on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute?**

**A.** We respect the Supreme Court judgment but the Ayodhya verdict holds no value for us. Five acres has no value for us. We are not satisfied with the verdict. We are unhappy

and dissatisfied with this judgment. There are several portions in the judgment. The Ayodhya verdict has a lot of contradictions and some incorrect findings also.

**Q2. What will be your future course of action on the issue?**

**A.** We will decide on the further course of action after studying the judgment in detail. We respect the verdict, but the judgment is not satisfactory. It is not a defeat. We will discuss if a review petition should be filed or not. We will



file a review petition if our executive committee agrees on it. It is our right and it is in the Supreme Court’s rules as well.

**Q3. Do you consider the**



**We will decide on the further course of action after studying the judgment in detail... We will file a review petition if our executive committee agrees on it. It is our right and it is in the Supreme Court’s rules as well.**

**Supreme Court judgment to be just?**

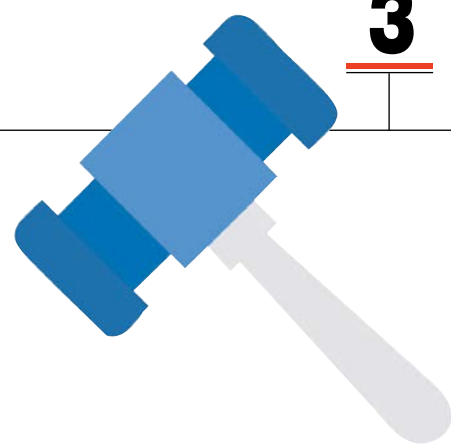
**A.** The entire country must respect the dignity of the apex court. However, a mistake

could be committed by anybody, and even the Supreme Court had reviewed its judgments on several occasions in the past.

**Q4. Will the verdict create a feeling of discontentment in a section of society?**

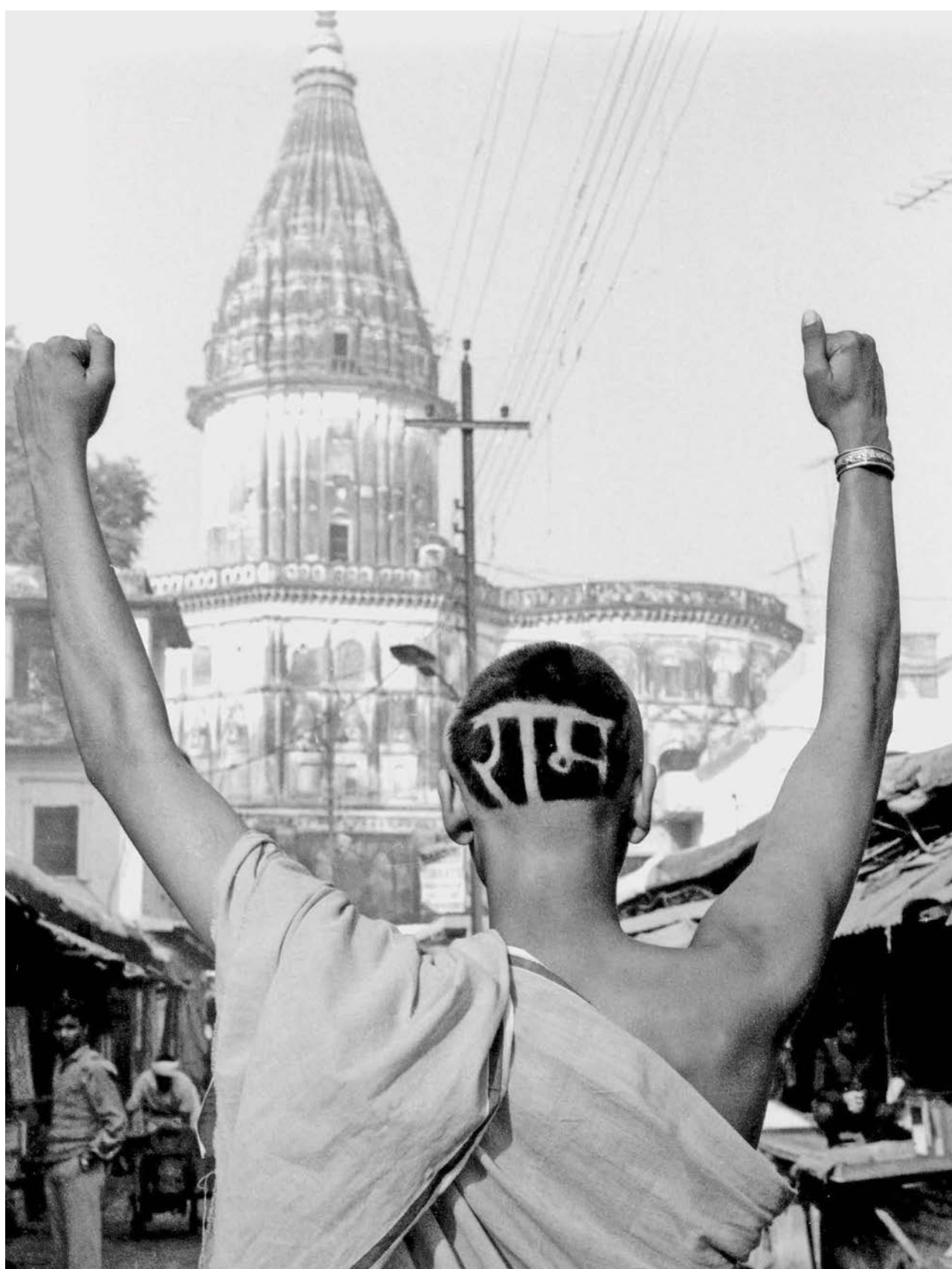
**A.** The verdict doesn’t signify a victory or defeat for any community. There should be no demonstration of any kind anywhere on it. We urge people to maintain peace and we will take whatever legal recourse we can.





# The Verdict

*Excerpts from the 1,045-page judgment by a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in the Ayodhya land title suit, one of the most important verdicts in India's judicial history, ending a century-old dispute*



## A kar sevak before Babri Masjid's demolition

In Ayodhya, December 1992, shortly before the Babri Masjid Structure was demolished by VHP, Bajrang Dal and RSS activists. — **SONDEEP SHANKAR**

extreme positions and search for the often elusive median.

### UPHOLDING ASI CONCLUSION ON EXCAVATIONS AT THE DISPUTED SITE

It would be unfair to reject the conclusions, which have been arrived at by an expert team which carried out the excavation. Yet the report must be read contextually. Having said this, we must also read the ASI report with the following caveats:

Though the excavation has revealed the existence of a circular shrine, conceivably a Shiva shrine dating back to the seventh to ninth century AD, the underlying structure belongs to twelfth century AD. The circular shrine and the underlying structure with pillar bases

belong to two different time periods between three to five centuries apart; There is no specific finding that the underlying structure was a temple dedicated to Lord Ram; and

Significantly, the ASI has not specifically opined on whether a temple was demolished for the construction of the disputed structure though it has emerged from the report that the disputed structure was constructed on the site and utilised the foundation and material of the underlying structure.

Consequently, when the ASI report will be placed in balance in terms of its evidentiary value in the course of this judgment, it is crucial for the court to sift between what the report finds and what it leaves unanswered.

## The conclusion

The facts, evidence and oral arguments of the present case have traversed the realms of history, archaeology, religion and the law. The law must stand apart from political contestations over history, ideology and religion. For a case replete with references to archaeological foundations, we must remember that it is the law which provides the edifice upon which our multi-cultural society rests.

The law forms the ground upon which, multiple strands of history, ideology and religion can compete. By determining their limits, this court as the final arbiter must preserve the sense of balance that the beliefs of one citizen do not interfere with or dominate the freedoms and beliefs of another.

The Constitution does not make a distinction between the faith and belief of one religion and another. All forms of belief, worship and prayer are equal... The Constitution speaks to the judges who interpret it, to those who govern who must enforce it, but above all, to the citizens who engage with it as an inseparable feature of their lives. In the present case, this court is tasked with an adjudicatory task of unique dimension. The dispute is over immovable property. The court does not decide title on the basis of faith or belief but on the basis of evidence. The law provides us with parameters as clear but as profound as ownership and possession. In deciding title to the disputed property, the court applies settled principles of evidence to adjudicate upon which party has established a claim to the immovable property. On the balance of probabilities, there is clear evidence to indicate that the worship by the Hindus in the outer courtyard continued unimpeded in spite of the setting up of a grill-brick wall in 1857. Their possession of the outer courtyard stands established together with the incidents attaching to their control over it.

As regards the inner courtyard, there is evidence on a preponderance of probabilities to establish worship by the Hindus prior to the annexation of Oudh by the British in 1857.

The Muslims have offered no evidence to indicate that they were in exclusive possession of the inner structure prior to 1857 since the date of the construction in 16th century. After setting up of the grill-brick wall, the structure of the mosque continued to exist.

We have already concluded that the three-way bifurcation by the high court was legally unsustainable. Even as a matter of maintaining public peace and tranquillity, the solution which commended itself to the High Court is not feasible. The disputed site admeasures all of 1500 square yards. Dividing the land will not subserve the interest of either of the parties or secure a lasting sense of peace and tranquillity.

### ANTIQUITY OF THE ISSUE

The history and culture of this country have been home to quests for truth, through the material, the political, and the spiritual. This court is called upon to fulfil its adjudicatory function where it is claimed that two quests for the truth impinge on the freedoms of the other or violate the rule of law.

This court is tasked with the resolution of a dispute whose origins are as old as the idea of India itself. The events associated with the dispute have spanned the Mughal empire, colonial rule and the present constitutional regime.

### 'JURISTIC PERSONALITY'

Legal systems across the world evolved from periods of darkness where legal personality was denied to natural persons to the present day where in constitutional democracies almost all natural persons are also legal persons in the eyes of the law. Legal systems have also extended the concept of legal personality beyond natural persons. This has taken place through the creation of the artificial legal person or juristic person, where an object or thing which is not a natural person is nonetheless recognised as a legal person in the law... A legal person possesses a capability to bear interests, rights and duties.

The recognition of the Hindu idol as a legal or juristic person is therefore based on two premises employed by courts. The first is to recognise the pious purpose of the testator as a legal entity capable of holding property... The second is the merging of the pious purpose itself and the idol which embodies the pious purpose to ensure the fulfilment of the pious purpose... So conceived, the Hindu idol is a legal person.

...In a country like ours where contesting claims

over property by religious communities are inevitable, our courts cannot reduce questions of title, which fall firmly within the secular domain and outside the rubric of religion, to a question of which community's faith is stronger

### TOP COURT ON ARCHEOLOGY

Archaeology as a science draws on multi-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary approaches. In considering the nature of archaeological evidence, it is important to remember that archaeology as a branch of knowledge draws sustenance from the science of learning, the wisdom of experience and the vision which underlies the process of interpretation...

Archaeology combines both science and art. As a science, it is based on the principle of objective evaluation. As an art, it relies on a vision which is realised through years of commitment to the pursuit of knowledge based on the histories of eras. Archaeology as a discipline cannot be belittled as unreliable... The supposed distinction between science as embodying absolute truth and archaeology as unguided subjectivity is one of degree not of universes. Yet as in other disciplines of its genre, archaeology is as much a matter of process as it is of deduction.

The archaeologist must deal with recoveries as much as the finds from them. Interpretation is its heart, if not its soul. Interpretations do vary and experts disagree.


When the law perceives an exercise of interpretation it must recognize margins of error and differences of opinion. Archaeological findings are susceptible of multiple interpretations... So long as we understand the limits and boundaries of the discipline, we can eschew

### APPLICABILITY OF LAW IN CASE

The disputed property has fallen within the territory of various rulers and legal regimes. The question of which party, king or religion had a first claim to the disputed site is one of significant historical interest. But this court must determine what are the legal consequences arising from such an enquiry.

Human history is testament to the rise and fall of rulers and regimes. The law cannot be used as a device to reach back in time and provide a legal remedy to every person who disagrees with the course which history has taken.

The courts of today cannot take cognisance of historical rights and wrongs unless it is shown that their legal consequences are enforceable in the present. Thus, before this Court embarks on a lengthy historical enquiry, it is important to consider the extent to which acts done and rights accrued under previous legal regimes have legal consequences today under our present laws.



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The pledgors, in specific and the public, in general, are hereby notified that public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the below accounts is proposed to be conducted at the Head Office at New Rajendra Nagar on 24/11/2019 from 12 Noon onwards. The Gold ornaments being auctioned have been pledged by various borrowers who have failed to close the loan accounts and redeem the pledged gold ornaments despite being notified by letters sent by the registered post. The list of pledges taken up for auction has also been displayed at the Head Office and the respective branches. Please note that the items remaining un-auctioned shall be auctioned on any other date without further notice. Changes, if any, in the venue and date of auction shall be displayed at the venue on the date of auction mentioned above and no further notice regarding the change of date and venue shall be issued.

**AN-299,300,301,302-NEHA MOHAN,BH-4518-THRIDEEP KUMAR, T.M.,BP-3224,3225,3226-RAJI, A.K.,DG-11826,11989-SUDHEER, S.,11948-ANU GEORGE,11854-PUSHPA NAIR ,11763,11800-RANJITH, B.,JP-10289-MAJU RANJITH,10224-GEETHA SAJI ,10227-ELDHOS, V.V.,10271-RAMNI, K.K.,KC-574,587-SAM T. JOHN,MV-13924-CHRISTINA P. SAMUEL,13635-ARUN, R.,13923-BENJAMIN P. SAMUEL, S,RO-4031-LICY THOMAS,4014-SIVA SENAN, K.**

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## Always In Hurry?


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Ayodhya residents celebrate ‘Deepavali’

Residents of Sadatganj area in Ayodhya burst fire crackers outside their houses on Saturday to celebrate the Supreme Court’s judgement to give dispute land to Hindus for the construction of a Ram temple, ending decades-long litigation. — PTI

IT’S MODI OR YOGI’S NAME EVERYWHERE

FROM PAGE 1

A “Peeppli live” situation prevailed in the temple town today after the verdict.

A few hours before the judgment, some shops in Faizabad opened while others remained shut anticipating trouble. As one proceeded towards Sahabgunj and beyond to Ayodhya, all shops were closed while local residents were scattered, animatedly discussing the outcome of the verdict or the possible scenarios. Not a single discussion ended without the mention of “Modi” or “Yogi.”

It was as if each knew what the verdict would be, and they even challenged one another. Others sat around on their terraces and balconies, watching each vehicle or passer-by with suspicion.

In front of barricades, national and local TV set up their bases and waited for the verdict.

In colonies with Muslim residents, green flags and buntings were visible, but the Milad un Nabi celebrations were subdued. The administration had cancelled the festivities due to security reasons, which disturbed many.

By afternoon, all streets were again deserted amidst a tight security vigil.

However, Ram Lalla remained available as usual, from 7 am to 11 am, a rest, and then again from 1 pm to 5 pm. But he had fewer visitors today.

While all roads leading to the temple were deserted, a man dressed up as Lord Hanuman walked past, chanting “Jai Shri Ram”.

Ram temple work to begin in April

YOJNA GUSAI  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

With the Supreme Court “facilitating” the construction of a “grand” Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is now hoping to lay the temple’s foundation stone on the ‘Ram Navmi’ next April.

While the Sangh and its affiliate VHP gave a coordinated response on the verdict, asserting that “truth and justice” have prevailed and that the verdict is neither a victory nor a defeat, sources said the completion of the temple could coincide with the next Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh in 2022. For the past one week, the RSS has been appealing for peace and harmony over the Supreme Court verdict pronounced on Saturday.

The VHP, which spearheaded the Sangh’s mandir campaign, has urged the Central government to set up a trust for the construction of the Ram Mandir and had asserted that almost 60 per cent of pillars and beams of the shrine are ready.

Preempting any move to take political mileage or communalise the verdict, the RSS had barred its leaders to react or act in any manner on the verdict. RSS leaders were also holding talks with Muslim religious leaders and influencers to check any move to aggressive response on the verdict.

It was RSS supreme Mohan Bhagwat, who first reacted, fol-

■ The VHP, which spearheaded the Sangh’s mandir campaign, had asserted that almost 60 per cent of pillars and beams of the shrine are ready.

lowed by VHP working president Alok Kumar. They said the verdict “should not be seen as anybody’s victory or defeat” and the “decision is in line with the sentiments of the whole nation.” Even the BJP, whose top brass had held meeting with the RSS recently, echoed their views.

“We welcome this decision. This case was going on for decades and it reached the right conclusion. We wanted the issue to end, this has happened. All sides were evaluated and truth and justice have been highlighted,” Mr Bhagwat said.

Mr Kumar said the verdict is a “decisive step towards construction of a grand Ram temple” and that it was a “day of happiness for Hindus the world over.” He also noted that “Hindu has the nature to live in maryada” therefore “the expression of joy cannot be aggressive.”

When asked about the other religious sites at Kashi and Mathura, Mr Kumar said the VHP is “currently focussed on construction “of the Ram temple and it has no time for other demands.

“About Kashi and Mathura, I must make it clear that the judgment is not the end of the story, it is the beginning,” he said.

Let us not stretch it further: Shahi Imam

ASHHAR KHAN  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) on Saturday expressed dissatisfaction with the verdict. All Muslim leaders appealed to the community to ensure that peace and harmony prevails and nobody takes law into their hands.

“We are dissatisfied with certain findings of the Supreme Court. We respect the Supreme Court verdict and respectfully disagree with certain aspects of it,” said AIMPLB secretary Zafaryab Jilani.

Mr Jilani said they will study the judgement and may seek a review. “Even the inner court-yard has been given to the other party. It is not just,” he argued, adding the working committee of the board will soon sit and discuss. “Whatever legal recourse is possible we will take,” Mr Jilani said.

“We had hoped that the apex court will pronounce its verdict not keeping the faith factor in mind, but available historical facts and evidence,” said AIMPLB member Kamal Farooqui.

However, Mr Zafar Ahmad Farooqui, the chairman of

6 We accept the court order and the Hindu-Muslim issue should come to an end now Muslims of India want peace in the country. Before the court’s order, all Muslims had said that they would accept the court’s order, whatever it be.

— DELHI’S SHAHI IMAM

Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board which was one of the main litigants in the case, on Saturday welcomed the verdict and said it has no plans to challenge it. The Shia Central Waqf Board, whose appeal was dismissed by the apex court, has welcomed the verdict.

Accepting the verdict, the Shahi Imam of the Jama Masjid in Delhi, Syed Ahmed Bukhari, said on Saturday the matter should not be stretched further. “We accept the court order and the Hindu-Muslim issue, which had been going on for several years, should come to an end now Muslims of India want peace in the country. Before the court’s order, all Muslims had said that they would accept the court’s order, whatever it be.”

Muslims failed to prove possession

FROM PAGE 1

On the inner court yard on which Babri Masjid stood since 1528 till December 6, 1992 when it was demolished, the court said. “As regards the inner courtyard, there is evidence on a preponderance of probabilities to establish worship by the Hindus prior to the annexation of Oudh by the British in 1857.”

Rejecting the Muslim claim over the disputed site under the three domes of the now demolished Babri Masjid, also described as inner court yard, the court said: “The Muslims have offered no evidence to indicate that they were in exclusive possession of the inner structure prior to 1857 since the date of the construction in the sixteenth century. After the setting up of the grill-brick wall, the structure of the mosque continued to exist and there is evidence to indicate that namaz was offered within its precincts.”

Recalling that the Babri mosque was “desecrated” on the intervening night of 22/23 December, 1949, and the exclusion of Muslims from “worship and possession” of the mosque, the court said: “The ouster of the Muslims on that occasion was not through any lawful authority but through an act which was calculated to deprive them of their place of worship.”

The court further noted that after the entire disputed site was taken over and receiver appointed

6 The Muslims have offered no evidence to indicate that they were in exclusive possession of the inner structure prior to 1857 since the date of the construction in the sixteenth century. After the setting up of the grill-brick wall, the structure of the mosque continued to exist and there is evidence to indicate that namaz was offered within its precincts.”

— THE SUPREME COURT  
5-judge bench

in 1950, the worship of Hindu idols placed in the inner courtyard right under the central dome of Babri Masjid was permitted.

Saying that the Muslims have been “wrongly deprived of a mosque which had been constructed well over 450 years ago”, the judgment says, “during the pendency of the suits, the entire structure of the mosque was brought down in a calculated act of destroying a place of public worship.”

Noting that the Hindus have not brought on record any document showing the conferment of the title of the disputed site to them and had just produced records showing grants received by them for maintaining the mosque, the court said, “This document, even if it is accepted as authentic, indicates a grant for specific purposes and does not confer the title to the disputed land.”

SC verdict bolsters PM’s Hindu image

FROM PAGE 1

As the Supreme Court’s verdict yet again bolstered Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s image as “Hindu Hriday Samrat,” the original poster boy of Hindutva and the architect of the Ram Jannabhoomi movement, L.K. Advani, remained in the shadows. No one in the party talked about the old warhorse today.

Later in the evening, Mr Advani issued a short statement saying “I feel vindicated and deeply blessed that the Supreme Court has given its unanimous verdict paving the way for the construction of a magnificent temple for Lord Rama...”

A VHP functionary felt that the “closure” of the Ram Jannabhoomi dispute is bound to add to Modi’s legacy of steering the nation towards the grand vision of establishing a Hindu Rashtra.”

However, after taking over the reign of the nation, Prime Minister has always spoken of a united India and stressed on the mantra — *Sabke saath, Sabka vikas*.

He had also urged people of the country not to construe the Ayodhya verdict as a “matter of victory or loss.”

Addressing the nation hours after the verdict, Mr Modi described “November 9 as a day to

■ WITH THE top court ruling in favour of the Hindu plaintiff, the BJP government has nearly ticked all the Hindutva boxes it had in its kitty — Abrogation of Article 370 and NRC.

■ THE ONLY major core issue remaining to be clinched is the Uniform Civil Code.

forget any bitterness one may have” and observed that “there is no place for fear, bitterness and negativity in new India.”

With the top court ruling in favour of the Hindu plaintiff, the BJP government has nearly ticked all the Hindutva boxes it had in its kitty — Abrogation of Article 370 and NRC. The only major core issue remaining to be clinched is the “Uniform Civil Code.” Some ultra right-wing outfits also want the word “secular” to be removed from the Constitution.

At a time when the economic slowdown has put the government on the backfoot and resulted in its poor show in Haryana and Maharashtra Assembly polls, the Supreme Court’s verdict came as a major boost for the party. Some of the BJP spin doctors felt that the verdict would offer the BJP a “fighting chance in Delhi and Jharkhand Assembly polls.”

Cops were ready to join kar sevaks

FROM PAGE 1

As I moved through the holy town wearing a two-day stubble and soiled clothes, I interacted with many PAC men. Always, I was treated with respect, even deference. One night some *kar sevaks* and I spent hours chatting with a group of PAC personnel. “We are solidly behind you. Don’t worry,” said a policeman. “If we are ordered on December 6 to attack you, we will lay down our arms and join you,” reassured another. “Come what may, we will force the paramilitary to surrender,” said a third.

Some days ago a constable of the PAC had been suspended for removing bricks from the disputed structure, i.e. the Babri Masjid.

A policeman told me that the PAC constable had

removed 10 to 12 bricks when he was caught.

The bonhomie between the kar sevaks and the Uttar Pradesh policemen was striking. They bought us tea and, later, one of them invited us over for breakfast to their camp, including many kar sevaks who were carrying arms.

The fact that I was a Kashmiri Hindu and had travelled to Ayodhya at my expense seemed to impress people no end.

A saint and a boy from Rajasthan bowed before me when they heard this. They said Hindus needed staunch supporters like me. The boy from Jaipur told me that he had been assigned the job of security, which probably meant being with the PAC or the Uttar Pradesh police.

A boy from Faridabad suggested that I join the RSS.

He said a 20-day camp is held every year in three places in the country to impart training to Sangh activists. “This year we were taught how to handle explosives. Even some Kashmiris were there,” he added.

Two boys from Hissar took me to their tent. They showed me a flick knife and taught me how to use it. I also saw some sadhus carrying wireless sets with them. A sadhu told me he was keeping an eye on those people who were moving suspiciously around the site. “We are keeping a close watch on journalists who are staying in Shaan-e-Avadh hotel in Faizabad,” he said.

It was with great difficulty that I managed to leave Ayodhya. On my way to Faizabad, I was grilled again by kar sevaks. This

time they wanted to know why I was leaving the holy town. An official posted at Faizabad railway station allowed me to leave only after I convinced him that I would be back with my Kashmiri Hindu friends who too were keen to perform kar seva on D-Day.

As I returned to Delhi on December 3, 1992, to file my reports, I recalled my closest encounter with death during this masquerade — One day a journalist friend had yelled out my name when I was with a group of kar sevaks in Ayodhya. I didn’t know how to react and was on the verge of a breakdown because I knew the extent to which the hardliners would go to avenge breach of trust. Somehow I managed the disaster by embracing my friend and confiding in him.



A file photo of L.K. Advani’s rath yatra.

Social media recalls Advani’s yatra

FROM PAGE 1

Sidelined within the BJP, both Advani and his colleague Murlidhar Manohar Joshi are members of the party’s ‘margdarshak mandal,’ which was formed in 2014 but has not officially held a single meeting since then.

Pictures of Mr Advani, flanked by Mr Joshi and some other BJP leaders during the Ratra Yatra were circulated

in social media. Also, remembered on the day was late VHP stalwart Ashok Singhal, the crusader of the Ram jannabhoomi movement. Mr Advani and Mr Joshi are still facing trial in the 1992 Babri mosque demolition case.

Mr Advani noted that “Ram and Ramayana occupy an esteemed place in India’s cultural and civilisational heritage” and the Ram Jannabhoomi

in Ayodhya holds a “special and sacred place in the hearts” Indians, even those living abroad.

“Therefore, it is gratifying that their belief and sentiments have been respected...I also welcome the apex court’s decision that five acres of land be given at a prominent place for the building of a mosque in Ayodhya....the time has come to leave all contention and acrimony behind and embrace communal concord and peace,” said the BJP veteran.

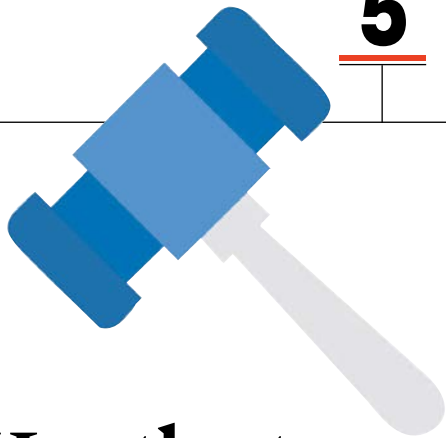
Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, who said November 9 will be written in “golden letters in the history of India,” said “He (Advani) had taken out ‘Rath-Yatra’ for this. I will surely meet him and seek his blessings.”

Earlier, Mr Joshi said the apex court’s verdict should be accepted with an “open mind” by all communities. Former firebrand and BJP leader Uma Bharti said Mr Advani’s “devotion to temple cause is at the root of the BJP’s success and it will be coming back to power for another term.” She is also facing charges in the Babri masjid demolition case.

Ms Bharti, who met Mr Advani after the verdict, said it was he who brought the BJP and Ayodhya movement to “this position” and hailed the verdict.



People react after the Supreme Court verdict on Saturday. The judgment in the politically sensitive Ayodhya land dispute case is historic in more than one sense as it is perhaps for the first time in the 69-year history of the Supreme Court that a verdict was delivered on Saturday. — AP, AFP, PTI



## Has the top court done its job?

*It can be said the court has picked peace over justice and, arguably, pragmatism over principles of fairness*



Valay Singh

Faced with an intractable dispute laden with politics and religion, layered with history and fiction, myth and propaganda, it has done what was widely surmised by many who have followed the dispute over the years. It can be said the court has picked peace over justice, and arguably pragmatism over principles of fairness and equity. Not many court verdicts are perfect and almost none that leaves every party satisfied. Given the significance of the Ayodhya issue to India's recent past, portentous present and future course as a multi-religious and richly diverse democracy, the Supreme Court had a rare opportunity to stamp its authority as the protector of justice, equity and rule of law. Has the court made good use of it?

Since 1855, when the issue first flared, over not the mosque but in fact, over the demolition of a mosque atop the nearby Hanumanagarhi temple, each chapter of this sordid saga has reflected our country's evolution. It has also reflected the application of justice, initially by the British when suits asking for rights over the Ram Chabutra were dismissed by the Courts, and later in post-independence communally scarred free India, when the local magistrate allegedly connived and ensured that the mosque was locked and transferred to government custody once the Ram-Sita idols were forcibly implanted by a band of sadhus in 1949. At that time too, political considerations of the communal kind were the motivation but the staunchly secular, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru ensured that the new republic was enthralled more by socialism than narrow sectarianism. However, as the promise of a new and equal India proved hollower with every passing decade, and a new politics of identity and appeasement too root, the Ayodhya dispute emerged gradually on to the national centrestage. A toxic culture of elitism, apathy and vote-bank politics (of not just the religious kind) infected the body politic of the country by the mid 1980s and the sudden death of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi inadvertently precipitated the rise of religion-based politics centred around the Babri masjid-Ram Janambhoomi issue. At least, even if Nehru couldn't see the mosque restored back to Muslims, he didn't allow the ugly head of communalism to rear its head in mainstream politics. Consequently, even though justice was not done, more injustice was put in abeyance.

However, his grandson, Rajiv Gandhi who had to overturn turn from an aviation pilot to Prime Minister was neither as politically astute as his mother, nor ideologically committed as his grandfather. He was not even a politician like either. By the time Rajiv was thrust into the job, Indian politics was corrupted to the core and its government reduced to a club of industrialists and political dynasts who were often less trustworthy in the public's eye than even the government machinery they controlled. Unable to stand up to first the Muslim clergy he negated a SC verdict through an Act of Parliament. The RSS backed and VHP-led Ram temple movement, which was just two years old then, In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi widely arranged the opening of the locks of the mosque but only Hindus were allowed to worship there. A few years later, his party, in a desperate attempt to return to power launched its campaign from Ayodhya where Rajiv promised he would usher in Ram Rajya. During this time it was in this context that courts too played a role that was not above criticism, the admitting of the Ram Lalla Virajman, the deity suit in 1989 was certainly a decision that attracted criticism. What could have been resolved as a property dispute was allowed to fester till it became a chimera for pluralism and secularism. The destruction of the Babri masjid by Karsevaks despite the presence of thousands of security forces and SC's own monitors razed to the ground the already crumbling rule of law in the country.

All through the Ram temple movement, the pro-temple groups had asserted that matters of faith cannot be decided by courts. And on 6th December, the court's orders were flouted with the same impunity with which the three domes of the 16th century mosque were pulled down. In the subsequent decade and a half, India seemingly turned its back to Ayodhya and fixated over economic growth, corruption and misgovernance. The Allahabad high court verdict too had provided a compromise formula based on prioritising peace over justice, but failed to deliver on either. In the last few years, 'Jai Shri Ram' chants have instilled sadly been appropriated by criminals who wilfully terrorise Muslims and dalits.

The verdict been delivered on Barawafat, the day celebrated by Muslims to mark the birthday of Prophet Mohammad. In view of the sensitive nature of the case, the administration has imposed Section 144 and banned processions and celebrations of any kind and by any community. And although Muslims across the spectrum have welcomed the verdict, there is a lingering feeling among some once again the rule of law has been selectively applied to them. This is an impression that the Supreme Court should do well to correct in the future course by closely monitoring the implementation of its landmark verdict. Only then it would have finished the job.

*The writer is the author of Ayodhya: City of Faith, City of Discord*

# Shah reviews security

NSA Ajit Doval, home secretary Ajit Bhalla & IB chief Arvind Kumar also present

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

Home minister Amit Shah on Saturday chaired a high level meeting to review security across the country in wake of the Supreme Court verdict on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute. Mr Shah personally spoke to some of the chief ministers to assess the situation in their states, directing them to put in place all security measures to ensure no untoward incident takes place.

National security advisor Ajit Doval, Union home secretary Ajit Bhalla, Intelligence bureau chief Arvind Kumar and some other senior security and intelligence officials were also present during the crucial meeting.

Senior officials gave the home minister a detailed presentation of the security situation in the country, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, as Ayodhya was considered to be a sensitive area. Earlier, even Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior political and religious leaders had requested people to maintain peace and respect following the Supreme Court order.

Security agencies across the country had made elaborate arrangements to even monitor the social media posts to ensure that no inflammatory content was posted to trigger any violence. Security at all religious and other crowded places with high foot fall was beefed up in Uttar Pradesh. The state government directed that all educational and training institutes would remain closed till Monday. Home ministry had earlier dispatched more than 4,000 central paramilitary personnel also to the state.

In Ayodhya specially, a massive security cordon was thrown around the town with more than 60 companies of PAC and paramilitary forces. Vehicle checking was also intensified near the Ramjanmabhoomi police station, "karyashala" of Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas and other parts of the town.

Security forces also deployed drones and CCTV cameras used to monitor the situation. Temporary jails were set up in different parts of Ayodhya and other sensitive areas to detain people in case they resorted to

## Assam Muslims to donate ₹5L for Mandir

MANOJ ANAND  
GUWAHATI, NOV. 9

In what has been seen as an attempt to strengthen communal harmony, 21 organisations representing indigenous Assamese Muslims have not only described the verdict on Ayodhya as historic but also decided to donate ₹5 Lakh to the trust that will oversee the construction of the Ram Mandir.

The organisations under the banner Jonogusthiya Somonnoy Parishad Asom (JSPA) said that the decision was an expression of solidarity

ty of the indigenous Muslims to country's unity and to "cherished aspiration" of Hindus to see the temple is constructed in Ayodhya.

JSPA chairman, Syed Mumtaz Aowal said that all the 21 organisations will raise the money and donate it once the trust is formed. "We are happy that the protracted dispute has been resolved through the historic judgement of the Supreme Court. We will donate ₹5 lakh because we also want to be part of this historic decision that will further strengthen the spirit of unity and harmony in the

country." Mr Aowal, who is also senior BJP spokesperson, said.

The 21 organisations represent Gorla, Moria, Deshiya, Jalha, Maimal and Kachari Muslims, whose ancestries converted to Islam from different ethnic groups of the state.

On the other hand, All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) chief Badruddin Ajmal said, "We respect the Supreme Court's verdict on the Babri masjid dispute. Our appeal is that post-verdict, people of Assam and across the country keep peace and harmony intact."

### IN AYODHYA SPECIALLY, A MASSIVE SECURITY CORDON WAS THROWN AROUND THE TOWN WITH MORE THAN 60 COMPANIES OF PAC AND PARAMILITARY FORCES

any kind of violence. State chief minister Yogi Adityanath also reviewed law and order in each district and appealed for peace. Home ministry on Thursday had also issued an advisory to all states and UTs to ensure adequate security arrangements are made. The railway police too had cancelled leaves of its personnel and stepped up vigil at 78 major stations. In the national capital,

Delhi police had increased security across the city and stepped up patrolling in sensitive areas along with monitoring of the social media platforms. Delhi government had asked all private schools to remain closed on Saturday. Officials said that social media posts and WhatsApp messages that trigger hatred or violence would lead to severe punishment, including jail terms. In adjoining Noida, the police said that action could also be taken under the Gangsters Act and the National Security Act. The local police also conducted a flag march in sensitive areas of the state, including Noida. In Mumbai and rest of Maharashtra also, the police remained on high alert.

In Mumbai especially, the

## MEA briefs envoys on Ayodhya verdict

New Delhi: Top officials of the MEA, including foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale, on Saturday briefed envoys of certain influential countries, including some of the P-5 nations and the Islamic world over the verdict on the Ayodhya issue. Apart from foreign secretary Gokhale, the MEA's secretary (east) Ms Vijay Thakur Singh and secretary (West) Gitesh Sharma also briefed various envoys separately, sources said. It is understood that the briefings were part of the practice of briefing foreign envoys about "important developments."

MEA issued prohibitory orders against gathering of five or more persons till November 18. Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot also directed senior police officers to ensure law and order in the state. He asked the officers to make additional deployment in sensitive areas. In the newly created Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as well, prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC were issued, which bans assembly of more than four people. Schools and colleges also remained closed and all examinations scheduled for November 9 have been postponed. In Karnataka too, the state government declared that all schools and colleges will remain closed on November 9.

## SC says Akhara not Shebait of Ram Lalla

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

The Supreme Court on Saturday said in its verdict in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute case that the Nirmohi Akhara, a litigant in the case, is not a "shebait" or devotee of the deity Ram Lalla.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said the Akhara's suit was barred by limitation. The bench in its order said the Akhara is not a shebait of the deity of Lord Ram and instead handed over the entire 2.77 acre of disputed area to Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas. The Nirmohi Akhara, which was awarded one-third of the disputed land by the Allahabad high court in 2010, had also made a claim to the entire disputed land stating that they were the original "pujaris" who worshipped Lord Ram at the temple at his birthplace.

However, the bench unanimously ruled that possession of Ayodhya's contested property will vest in a trust to be formed by the central government and also directed that representation in the trust may be given to Nirmohi

Akhara. "A 'shebait' is a person who is appointed by temple authorities to serve the deity, maintain the property and manage it.

The office of 'shebait' comes with rights. A pujari gains no independent right despite having conducted the ceremonies for a long period of time. Thus, the mere presence of pujaris does not vest in them any right to be shebait," said the bench and ruled that "at its highest, these exhibits show that the Nirmohis were present in and around the structure and assisted the pilgrims." It does not, however, evidence any management over the idols or the disputed site itself, said the bench.

The Akhara welcomed the apex court decision of giving it an "adequate representation in the trust". "Nirmohi Akhara is grateful that Supreme Court has recognised our fight," said a office bearer of Nirmohi Akhara. "Central government shall form in three to four months a scheme for setting up of a trust. They shall make necessary arrangements for the management of trust and construction of the temple," CJI Ranjan Gogoi said.

## ‘Rajiv blunders helped BJP rise’

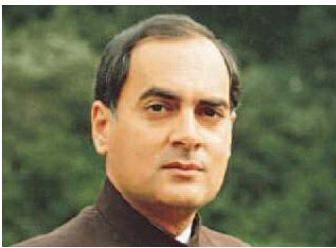
ASHHAR KHAN  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

Former Union home secretary, Madhav Godbole, who quit after the demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992 was not far from the truth, when he described former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi as the "second most prominent kar sevak, after Nayar, the district magistrate of Faizabad, who encouraged the clandestine placement of the Ram Lalla idol in the Babri Masjid on December 22, 1949."

It was Rajiv Gandhi's political blunders of conceding to the demands of the fundamentalists led to the resurgence of the BJP and revival of the Ayodhya dispute, which rekindled scars of partition and eventually completed the division between Hindus and Muslims in the country.

It was in 1985, Rajiv Gandhi reeling under various controversies, including the Bofors scam. In a bid to get out of the crisis, Rajiv began his mistakes of tinkering with India's socio-religious fabric.

The first was to overturn the Supreme Court verdict in the Sha Bano case on the triple talaq issue. This was an attempt to appease the Muslim fundamentalists and the Muslim Personal Law Board. Rajiv Gandhi enacted a law abolishing the alimony provision in conformity with the Sharia that principally gov-



Rajiv Gandhi

ern the Muslim personal laws. Rajiv Gandhi's "regressive" move upset the secular minded Muslim leaders and one of the prominent Muslim face in his Cabinet, Arif Mohammed Khan quit in protest against the move.

This decision opened the can of worms. The Hindu fundamentalists, including the BJP launched a scathing and relentless attack on Rajiv Gandhi over the Sha Bano issue. Surprising many, Rajiv Gandhi in his so-called balancing act, ordered the locks on the Ram Janam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid in Ayodhya to be removed. Until then, a priest had been permitted to perform puja once a year for the idols installed there in 1949. This step catalysed the rise of the right wing politics in India. And BJP, which that time had only two MPs, rose like a Phoenix.

In 1989, Rajiv Gandhi went ahead with negotiations with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and allowed Shilanayas, when the

first stone of the proposed temple was placed. At this juncture, Rajiv Gandhi riddled with troubles. His mishandling of the situation in Punjab, Kashmir and Sri Lanka had resulted into the rise of terrorist activities in the country. To make matters worse for him, V.P. Singh quit the Congress and started his own party. Rajiv Gandhi thought the pandering to the majority community could be the only way to consolidate his position. Toeing a Hindutva line, Rajiv Gandhi talked of a 'Ram Rajya' during his election campaigns.

The assurance of a "Ram Rajya" could not save Rajiv Gandhi, who lost the 1989 elections to V.P. Singh led Opposition. However, his move to open the locks benefitted the BJP, which stepped on the issue and in 1989 the party tally rose from two to eighty Lok Sabha seats. Then came L.K. Advani's repeated rath yatras for the construction of the Ram Mandir and the consistent rise of the BJP. If Rajiv Gandhi ushered in the rise of the BJP, the former Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao consolidate the Hindutva brigade with inaction during the demolition of the Babri Masjid by the Hindu fundamentalists in 1992. After the demolition, the Central government went ahead and dismissed the Kalyan Singh led BJP government in Uttar Pradesh and virtually made him a martyr.





# India is spared worse, chapter of follies over

The Supreme Court of India appeared to follow its own precedent of “satisfying the collective conscience of society” in settling the Ayodhya title case and declaring the disputed 2.77 acres as belonging to Lord Ram. The court essentially threw out the 2010 Allahabad high court trifurcation of the disputed site on the grounds that the 2010 order was self-contradictory (it said one of the parties had exceeded the time of limitations, and then awarded that same party a share in the three parts). Its justification was that from before 1856, when the British Raj erected a wall-grill outside the mosque that lead to inter-communal riots, it was clear that Hindus had been worshipping the area as Lord Ram’s birthplace. The only thing that puzzled the court is what happened in the 400 years between the time when a Hindu structure was archeologically found to last exist in the spot, and the time Babur erected the mosque.

It is a settlement that will satisfy majoritarian India — it is akin to the reincarnation of the Ram Temple for the hardcore devout — though one wonders if the majority of the majority community will feel anything more than indifference to the resolution of this 70-year-old dispute (or 165-year-old, or 400 year-old dispute, depending on whom you talk to). Religion is said to be the opiate of the masses, but from most the reaction is one of exhaustion or ennui, their attention only momentarily deflected from the increasing despair over the deteriorating economy that was sunk in no small part by the needless and nutty demonetisation almost exactly three years ago.

One consolation is that in the entire history of the Babri Masjid’s existence, from 1528 to 1992, the Supreme Court found three instances of law-breaking: the 1934 attack on the mosque, which lessened the frequency of prayers by Muslims; the 1949 placement of idols inside the mosque, which led to a shutdown of even Friday prayers; and the December 6, 1992, demolition of the masjid. This last observation should help in the criminal case against those who conspired to demolish the mosque, the judgment of which is due to happen next spring.

The court decided that the Muslims would be compensated with five acres — nearly twice the disputed area — in a place to be decided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Central government within the larger 67 acres at the site, or by chief minister Yogi Adityanath’s state government within the city of Ayodhya. It is to happen at the same time the disputed area is handed over to a trust that the government will appoint to construct the Ram temple. This consolation prize can hardly please the Indian Muslim — it is an apt metaphor for the forced eviction and ghettoisation that the community has faced since December 1992.

But what is the Indian Muslim to do? When the “collective conscience of society” had to be satisfied with the 2013 hanging of Afzal Guru for his role in the 2001

Parliament attack — a case that was tenuous at best — then the Kashmiri Muslim was helpless. This time the Indian Muslim is reeling under a series of blows that characterise the reign of the current Central government, in which Muslims around the country are picked up and thrown into jail on a whimsy, under dubious charges ranging from cattle-smuggling to terrorism; where a whole population is locked up in their home barracks in an open prison called Kashmir; and where the fear of disenfranchisement by the National Register of Citizens has created a nationwide atmosphere of paranoia and panic. Indian Muslims feel pummeled so badly that the fight has gone out of them, and they just want to get on with life. The community no doubt expected, in its heart of hearts, that the judgment would be as it has turned out. And in any case, what choice does it have? It has no leadership, and it has seen how the political class and the judiciary offer the community no succor. It has no choice but to move forward in its individual lives.

It is probably why, despite scattered attempts by local BJP units to defy the PM’s orders and cause minor friction, the Indian Muslim has not reacted. In fact, the Indian Muslim, though perhaps feeling depressed by the verdict, and though Milad-un-Nabi today may be subdued, has publicly shown supreme indifference. Instead, Indian Muslims seek refuge and consolation in their faith.

As for the judges who came up with a lucid 1,045-page judgment that clinically went through the issue, the timing of the judgment was surprising, as was the unanimity of the verdict, barring a single judge’s addenda. Some had surmised that at least one prominent outlier on the five-member bench would have dissented. In any event, a chapter of Indian history has closed. One can only thank the court for having the courage to not kick the can further down the road, so that the “collective conscience of society” can somehow put this entire sordid episode behind it.



## Office politics

The Winter Session of Parliament is about to commence but Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has not been able to make some key appointments to his staff. Individuals with a Sangh background who were part of Sumitra Mahajan’s establishment are lobbying hard to get a new lease of life in office. Mr Birla reportedly has his own set of favourites from Rajasthan but the ‘political clearance’ has not arrived. An agonising wait continues.

## Parliament TV?

A move is afoot to merge Lok Sabha TV and Rajya Sabha TV. Many contractual staffers face an uncertain future beyond January 2020. Apparently, the government finds separate Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha TV entities extravagant and useless when Doordarshan is doing a much better job. There is also a view that Lok Sabha TV has been occupying too much of space inside the Parliament House premises.

## Uttarakhandi’s turn

The Maharashtra impasse has brought into focus the Uttarakhand politician Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, who is occupying the Raj Bhavan at Malabar Hill in Mumbai. If the state heads for President’s Rule, Koshiyari will become the third Uttarakhandi to be directly ruling a state. While Trivendra Singh Rawat is chief minister of Uttarakhand, his Uttar Pradesh counterpart Yogi Adityanath or Ajay Mohan Bisht too hails from Pauri Garhwal.

## No peacemakers please

The titanic battle of supremacy between Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath, Digvijaya Singh and Jyotiraditya Scindia has gotten a twist. Congress president Sonia Gandhi has deputed Shivraj Patil and Meira Kumar to act as

# Sumitra’s men or Om Birla’s?



By WAQYANAWIS

peacemakers. Now, the warring factions of the Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) are dreading the Patil-Kumar duo, known to hold court and speak at length, resulting in nothing. Some

well-meaning persons in the state Congress want the Nath-Singh-Scindia trio to patch up informally and quickly.

## How Ranga died

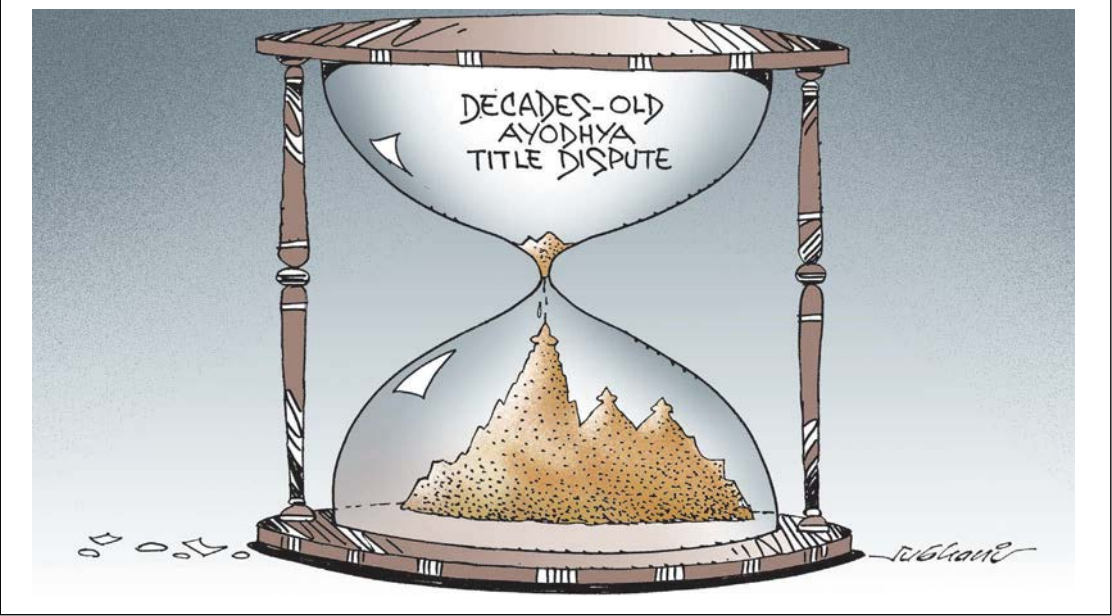
A new book on Tihar Jail has ashocking details of how the premier prison in the national capital has been functioning. In *Black Warrant* (Roli Books), narrator Sunil Gupta, Tihar jailer, has given a graphic account of the January 31, 1982, hanging of two dreaded criminals — Ranga-Billa who had kidnapped, raped and murdered 16-year-old Geeta Chopra and her younger brother Sanjay in New Delhi. Incredible as it may sound, Gupta told co-author Sunetra Choudhury how Ranga had actually survived hanging at Tihar. A constable was asked to jump into the well of “*Phansi Kothi*” to pull the con-

demned prisoner’s legs till Ranga’s life was pulled out of him, reveals Gupta. Sunetra, an award-winning author-journalist-TV news anchor, has provided an effective voice to Gupta’s dark world of incarceration.

## Freedom to Fadnavis rued

The Maharashtra political stalemate has brought into focus some lesser-known details of the BJP’s functioning. It was assumed that BJP chief Amit Shah, considered a modern-day Chanakya, has a Midas touch. However, little birdie from Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg in New Delhi now says he was misled by the state unit on selection of some candidates, as well as the politics behind the Shiv Sena fielding Aaditya Thackeray. So, when it came to government formation the central BJP leadership gave a “free hand” to chief minister Devendra Fadnavis (who resigned on Friday) instead of taking direct charge. Till the time of writing, it had not worked.

Subhani



# A Solomonic verdict, but not quite closure



Mohan Guruswamy

The Supreme Court bench made a series of interesting observations before it delivered its verdict. It held the installation of idols in 1949 inside the former Babri Masjid was illegal. It held the 1992 demolition unlawful. Yet it granted the disputed site to the Hindu community to build a temple on the disputed 2.77 acres of debris-strewn land. Now factor this with the 67 acres acquired by the Uttar Pradesh government around the hitherto disputed site. Clearly, the path has been cleared for the building of a grand temple and a theme park dedicated to further deifying Lord Ram.

The unanimous judgment of the Supreme Court bench has been generally applauded by most otherwise argumentative Indians as an act of reconciliation and even an instance of Solomonic wisdom. But several top Muslim leaders expressed unhappiness with the court’s experiment with Solomonism. They say they defer to it, but aren’t happy. Asaduddin Owaisi pithily said: “The Supreme Court is supreme, but is not infallible.”

Although King Solomon used the share-the-baby test to determine the identity of the biological mother, Solomonic judgments are generally understood as compromise judgments that reject the winner-take-all approach that characterises most modern common law adjudications. But sometimes Solomonic judgments may prioritise pleasing and displeasing the litigating parties in varying degrees over deciding disputes in strict accordance with the relevant law. Clearly, the Supreme Court preferred Solomonism over law. It may have sewn up the wound, but the scar will remain. It will be in our

history books.

All through the 164 years of torturous transit through our courts, Muslims didn’t agree to share even the *chabutara* with Hindus as part of a grand compromise. They wanted all, and all they got was five acres of land at some other place in Ayodhya. Even if a mosque is built there, I don’t think it will be called the Babri Masjid. There can be little denying that like Shahi Idgah at Mathura or Gyanvapi Masjid in Varanasi, the Babri Masjid was a symbol of Muslim rule. That moment in history is long gone. But does destruction of age-old buildings and monuments reverse history? Realising this, L.K. Advani, who led the last charge on the Babri Masjid, called it an “ocular distortion”. Even the allegedly more liberal Atal Behari Vajpayee called it a “*kalank*”. That is now gone. But our history has been writ and imprinted on our minds. But that is not the history we must be worried about. A new history is being written. Lord Ram has now legally metamorphosed from an article of faith to a legal entity. The judgment allots the site to the infant Ram Lalla Virajman. It must be clarified that Ram Lalla Virajman is not a living person, but a notion.

Mr Advani is still the popular villain of the liberal set because he set off on his Rath Yatra wanting a Ram Mandir built in Ayodhya. But that demand was a much older one. The British first allowed Hindus to offer worship at the mosque in 1857, soon after the events that year to restore Bahadur Shah Zafar as truly the emperor. One Abhirama Das first placed the idols inside the mosque premises in December 1949. It is also pertinent to mention that

Faizabad’s then DM, K.K.K. Nayar, ICS, did not have the idols removed despite being explicitly ordered by the chief secretary, Bhagwan Sahay, ICS, and IGP B.N. Lahiri. Mr Nayar was rewarded for his exertions by getting elected as the Jan Sangh MP from nearby Bahraich. Let’s also not forget that it was in Rajiv Gandhi’s time that the court-ordered lock on the purported “Jannabhoomi” was broken, at Arun Nehru’s behest, with the Congress even performing “*shilanyas*”. There is no dispute that the claim has been a historical one, and even in 1947 an attempt was made to seize the property. The problem was allowed to fester because it suited all parties. It was inflamed by intemperate language by both sides to the dispute.

I recall Syed Shahabuddin once demanding proof that Ram ever existed. Shahabuddin a former IFS officer who served as India’s ambassador to Algeria, was Prime Minister Vajpayee’s hand-picked choice for an educated Muslim face in politics. But he just became the English-speaking face of Muslim bigotry. It was against this backdrop that the BJP upped the ante and conceived of the Rath Yatra. It was the brainchild of Pramod Mahajan, Narendra Modi and M. Venkaiah Naidu, all blue-eyed boys of Mr Advani then. The “rath” itself was a garish and stupid-looking contraption slung over a DCM Toyota truck. I rode with Mr Advani on the “rath” from Indore to

Ratlam. It was a horribly uncomfortable journey. A truck chassis is not optimised for comfort but to take a load, besides the road was pockmarked. Mr Advani showing me the Western-style toilet provided by his chelas and commented that he defied anyone to sit on it when the rath was moving. But the rath was carrying the burden of history, and all along people thronged to greet Mr Advani astride it. It took the BJP from two Lok Sabha seats in 1984 to 85 in 1989. There was no looking back for the RSS from then. But when Lalu Prasad Yadav, then Bihar’s chief minister, stopped the *tamasha* in Samastipur and arrested Mr Advani, he rightly said: “*DCM Toyota tha, koi uran khatola nahi!*”

But the rath has not stopped rolling. The avatar from Mathura now beckons for recognition. Why should the Shiva worshippers settle for less? Rulers such as Aurangzeb, the last great Mughal, and even democratically-elected Indira Gandhi who tried to impose their beliefs and will by being authoritarian were felled by regional uprisings and popular rejection. This then is the great lesson of history. India can only be governed and kept together by the persuasive use of authority and not by the imposition of will. The elected government can govern not just with the support of a majority in Parliament but by also catering to the aspirations and demands of the many groups of the colorful mosaic that India is. We also have a tradition where some nationalities enslaved others. Just as India is a nation of diverse people, it is a nation of diverse victimisations. What the founding fathers sought to enshrine in our Constitution is to ensure that the march of victimisation is halted once and for all. Solomonic judgments don’t help in that.

*The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry*

## LETTERS

### 1992 REDUX

The CJI-led Constitution Bench says in the Ayodhya verdict that the destruction of the *masjid* in December 1992 was in breach of the SC order. Hence the judgment giving the entire 2.77-acre land, including the demolished mosque site, for the construction of the Ram temple amounts to legalisation of the act of mosque destruction. It appears the demolition of the *masjid* made it easier for the bench to pronounce such a verdict.

N.A. Joseph

Etumanoor, Kerala

### SALUTE TO COURT

Kudos to the Supreme Court bench which gave a brave and bold verdict in the vexed Ayodhya land dispute, pending for about 70 years. This was achieved in a record continuous hearing for 40 days in the stipulated time, which deserves a salute. It is proved that if you have strong willpower, anything impossible can be made possible.

Manik Sathe

Gaddiannaram, Hyderabad

### TIME TO MOVE ON

November 9, 2019, is a historic day when the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court brought to close an issue that was opened with the demolition of a mosque 27 years ago. Though a wrong cannot be righted by a new wrong, it is time for members of both the Hindu and Muslim faiths to place their collective trust in its wisdom and move on. In fact, this has largely been the case, with one of the litigants, Mohammed Iqbal Ansari, even promising to abide by the verdict.

Ramesh G. Jethwani

Bengaluru, Karnataka

## WRITING ON WALL

The surfeit of statements on the Ayodhya verdict by the Sangh and its affiliates asking followers not to celebrate the final verdict on the Ayodhya title suit betrays the fact that the verdict was a foregone conclusion. A delegation of BJP leaders approached the DGP of Telangana state requesting extra security in sensitive areas. These disconcerting actions make one wonder whether the independence of the custodian of our constitution has been seriously compromised.

Mohammad Abdul Hakeem  
Tolichowki, Hyderabad

## THE REAL ISSUES

Finally, after a long wait, the vexed Ram Jannabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue has been brought to a closure by the court. Whatever be the merits of this verdict, it is a golden opportunity for Indians of both communities. They must now put this superfluous matter behind them as heritage lost cannot be restored, and put their energies into tackling real issues like poverty and corruption. A better India beckons all of us.

Bidyut K. Chatterjee

Faridabad, Haryana

## SCHOOL IN AYODHYA

The ghost of the Ayodhya mosque continues to haunt the entire nation. Whether a temple is built or not, I would like the BJP and the Ramjannabhoomi supporters to abide by the idea of India as a pluralist and inclusive democracy in which all citizens of the country are equal before the law. The Ayodhya issue can only be resolved if a temple and a mosque are built on the same land. Or else, the trust should use it to erect a school for children.

Jubel D’Cruz

Dombivali, Mumbai

## WIN FOR ALL INDIANS

The final verdict given by the five eminent judges on the long-pending Ayodhya issue is a great relief for all Indians. It is “*Bharat ki jeet*” and a historical one to be remembered by the future generations of the world.

Padmavathi Vikram Raj K.N.

Kacheguda, Hyderabad

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: letters@asianage.com

# ‘Supreme, not infallible: Faith wins over facts..’

Asaduddin Owaisi

Q&A

On a day so historic that it is guaranteed to significantly remain in the nation's collective memory, impacting not only the people of today but all Indians to come ahead, perhaps changing the psyche of its two significant communities — Hindus and Muslims — forever, and establishing new contours and balance between the two, one voice that stood out as distinct, separate, sui generis, and perhaps the only one that sounded in discord, even a trace of dissent was the stand backed by a lifetime's conviction, the chief of All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM), **ASADUDDIN OWAISI**. Mr Owaisi, himself a lawyer trained in Britain, intrepidly called out the judgment, saying it seems to be a "victory of faith over facts", and tweeting

minutes after highlights of the judgment were reported widely on the media, a cover of a book, titled, "Supreme, Not Infallible" — echoing what was left unsaid by many in the community he represents and leads. This judgment, besides its impact on the case that was a source of strife, mistrust and conflict between people, communities, and a legal challenge before India, the AIMIM chief argued, will become a precedent for other disputes of mandir and masjid. On such a day, Mr Owaisi spoke with **ATHER MOIN** of this newspaper and gave out his views strongly on a slew of contentious issues:

The case brings to a closure a contentious issue of the past several decades, in fact, since the nation became independent. What is your response to it? Do you have any apprehensions?

There are many cases in front of our courts, including the site disputes in Kasi and Mathura, which are pending. Though the Supreme Court had mentioned the Places of Worship Act 1991, other parties will refer to this judgment as a precedent.



AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi

A masjid caught up in legal contention exists in Varanasi, the Lok Sabha constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Sangh people will now argue that we accept the 1991 Act, but we have a right on the undercroft of the masjid.

In Lucknow, there is dispute on Teele Wali Masjid. Some day, they (Sangh) might tell you that they do not have dispute on the masjid itself, but we have claims on cortile area. I have apprehension that the Sangh Parivar will drag many mosques to court now, claiming that temples existed in those places centuries ago. We

will all realise only in future, when other courts start reacting to those cases, in the light of this judgment, of its fullest consequence.

Will either the AIMPLB or you as a leader of a political party or as an individual seek a further review of this judgment?

As the national president of the AIMIM, I will respect any and all decisions that the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) might take in response to the Supreme Court verdict on the Babri Masjid-Ram Jannabhoomi dispute. As far as the future course is con-

I have to accept the Supreme Court judgment. But I have a right to also respond to it, critique it, give my opinions about it. Don't I have a right to comment on the judgment and express my dissatisfaction with it?

cerned, the Muslim Personal Law Board and its counsels had presented their stand with sincerity. Our counsels presented their contentions in full length, backed with strong research and facts. The AIM-PLB may choose to file a review petition, but I can't say whether the court would reconsider the judgments and its findings in response to a review petition.

In the past you had categorically stated you would accept any judgment of the Supreme Court. What has changed now?

I have to accept the SC judgment. But I have a right to also respond to it, critique it, give my opinions about it. Don't I have a right to comment on the judgment and express my dissatisfaction with it? Is it or is it not permissible any more, in keeping with the rights bestowed by the Constitution, to express my views? Is it a contempt of court? I have a right to freedom of expression in India.

Should not the Muslim com-

munity accept the verdict in the larger interest of the community and creating harmony?

The question of accepting the verdict for the sake of amity does not arise, because I would like to ask you first — was this judgment delivered for the sake of brotherhood? The judgment must deliver and uphold justice, based on evidence, on the title dispute. Who told you we are against harmony? Though the judgment of the Supreme Court is final, according to the Sharia, there was a mosque there, and it will always remain a mosque.

What do you have to say about the Sangh Parivar today?

I want to inform all people of the Sangh Parivar that we, Muslims of India, are respectable citizens of India and we will always remain. We will tell our generations to come that there was a masjid for 500 years, which the Sangh demolished in front of the eyes of the world, with conspiratorial collusion of the Congress Party on December 6, 1992. We were ditched by the Supreme Court judgment. Describing the demolition of Babri Masjid as vandalism is an understatement. Why should we forget the killing of Mahatma Gandhi and the demolition of the Babri Masjid?

How do you feel about the Congress Party?

It is very unfortunate, and late, but finally the true colours of the Congress have been exposed. If not for the

hypocrisy of the Congress, then those idols would not be placed inside a mosque in 1949. Had the idols not been placed, the masjid would have still existed. It was Congress PM Rajiv Gandhi who unlocked the Babri Masjid. It was Congress PM P.V. Narasimha Rao who failed to save the masjid from demolition. Muslims were deceived by all these so-called secular political parties. Now, Muslims have to emerge as politically strong, without depending on these parties.

Why are you asking for rejection of five-acre land for building a new mosque?

I do not know whether the Muslim Personal Law Board would proceed to file a review petition or not. I don't know whether it would accept the five acres for the mosque or not. But in my personal opinion, we should reject the stand of giving us five acres of land for a new mosque.

Muslims of India have full faith in the Constitution. We were contesting the case for our legal rights, not some land given to us as alms. Though Muslims are very poor and weak, even though we have been discriminated against, no one can deny this simple truth — Muslims are not so miserable that they could not buy a piece of five acres of land for a masjid. If I ask the people of Hyderabad, they will donate so much that we can build a mosque in Uttar Pradesh. We need no alms from anyone. We do not need patronage from any corner.

## Ayodhya, 1992, left Muslims shaken; in 2019, the hate has become normal

Mir Quadir Ali

Though more than half of my life has gone by since the fateful events of December 6, 1992, memories of the day are as vivid as it was yesterday. I had climbed up the biggest of the guava trees in our courtyard, and had already consumed one of the fruits and eyeing another ripe one just out of reach when I heard the news wafting over the air, from a radio blaring in a neighbourhood home. My ears could hear the newscaster saying something about "extensive damage" to one of the domes of the Babri Masjid. It was too stunning, too unbelievable. Safely ensconced in a neighbourhood that was predominantly Muslim, I was too young to realise the significance of what had transpired. Still, a sudden, indescribable darkness enveloped me. The only other time I experienced a similar darkness was when my father passed away. Hyderabad, especially the Old City, had in its history seen and withstood communal riots, it had withstood an invasion, and before that a flood that took the life of thousands. But never a threshold such as this had been crossed, never had our faith been crushed, nor had the faith of others trampled, subverted and vanquished the law. Curiously, nobody ran out on the streets, there was no slogan shouting, there was no outward reaction as such. Perhaps everyone in my locality was too stunned to react. Or perhaps they did not know how to react, since this was something unimaginable, unprecedented and like a bolt from the blue. By dusk, the roads were empty and the only movement was of stray dogs. Every home that had a TV was crowded with neighbours; ears were glued to the radio, hoping to catch any and all news. At 9 pm that day, Doordarshan repeated what had already been claimed over the radio — "extensive damage to one of the domes of the Babri Masjid". A dour-looking P.V. Narasimha Rao came on TV, and we heard him promise that the masjid would be rebuilt at that very spot. I remember the words "President's Rule" being imposed in Uttar Pradesh after Kalyan Singh resigned and his government was dismissed. I remember curfew being imposed the next day. Like all other times curfew

was imposed earlier, we vaulted over the wall and onto our neighbour's terrace where the men used to play dominoes or carrom. In the days that followed, the discussion invariably was "what next". In my locality, the Muslim Personal Law Board, and especially the sitting MP from Hyderabad, Sultan Salauddin Owaisi, was declared guilty of failing to protect the masjid. The "guilty" label was ultimately erased when he swore on the Holy Quran after Friday prayers in the Macca Masjid that he was innocent and a victim of circumstances. P.V. Narasimha Rao was cursed, and was branded a stooge of the RSS. Some even said that under his dhoti, he used to wear the famous RSS knickers. Though many Muslims may not openly say it, Narasimha Rao remains the most reviled of all Congress leaders, years after his death. Ironically, the Hindu community at large was never blamed; it was only the leaders of the BJP and P.V. Narasimha Rao who were cursed. As days went by, the community began feeling the impact of the aftermath. The Mumbai riots that followed, and the increasingly vitriolic comments by Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray, left us shaken. Thackeray's vitriol ensured that there would be no negotiated settlement vis-a-vis the Babri Masjid, since every Muslim believed that a firm stand alone could stop Hindutva's onward march. I remember reading a report by a Muslim columnist how he was shunned at a public meeting. I also remember a columnist, I believe it was Shobhaa De, writing in the *Deccan Chronicle* how in casual conversations at parties, Muslims were being insinuated as "they" or "them", as if we were second-class citizens. Till December 6, 1992, despite numerous riots, Muslims in Hyderabad, especially in the Old City, had never felt unsafe. Perhaps it was because the Old City had always been predominantly Muslim, or perhaps because the riots were limited to pockets and it was business as usual after the flare-ups subsided. The demolition of the Babri Masjid left us, like all Muslims across India, shaken to the core. Our trust in the Constitution, our belief in the system, our conviction in our loyalty to this country, our reliance on the official

**The dawn of the Modi era saw Muslims being targeted like never before. While mentally the community was prepared for violence, no Muslim was prepared for being branded 'anti-national' and having to prove his/her love for India.**

machinery being our shield, were all razed that day. We began to feel alienated, and for the first time, victimised in our own land. The BJP's political ascendancy in the days that followed strengthened this feeling. For the first few days, speeches by Muslim politicians were devoted to claims that they would give their life and ensure that the masjid would be rebuilt at the very spot. Initially, these claims evoked optimism, but gradually, they were taken less and less seriously. Like every other community before us, the sadness faded and was replaced by hope. Hope in the judiciary, in the law and hope that one day, we will get back what is ours. The hope failed to dull our hatred for Advani and Co. Anyone even talking positively about the BJP was mentally branded an enemy, without a second thought. It was this hatred that led to many Muslims rejoicing in Narendra Modi upstaging L.K. Advani and becoming the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, though the former was far more reviled. The hope also failed to stop ghettoism in the Old City. The handful of Hindu families in our neighbourhood moved away to new localities. We tried to persuade them to stay, saying that the worst was past, and they would remain unharmed, but to no avail. Similar instances of Muslim families migrating from Hindu neighbourhoods were heard of, and the community at large clucked its collective sadness and accepted it as a fact of life. The demolition of the Babri Masjid brought some positives too. More and more Muslim youth in the Old City began to realise the futility of petty business and began to study harder. The elders of the community turned their focus to education, exhorting the youth to study well. Study centres were set up, and some well-off Muslims began to streamline the system using Zakat collections. The overwhelming sense of loss also created a bond of brotherhood, of unity and of tolerance. In the late 1990s, when N.

Chandrababu Naidu first spoke of "equidistance" from both the BJP and the Congress and later offered "outside" support to the Atal Behari Vajpayee government, he immediately became the most despised person, replacing even Mr Advani on the list. This was because Mr Advani, despite his infamy, was someone far away on the horizon while Mr Naidu was a familiar figure and was someone who had gone to great lengths to portray himself as secular. Mr Naidu was to be replaced on top of the list of most hated politicians very soon by Mr Modi in 2002, in the aftermath of the Gujarat genocide. Interestingly, the rabble-rousers were never reviled; they were always seen as what they were — a nuisance. News of the deaths of the kar sevaks in the Sabarmati Express fire on February 27, 2002 was immediately met with suspicion that it was the handiwork of politicians. While Gujarat was in flames, Muslims everywhere burned. Some months after the Gujarat riots, the Muslim Personal Law Board organised a mammoth public meeting in Hyderabad, where speaker after speaker vowed justice to the victims. The speakers also made it clear that they were anointing Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi as the undisputed political leader representing the community in the country. The Gujarat riots also saw the community gather its wits, realise that it was time that individuals became one and stand up to face an enemy that brooked no dissent, offered no quarter and had absolutely no sense of humanity. The dawn of the Narendra Modi era saw Muslims being targeted like never before. While mentally the commu-

nity was prepared for riots and violence, no Muslim was prepared for being branded "anti-national" and having to prove his or her love for the country at every step. Attempts to defend ourselves by pointing out that we opted to stay on in India and not leave for Pakistan were brushed aside casually and more often than not ridiculed. Anyone standing up for the rights of the community was painted with the same brush of "anti-national" or accused of appeasement. While these changes took place, one question that no one has attempted to answer remains: To what ends? Hindutvawadis obviously are intelligent enough to realise that they cannot rid the country of at least 30 crore Muslims. This community can be subjugated only so much and not more, since the Constitution empowers it, like it empowers all citizens. Some Muslims with more foresight than others see the situation as an opportunity that will make the community stronger, better and more productive. American author Lafayette Ronald, in the early 1950s, said: "Man thrives, oddly enough only in the presence of a challenging environment". For Muslims in India, this is the perhaps the biggest challenge the community has faced. It has been punched, kicked and is down on the ground. There is no place to go but rise and stand firm. Oddly enough, it was business as usual on Saturday, November 9, when the Supreme Court gave its verdict on the Babri Masjid title dispute. Going by the open shops and traffic on the roads of the Old City, it is clear Muslims had at the back of their minds accepted the verdict and have moved on. The city was bustling as usual.



The Ayodhya judgment has reminded one of our judicial history. On the Indian subcontinent, the judiciary has invoked something called the Doctrine of Necessity. In Pakistan, this happened 65 years ago. Just a short while after Independence, the Pakistan Army took over charge of the country in a sequence of events that made Gen. Ayub Khan the leader of the country. The sequence was triggered by the governor-general, a man named Ghulam Muhammad. He was a partner of the Mahindra group of India in a company that was originally called Mahindra and Muhammad (later renamed Mahindra and Mahindra). He was a clever man, a chartered accountant by training, who was named to run the finance ministry. After the death of Jinnah in 1948, and the assassination of Jinnah's deputy Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951, the Pakistan Muslim League was leaderless and in this space Muhammad became governor-general. In 1954, he unlawfully dismissed the Pakistan Constituent Assembly which was taking much longer than India to frame its Constitution. Those who were dismissed went to court where it was determined that Ghulam Muhammad's actions were unlawful. However, he and the new ministers who had taken power with him went into appeal. Here the Supreme Court backed Muhammad, justifying his illegal action. The judgment reads: "Thus the issue raised refers to the extraordinary powers of the governor-general during the emergency period and not to powers which vest in the governor-general during normal times when the vital organ of the Constitution, namely the legislature, is functioning, and the question that we have to consider is whether there is any provision in the Constitution governing such a situation or any other legal principle within, outside or above the Constitution Acts which entitles the governor-general to act in case of necessity of such a nature". Basically, since there was an emergency (and it didn't matter that the emergency was a creation of the governor-general), he had to be allowed to do whatever he wanted. The court added: "If nothing should be done but what is according to law, the throat of the nation might be cut while we send for someone to make the law". This

is a quote from Oliver Cromwell, winner of the English Civil War. The court added that it "found that the governor-general's actions prevented the breakdown of the political and constitutional institutions of Pakistan". And so the court overlooked wrongdoing and justified it. To my mind it appears that the Ayodhya judgment also comes out of similar thinking and a reliance on necessity. I am absolutely unclear about why the court felt it essential to hand over the entire land to the temple after saying that it could not conclude that the Babri Masjid was built on a demolished structure. The Supreme Court accepts that the breaking down of the mosque after the mobilisation by the BJP was a violation of the rule of law and a crime. It also accepts that the act of putting idols in the mosque was that of desecration. But it nonetheless gives the land over to those who desecrated, saying that: "Whether a belief is justified is beyond judicial inquiry. Once faith is established, courts should defer to it." It has become clear that legally India has done what the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the BJP were demanding all this time. When I was a student 30 years ago, Arun Shourie came to our university in Vadodra to speak on the issue. This was three years before the mosque was demolished. Mr Shourie (who was then a supporter of the BJP) said that Muslims should take the mosque and go somewhere else, because for Hindus the land was sacred. What we are going to do now is the same thing except that it has legal cover. We should know that the Pakistani court's actions had long-term repercussions. The form of law that we have in India and Pakistan relies on precedent. A few years later, by when Ghulam Muhammad had died, the court used the same reasoning to validate the military takeover of the government by Gen. Ayub Khan. And then again when Gen. Zia-ul Haq handed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and became President — the courts were fine with it because there had already been a precedent. Closer to our time, Gen. Musharraf was validated in the same fashion. All the dictators have operated under legal cover, and their actions have been seen as legitimate. What the long-term repercussions of the Ayodhya judgment are will unfold in time. But there will be repercussions of course. And I hope that the consequences are not going to be as damaging to us as they were to Pakistan. **Aakar Patel** is a writer, columnist and executive director of Amnesty International (India)

# Finally, deja vu moment

*Across many Muslim dominated localities in the twin towns of Ayodhya-Faisabad, many stayed at home, but some groups of people were seen engaged in discussions. That they were dejected could not be missed.*

VIKRAM SHARMA  
AYODHYA, NOV. 9

Gently running his fingers through his long white silky beard, Maulvi saab, as he is fondly known, sat in one corner of the deserted street gazing at the buntings erected for Milad Un Nabi in the Muslim-dominated Bhadarsa locality.

Ask him about the Ayodhya verdict that has come on Saturday, and the 74-year old smiles as he says that the judgment was on expected lines.

"Let's not act as if we'll not know what the verdict would be like. We all had anticipated that. First it was triple talaq, then scrapping of Article 370 from Kashmir and now this (Ayodhya verdict). Not many will like to say it openly but the designs of some powerful people is getting clear to us now," he says.

Reminded that it was the court's verdict and the government had nothing to do with today's judgment, Maulvi saab laughs it off, making clear his disagreement.

Minutes after the Supreme Court read out the historic judgment in favour of Ram mandir, Muslims across the twin towns, though remained calm, felt that the BJP had lost its last chance of winning the confidence of the community.

What was even more disturbing for them was that the verdict came on a day when the Muslim community was looking forward to celebrate Milad un Nabi — the birthday of prophet Mohammed. Due to security concerns, the Faizabad district administration has banned all kinds of processions and gatherings including the Milad un Nabi "juloos" or procession.

"We are not against any community. But since morning, have you not seen Hindu community crediting Modi government for the verdict? Even TV channels will do it soon. If we blame Modi government for it (verdict not coming in our favour) we are wrong, right?" asks Arif Muhammed, a college-goer and resident of Benigunj.

All of them base their argu-

ment on the saffron party's election manifesto which promises to construct a ram mandir at ayodhya.

Maulana Abdul Rashadi Madni, who runs a Madrasa in Azamgarh, says that the Muslim community was deeply hurt when the Babri masjid was razed and says he is equally hurt now. "All Muslims would have become BJP supporters had the verdict come in their favour. Now, it is difficult to trust the Supreme Court," he says.

It was back in 2012 that some BJP and VHP leaders had coined the slogan "*UP mein banega Gujarat, Faizabad se hogi shuruvaat*" — and many say that this is coming true now.

Among many muslims *Deccan Chronicle* randomly spoke to, almost all of them said they had anticipated the judgment and it

did not surprise them one bit.

"You heard TV channels say even Muslims want a temple to be constructed at the site and they want an end to the dispute. Just because some Muslims who call themselves our leaders are in the payrolls of the BJP, it does not mean that all of us are of the same opinion. Faith is as important a matter for us as it

is for Hindus," says Abdul Mateen, a small time trader in Sahabgunj.

Across Muslim dominated areas, a pall of gloom has descended soon after the verdict. Green flags, banners and buntings were everywhere but there were no celebrations.

"Leave alone the verdict, we are now not allowed to celebrate the most important event in Muslim calendar. We definitely did not see this coming," said Abdul Subhan of Rikabgunj.

Across many Muslim dominated localities in the twin towns, most confined themselves to their homes while groups of people were seen engaged in discussions. That they were dejected was something no one could have missed.

By evening, several locals celebrated by lighting diyas. Some burst crackers. It was like Diwali.



## The wait is getting over

Karsevaks resting on partially carved stone slabs to be used as pillars of the proposed Ram temple near Babri Masjid.

— Sondeep Shankar

# We respect the judiciary and its verdict: Muslim League

*IUML leaders reminded workers of the role the party had played in the past to ensure peace during tough times, including when Babri Masjid was demolished*

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
KOZHIKODE, NOV. 9

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), the prominent political party representing Muslims based in Kerala, said that it will respect the verdict in the Ramjanambhumi-Babri Masjid dispute though the party was not fully satisfied with it.

The party, which has been credited with ensuring peace during the turbulent days in the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, was however non-committal on the future course of action it will take. Most leaders evaded questions on the merit of the verdict, saying that it is too early to give a statement as they are yet to access the verdict document. The party has convened a special meeting of its high-power committee at Panakkad, Malappuram on Monday to discuss the verdict in detail.

In an interaction with reporters at Malappuram, IUML supremo Panakkad Syed Hyderali Shihab Thangal said that the party respects the verdict. "We shall be able to comment more only after a proper evaluation," the Thangal said. He urged party workers as well as public to approach the verdict with composure.

IUML leaders also reminded the workers on the role of the party played in the past in the nation to

ensure peace in society during such times of communal tension. Even at the times when the Babri Masjid was demolished, the state remained without any communal violence due to the active role of IUML, the leaders pointed out.

IUML national secretary P.K. Kunhalikutty, MP, said IUML has its origin in the freedom struggle and hence the nation is very much important. "We respect the judiciary and will come out with a considered stand after due deliberations," he added. On a query on the move of Muslim Personal Law Board to approach apex court for a review of the verdict, Mr Kunhalikutty said it is too early to comment on decision of board.

"The IUML had passed a resolution in as early in 1989 to accept the verdict of the apex court in the dispute," he pointed out. "Whatever its legal impact, the party would abide by our earlier decision."



The Indian union Muslim League had passed a resolution in as early in 1989 to accept the verdict of the apex court in the Ramjanambhumi-Babri Masjid dispute. Whatever its legal impact, the party will abide by our earlier decision.



— P.K. KUNHALIKUTTY, MP  
IUML national general secretary

# Why not a museum at Ayodhya?

*As a social science student, teacher I would say what was really needed there was a modern research institute or a museum*



RAJAN GURUKKAL

As a student of history, the verdict of the Supreme Court on Ayodhya did not make me happy or gave me peace. However, this is a verdict given by the top court of the country and as a citizen, I am bound to accept by it. However, as a social science student, teacher and a person who wanted to the quality of the higher education sector in our country go up, I feel that this verdict is pushing us backward.

The court decided on this verdict-of allotting the disputed site for the construction of a Ram temple-keeping in mind one section of people and their beliefs. A small town such as Ayodhya can do without a grand temple; but what was really needed was a modern research institute or a museum instead. This is a period when we have been affected by environmental issues and climate change. An institution devoted to studying them would have been in order.

The Ayodhya issue started as a title dispute over 2.77 acres. It was only later that political, historical and socio-religious debates become the focal point of the dispute; political and religious angles were added to give weight to the argument.

Such issues cannot be settled by considering historic evidence alone. It is not prudent to decide on ownership of a plot of land with information on one period of the history.

There are Buddhist and Jain links to Ayodhya. According to the Jain tradition, five tirthankaras were born at Ayodhya, including Rishabhnanatha, Ajitanatha, Abhinandanananatha, Sumatinatha and Anantanatha. It has been associated with Kosala kingdom, later to Maurya rule. It was also an important trade centre associated with various Sarthavaha communities. It has also been under sultanate and the Mogul rule later.

The issues that happened after 1992 were vital as they have several socio-political dimensions. But now that we have an order of the apex court on our hand, it is imperative that all sections of the people react to it in a mature way. Most of the people in the country believe in friendship and mutual respect. This was true even when some reacted in an impulsive way.

(The writer is vice-chairman, Kerala State Higher Education Council) (As told to Sabloo Thomas)

# Time everyone worked for peace



K.T. JALEEL

Faith and places of worship are not meant to destroy the peace of mankind; instead, they are meant to forge strong friendship between them.

I wish the judgment of the Supreme Court on the Babri Masjid case will settle all the disputes forever. Let's all accept the final verdict in the case. Let's also hope that the dispute over Babri Masjid is the first and the last one over the ownership of various places of worship in our country.

I wish the Hindu and Muslim communities would work for lasting peace by strengthening their faith in the country's judicial system. My prayers are for that.

Dr K.T. Jaleel is minister for higher education, minority welfare and waqf, Kerala

# Let's count the holes in the verdict later



M.A. BABY

The CPM would undertake an elaborate breakdown of the Supreme Court verdict in due course. We have various ideas about the verdict and they have been presented in a capsule form in the communiqué issued by politburo on Saturday.

For example, there is a reference that certain premises in the verdict are questionable. This means we have our reservations or questions about some of the aspects of the judgment.

The judgment speaks about the criminal violation of Babri Masjid, though not in the same term. It said the demolition of the Masjid was a violation of law. So the law should take proper action against the culprits. That legal action is not completed and the culprits have not been meted out the punishment.

The verdict has referred to the Places of Religious Worship Act, 1991. There cannot be a reopening of any other place of worship on similar lines in future. We have

stated this in our statement.

It is a sensitive matter. At this point of time we don't want to state anything which could create provocation. The issue which has been used for fanning up communal passions by various forces for long periods had to be settled at some point in a non-controversial manner. Such a dispute cannot be settled fully to the satisfaction of everyone. But still, it should be settled in a manner where nobody would feel defeated or triumphant.

We have our reservations in saying that this is a judicious decision. But still there has to be an end to this litigation.

The Sangh Parivar may go forward in a triumphant mood but it is for the democratic and secular forces to see they are prevented from doing that. It is a big task before them. We have to painstakingly spread the message among the masses. It is not an easy task, but we will have to take it up.

The RSS is notorious for double speak. They don't stick to what they say. That they refuse to give a categorical reply on the issue of Kashi and Mathura shows they are going to take up other matters.

**THE JUDGMENT SPEAKS ABOUT THE CRIMINAL VIOLATION OF BABRI MASJID, THOUGH NOT IN THE SAME TERM. IT SAID THE DEMOLITION OF THE MASJID WAS A VIOLATION OF LAW. SO THE LAW SHOULD TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE CULPRITS. THAT HAS NOT BEEN DONE.**

The judiciary is found wanting even in the case of all those who have criminally destroyed a place of historical importance. They have not pronounced the verdict and settled the issue yet. So there are many grey areas where systemic failure was evident in protecting democracy and secularism.

The Indian political, social and cultural communities will have to stand up and discharge their responsibility to protect the secular and democratic values as enshrined in the constitution.

The only office that the communal forces attacked in Delhi was the CPM headquarters. They know

who is systematically exposing and opposing communal forces. But unfortunately the Congress does not have the courage to politically, ideologically and organisationally face communalism.

There are wide areas where the Left is almost non-existent and the Congress is the only opposition. But the Congress is not discharging the role of the opposition. This is also helping the BJP and RSS to be more bold and aggressive. The Left will never be found wanting in fighting the communal forces politically, ideologically and organisationally. We are doing it in Kerala.

The Left will continue to play its role within its limitations and influence in taking up secular positions and fighting communal forces. Whether the Left will develop as a leading force is something society also has to respond to. We cannot assume the leadership position on our own.

We have taken up positions about following a mass line and connecting with marginalised sections such as tribals, dalits, minorities and women. Problems such as agriculture distress, farmer sui-

cides, economic recession, retrenchments, layoffs, unemployment, atrocities against women and livelihood issues are problems which need to be taken up.

Only by doing so can you develop and evolve a mighty mass movement for secularism, societal problems and livelihood issues of various sections and that has to be the important pillar on which the fight against communalism can be developed.

Long march of farmers from Nashik to Mumbai and farmers struggle in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have been organised under the red flag. More such movements have to be built.

Today we may have different critical observations about the verdict. But we have to keep our cool and patience. We have to respond to the situation in a responsible and restrained manner and that is very important. Preserve the unity so that the struggle for social change and unity can be strengthened in the coming days.

M.A. Baby is member of the CPM politburo (As told to Gilvester Assary)

**Narendra Modi, Prime Minister**

It is a day of unity (*jode ka din*, referring to the opening of Kartarpur corridor, a historic event which opened access to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan for Indian Sikh devotees). The way each section of the society welcomed the verdict reflects India's ancient traditions of amity

**M. Venkaiah Naidu @VPSecretariat**

Further to today's unanimous verdict by 5-Judge bench of Supreme Court on Ayodhya issue, let's leave the past behind and move towards building an India of peace, harmony

**Rajnath Singh @rajnathsingh**

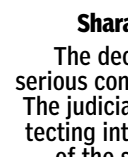
The Judgement will strengthen India's social fabric. I urge everyone to take the verdict with equanimity and magnanimity. I appeal to the people to maintain peace

**Rahul Gandhi @RahulGandhi**

Supreme Court has given its verdict. With the highest regard for the Court and the judgment, every one of us must maintain communal amity and peace

**H.D. Deve Gowda @H\_D\_Devegowda**

It is a balancing decision, which I welcome... What happened in the past, so that is a big issue. So I do not want to go to the past

**Sharad Pawar @PawarSpeaks**

The decision will help address a serious concern before the country. The judiciary has talked about protecting interests of all the sections of the society. It is a good thing

**Mayawati @Mayawati**

While respecting the decision by the SC as per the Constitution of Param Pujya Baba Saheb, all future action should only be taken in an amicable atmosphere

**Asaduddin Owaisi @asadowaisi**

I endorse the AIMPLB's stand. Our fight was for justice and legal rights. We don't need 5-acre land as a charity. There cannot be any compromise over a mosque

**Uddhav Thackeray @uddhavthackeray**

This is red-letter day in the country's history. I remember Bal Thackeray, Ashok Singhal on this day

**M.K. Stalin @mkstalin**

All sections should accept (the verdict) and I firmly believe it will be taken forward in a way upholding communal harmony, and without harming the country's plurality

**Manohar Lal Khattar @mlkhattar**

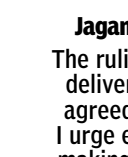
The verdict given by the Supreme Court on Ayodhya issue is historic. This verdict will help further strengthen the country's social fabric

**Subramanian Swamy @Swamy39**

Only when Lord Rama wanted the green light for re-building the temple is being given. Namo Govt must immediately announce Bharat Ratna for Ashok Singhal

**Tejasvi Surya @Tejasvi\_Surya**

A civilizational wound is now healed. 490+ years of struggle has finally ended in victory. Let's bow down to all the Ram bhakts who relentlessly fought for this

**Jagan Mohan Reddy @ysjagan**

The ruling on Ayodhya has been delivered after all parties have agreed to abide by the verdict. I urge everyone to abstain from making provocative statements

**N. Chandrababu Naidu @ncbn**

The unanimous decision taken by the panel of esteemed judges must be respected. I request all to maintain peace and harmony #AyodhyaVerdict

**Pawan Kalyan @PawanKalyan**

The healing and historical judgement by Supreme Court on 'Ram Janmabhoomi' reflects the distilled wisdom of Indian Judiciary



## In memoriam

Senior BJP leader Uma Bharti applies tilak on a photo of Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader late Ashok Singhal at the VHP office in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

# Keep calm and tweet

*The offline calm maintained by restrained citizens was palpable on Twitter too. The tone in which most Indians spoke was refreshingly delightful.*

**SRIRAM KARRI**  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 9

On many a day in the past marked as red-letter in Independent India's history, Indians have shamed it; with their words, and actions, individually and collectively. On November 9, on a medium that often is an exemplar of level of hatred citizens spew on each other over political differences, Indians, largely, made India feel proud.

The offline calm maintained by restrained citizens was palpable on Twitter too, where numero uno amongst the largest trending hashtags was a secular, wilfully detached and objective by choice coinage was #AYODHYAVERDICT (which crossed 709K tweets by 10 pm). The greatest sentiment was a sane stance, so alien of Twitter throughout the year, of welcoming the verdict and requesting all citizens to remain calm. Any attempt to put up any showy celebration was put down respectfully, but firmly.

A juvenile tweet smacking of bravado, communally instigating in intent, and superficially celebratory in tone was put down quickly, with replies like 'the only winner is Indian democracy, and all Indians,' being liked and re-tweeted most. On #AyodhyaJudgment, a similar trending thread, also in the top three, the mood was cautious, guarded, and respectful. People congratulated the judiciary, alone. 'Oh, my god. Such a detailed, long judgment - what effort it takes. Respect five judges, heroes.'

The two hashtags I suspected could be senseless, vituperative and acidic, #RamMandir and #JaiShriRam too remained largely humane, empathetic and reasonable. Not too many liked or shared pictures or videos of ostentatious celebrations, nor did those who felt a surge of joy unleash it in the usual ugly

banter characteristic of social media exchanges. The sadness and sense of dejection reflected in another popular #BabriMasjid completed the circle of rising the occasion. Many complaints of being disappointed, of having a feeling of being let down, or of even having felt anger were measured. Far from any potential disrespect for judiciary, there was a regard for the process, if not outcome. Many expressed their sense of hope in India, its democracy, and its secular characteristic.

The most significant exception, and a noteworthy discordant note, revolved around the comments of MIM chief, Asaduddin Owaisi. Several users expressed their disagreement with his views, again with respect. While Wasim Khan @wazkhaz30 said, "Owaisi sahib, Allah

ne yeh nahi kaha hai ki Babri Masjid mein namaaz padhoge toh he tumhari namaz qabool hogi. Political agenda mat banao, #PeaceAndLove Baato," another user, Zishan Alam @zishanalam2212, said, "We absolutely accept this judgement because we have trust in Indian Constitution and Supreme Court."

Respect, considerate and moderate views dominated the Twitter discourse, but not completely missing the usual calumniating and contumelious digs, and trading retorts. It was a mature discourse to a large extent, and the exception was ignored by people more often than not.

There were obvious exceptions, but the tone and style in which most Indians, by and large, spoke and behaved, with such a decorous becoming manner, expressing such hope for the future, was refreshingly delightful.

Maybe, we have already taken our first step towards healing, reconciliation, and appreciating a fellow citizen who disagrees. Maybe, we have taken a first step in trying to be a better nation. Hopefully not!

**A JUVENILE TWEET SMACKING OF BRAVADO, COMMUNALLY INSTIGATING IN INTENT, AND SUPERFICIALLY CELEBRATORY IN TONE WAS PUT DOWN QUICKLY, WITH REPLIES LIKE 'THE ONLY WINNER IS INDIAN DEMOCRACY'**

**Chetan Bhagat @chetan\_bhagat**

Thank you to the entire Muslim community for your grace and generosity. Thank you to the Hindus for patience. India remains intact, as does the birth-place of Ram. Jai Shri Ram

**Huma Qureshi @humasqureshi**

My dear Indians, please respect the Supreme Court verdict on #AyodhyaCase today. We all need to heal together and move on from this as one nation

**Farhan Akhtar @FarOutAkhtar**

Humble request to all concerned, please respect the Supreme Court verdict on #AyodhyaCase today. Accept it with grace if it goes for you or against you. Our country needs to move on from this as one people

**Taapsee Pannu @taapsee**

#AYODHYAVERDICT hail Supreme Court! Let the needful be done. Now moving towards working on issues that will help our nation become the BEST place to LIVE in

**Madhur Bhandarkar @imbhandarkar**

Welcome the fair verdict over the #AyodhyaCase by Hon. Supreme Court. Finally the long pending issue will be resolved now

**Mohan Bhagwat, RSS chief**

We welcome this decision of Supreme Court. This case was going on for decades and it has reached the right conclusion. This should not be seen as a win or loss. We also welcome everyone's efforts to maintain peace and harmony in society. #AYODHYAVERDICT

**All India Muslim Personal Law Board @AIMPLB\_Official**

The judgment is against our expectations. Our legal committee will review the judgment. We have sincerely tried to fulfill our responsibility to restore the demolished #BabriMasjid

**Sri Sri Ravi Shankar @SriSri**

I wholeheartedly welcome the historic judgment of the Hon. Supreme Court. This has brought joy and relief to people of both communities from a long-standing dispute.

**Rajinikanth @rajinikanth**

Members of all faiths should strive for the welfare of the country and its growth without any religious differences

**Anand Mahindra @anandmahindra**

5 men. A decision that 1.3bn people were awaiting. What extraordinary courage it required to be on this bench

**Minhaz Merchant @MinhazMerchant**

Babri Action Panel's Zafaryab Jilani says Muslims dissatisfied with #AYODHYAVERDICT, likely to file review petition. With 5-judge SC judgement being unanimous that could prove infructuous

**Barkha Dutt @BDUTT**

This is significant. Supreme Court declaring itself unable to be arbiter of established Faith #AYODHYAVERDICT

**Kanchan Gupta @KanchanGupta**

Among editors who refused to toe the line of least resistance and stood by their journalists: Sunanda K Datta-Ray, Vinod Mehta, Girilal Jain, Arun Shourie and @MadhuRehan On this day, gratitude to them. #AyodhyaJudgment

**Jayanta Ghosal @jayanta\_ghosal1**

Previous Prime Ministers were happy to keep #RamMandir in cold storage. @narendramodi had the courage and acumen to take the issue head on and steer it to conclusion despite attempts of the opposition to scuttle the legal process

**Srinivas B.V. @srinivasiyc**

As our founding fathers accepted the Constitution as the guiding light of India, we honour the judgement of Supreme Court on the #AyodhyaVerdict

**Priyanka Chaturvedi @priyankac19**

Gratitude. Hon Supreme Court - Hon CJI Ranjan Gogoi. - Justice S A Bobde. - Justice D Y Chandrachud. - Justice S Abdul Nazeer. - Justice Ashok Bhushan

We welcome the verdict and we respect it. With this judgment, the dispute between Hindus and Muslims has come to an end. I appeal to all not to indulge in anything which will ignite passions

— IQBAL ANSARI, one of the litigants

Truth never gets defeated and the Supreme Court's verdict proved that. The construction of Ram Mandir will begin soon. It is like Deepavali and it is victory of the entire country

— NRITYA GOPAL DAS, president, Ram Janmabhoomi

We welcome the Supreme Court verdict. We are committed to maintaining peace and unity across the state. Everyone should support unity and amity in the country

— YOGI ADITYANATH, UP Chief Minister

We are dissatisfied with certain findings of the Supreme Court. We respect the verdict and respectfully disagree with certain aspects of the verdict. We will study the judgment and may seek a review

— ZAFARYAB GILANI, secretary, AIMPLB

Satya ki vijay hai. Isko Jeet ya haar ke roop mein nahin dekhna chahiye. Court ne satya ko azad kiya hai. No juloos and no naara

— SHARAD SHARMA, VHP spokesperson, who played a key role in ram mandir movement





# Babri razed, Sena rose

Shiv came to power in Maharashtra in 1995 riding on public sentiments fomented by riots in 1992-93. Balasaheb Thackeray was ‘proud’ of Babri demolition.

BHAGWAN PARAB  
MUMBAI, NOV. 9

A jubilant Shiv Sena on Saturday welcomed the Supreme Court’s verdict, which cleared the way for the party’s long-standing demand for a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Party chief Uddhav Thackeray hailed the Supreme Court judgement and said that the day would be written in golden words in Indian history.

The party, currently engaged in a bitter power struggle with the BJP, even hinted that it was ready to put its ambition of forming the government in Maharashtra on backburner for the sake of constructing a Ram Mandir at Ayodhya.

Senior Sena leader Sanjay Raut, in a tweet, said, “Pehle Mandir Phir Sarkar!! Ayodhya mein Mandir, Maharashtra mein Sarkar... Jai ShriRam.”

While emphasising the importance of the long-pending issue to his party, Mr Thackeray announced that he would visit Ayodhya on November 24 to offer his prayers.

“I had visited Ayodhya on November 24 last year and offered prayers. I also participated in ‘aarti’ on the banks of river Sarayu there. I had then taken along with me soil from the Shivneri fort, the birth-place of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and prayed for a miracle to ensure construction of a Ram temple. I am happy that that miracle happened within a year,” he said.

During the Lok Sabha campaign earlier this year, Mr Thackeray had categorically

demanding that a temple should be constructed at the disputed site in Ayodhya. He had also urged the BJP-led Union government to introduce a law to ensure construction of a grand Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

The Shiv Sena has used Ram Mandir issue in the past to corner its long-time ally BJP.

Mr Thackeray’s Ayodhya visit in November last year was also seen as part of his efforts to put pressure on BJP as the party

**THE UDDHAV THACKERAY-LED PARTY, CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN A BITTER POWER STRUGGLE WITH THE BJP, EVEN HINTED THAT IT WAS READY TO PUT ITS AMBITION OF FORMING THE GOVERNMENT IN MAHARASHTRA ON THE BACKBURNER FOR THE SAKE OF CONSTRUCTING A RAM MANDIR AT AYODHYA. ‘PEHLE MANDIR PHIR SARKAR!... JAI SHIRAM’, TWEETED SANJAY RAUT**

had failed to resolve the issue politically despite being in power in Uttar Pradesh and Centre.

He said he would visit L.K. Advani, who had undertaken a Rathayatra. The veteran BJP leader has been sidelined in the BJP ever since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took charge of the party.

Crediting Mr Advani on Ram Mandir issue, the Sena chief added, “Ram Janmabhoomi

SENA’S ROLE IN RAM MANDIR ISSUE		
► After Babri Masjid’s demolition, late Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray claimed that his organisation had played a key role in the bringing down of the mosque.	► Current Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray kept pressurising its ally BJP for the construction of Ram Mandir. On Friday Uddhav said BJP-led Union government cannot take “credit” for the Supreme Court’s much-awaited Ayodhya verdict.	
► In June this year, Uddhav Thackeray went to UP and offered prayer at Ram Lalla temple in Ayodhya.	► For the January 1993 riots, Srikrishna Commission report blamed Bal Thackeray and Sena of taking the lead in organising attacks on Muslims and their properties.	► The Commission also stated that by the time the Shiv Sena realised that enough had been done by way of “retaliation”, the violence and rioting was beyond the control of its leaders, who had to issue an appeal to put an end to it.

movement was a big agitation. Some people are not with us now. Some have lost their lives in the agitation. I salute them all.” Uttar Pradesh and Centre. ation. I salute them all.”

The Shiv Sena owes its electoral success in Maharashtra to the Ram Mandir issue. The party came into national limelight in the nineties when its chief Balasaheb Thackeray claimed credit for Babri Masjid demolition. In fact, the party did not even hesitate to shed its original tag of being a pro-Marathi party to become a Hindutva party.

The Shiv Sena organised events like Maha Aartis in nook and corners of the city to keep the issue burning.

The deadly riots, which followed in Mumbai and other

parts of the state after the Babri Masjid demolition, further ascertained Sena’s image as a hardline Hindu nationalist party in the country. The party also faced allegations of orchestrating the violence during the riots.

However, the Ram Mandir issue also benefited the Shiv Sena immensely as it propelled to power in Maharashtra in 1995.

Riding on the wave of a strong religious polarisation that soared after the riots, the Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alliance won the polls and formed the first truly non-Congress government in Maharashtra.

Since then the party has been aggressively pursuing the issue, in the Parliament as well

as outside of it.

“The contribution of Balasaheb in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement is immense,” said Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant, who is also the Union minister of heavy industries and a Member of Parliament from Mumbai South.

“When no one was willing to speak after the Babri Masjid demolition, Balasaheb openly came out to say the he was proud of Shiv Sainiks if they had demolished the Masjid. During the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, he also coined the popular slogan ‘Garv Se Kaho Hum Hindu Hai’. The construction of Ram Mandir at Ayodhya is a matter of country’s pride,” the Sena’s lone minister at the Centre added.

## Babri Masjid dispute: A brief recall

The demolition propelled the BJP to electoral significance. In 1996, it tasted political power at the Centre for the first time.

Ram Puniyani

With the Supreme Court pronouncing a unanimous judgment, allotting the disputed Ayodhya Ram Janmabhoomi land to the Hindus, one long chapter of recent political imbroglio came to a halt on Saturday. Most of the concerned organisations, in a welcome move, have asked the communities to keep calm.

A brief recap of the dispute is necessary in order to understand how the Babri Masjid issue turned controversial and what was the political fallout of the demolition.

The first Mughal emperor Babar’s trusted general Mir Baqi built the Masjid in 1528. There was no dispute over it till 1855, when a clash took place between Bairagis and Muslims on the issue of Chabutara (raised platform) outside the Masjid. The matter never raised its ugly head during the freedom struggle, when the nation came together to fight against colonial forces.

After Independence, the issue came to the fore on the night of December 22-23, 1949, when some elements forcibly broke the locks of the Masjid and installed Ram Lalla idols inside it.

After the idols were illegally installed, fearing future trouble, the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to G.B. Pant, erstwhile chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, to get the idols vacated. However, the local district collector, K.K. Nayyar, did not comply.

In the 1980s, after the Shah Bano judgment was reversed by the Parliament, the Centre decided to open the locks of the Masjid. Buoyed by the move, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) took up the campaign of constructing a grand Ram Temple at the site, claiming that Lord Ram was precisely born where the Masjid stood.

The Sangh Parivar popularised the notion that Babri Masjid was a symbol of ‘foreign rule’ and Muslim atrocities. That there was a temple at the spot and it was a part of the communal historiography introduced by the British. A.F. Beevridge, a British officer, while translating Babar’s memoirs had put a footnote that there may have been a temple on which the mosque was built.

The campaign turned political in the late 80s, when the BJP

**IN THE 1980s, AFTER THE SHAH BANO JUDGMENT WAS REVERSED BY PARLIAMENT, THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT LED BY RAJIV GANDHI DECIDED TO OPEN THE LOCKS OF THE MASJID**

took over from the VHP. Then BJP president L.K. Advani began a Rath Yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya. The Rath Yatra was followed by communal violence across the country. Mr Advani was arrested in Bihar as per the orders of the then chief minister Lalu Yadav. Yet, many were able to reach the Masjid. To prevent any damage to the structure, erstwhile Uttar

Pradesh CM Mulayam Singh Yadav ordered the police to fire at the mob.

After the then PM V.P. Singh announced the implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations, the movement got a new lease of life.

The Sangh Parivar decided to perform ‘Kar Seva’ on December 6, 1992. The then UP CM Kalyan Singh had given a written undertaking to protect the Masjid. However, with nearly three lakh Kar Sevaks in Ayodhya on the fateful day, the security forces withdrew from the site. The Masjid was demolished, in a span of just five and a half hours. The cheering crowd, led by Mr Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharati, raised the slogan, “Ye to Keval Jhanki hai, Kashi, Mathura Baki hai” (This is just the beginning, Kashi, Mathura will follow).“

The demolition was investigated by Liberhan Commission, which opined that it was a planned act led by Mr Advani and company. Those guilty of demolishing the Masjid have not yet been punished. The demolition was followed by massive violence, particularly in Mumbai and also in other cities.

The demolition propelled the BJP to electoral significance. In 1996, the BJP tasted political power at the Centre for the first time.

## ’92 riots signalled Bombay’s transformation to Mumbai

Kaniza Garari

December 6, 1992 was a special Sunday for the L o k h a n - dwala-Mantri family at Firdaus Apartments in Kurla. Six families in two adjacent apartments were preparing for a wedding during Christmas. My mother had gone to Karachi, her maiden visit to Pakistan, to meet her only sister.

There were few TV sets those days. But by noon, there was a commotion in the building. In the 21 flats, whoever had a TV was watching the news. In my house, there was no TV. The news trickled in through my father, my uncle and my grandfather. My sisters were told that there would not be any college or school for a few days. The Masjid in Ayodhya had been demolished and the situation was tense.

I was a student at Somaia College of Science and Commerce in Vidyavihar, and I had a project to complete. However, I was certain that as I had classes in the morning, I would be back home by noon. But it was not to be. The morning saw angry protests, and by afternoon, the streets were

re filled with stone pelters.

A group of boys ran with sticks and stones. A police van on the main road did not cross to our side of the lane. My only view to the incidents was a single window of our home that was kept open. The rest were shut tight and no one was to venture out.

There was a commotion as men ran up and down the building. There was a Masjid opposite the building. The lane adjacent to it had small settlements and the men were all crowded in the front homes. A group of men stood on the terrace situated of our building to keep an eye.

For a Bombay-bred girl, this was the first-hand experience of violence up-close. The annual family visit to Godhra during summer vacations had a strict set of rules to be followed, in which we could not venture out without an escort during the day to the other side where the Hindus lived. After 6 p.m. it was an absolute no.

But that was Godhra and this was Bombay. How come we were witnessing this behaviour in a civilised and modern city? A naive thought. Huddled in the house, the narrative of violence came in the form of expression. My grandfather, who had witnessed such incidents in his life, was standing guard at the apartment gate. Night was

critical and scary.

Every morning, my neighbours who had their extended family of eight in Madanpura, South Mumbai, called to inform that they were alive, and vice-versa. We could not call my mother as international calls would raise doubt. Night vigils became the order of the day.

On December 10, the Kurla office of the local corporator, Firoze Mantri, blasted late at night. Our building was the residence of his family and cousins. My father worried the building would be targeted. The compound gates the building gates were also locked. The ten-day ordeal was only a glimpse of the turmoil brewing across the country.

The Christmas wedding celebrations were cancelled. My mother was back in town. The New Year in 1993 came with a new set of riots. January was the month of burnings. The wood scrap-yard in Kurla depot, Kapadia nagar and Hall Road were burnt. Bottles were filled with petrol and fired with rags or sent like rockets from one locality to another.

We were not sure if we would see the next morning. It was the beginning of the change in mindset: From Bombay to Mumbai.

## A temple won’t heal wounds

Meena Menon

The country’s oldest land dispute has been resolved today and a temple will be built at

Ayodhya, but few will know about a case that continues in a Mumbai sessions court, related to the communal riots in the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992.

In the Suleman Usman bakery firing case, witnesses are still being examined. The demolition of Babri Masjid became a pivot for unprecedented violence in the city, revealing the communal character of the police and the influence of parties like the Shiv Sena. Even police jeeps had the “Jai Shree Ram” stickers on their windshields. The riots changed the cosmopolitan character of Bombay, sharpening the divide between Hindus and Muslims.

There are no memorials to the over 900 lives lost (officially) in the two months of riots. The violence is clear as daylight for some while others have moved on.

Back in 1992, it was a Sunday and I watched the Kar Sevaks climbing the Masjid on TV. My Muslim neighbours watched with me. I still recall the faces of the young boys, pale with fear. I was a reporter at The

Times of India. By the time I reached office, I heard on the radio that many people were killed. Justice B.N. Srikrishna, who headed the commission of inquiry into the riots, has in his reports outlined the beginning of tensions on December 6 and 7, 1992.

Wading through police logbook entries of wireless communications, he found trouble brewing in the city at various points. By 11.34 am, trouble was reported in South Mumbai. At around 4.40 pm, local Shiv Sena leaders took out a cycle rally in Dharavi passing through several “sensitive” areas, culminating in a public meeting. The first instances of stone throwing and firing was reported at Minara Masjid in Pydhonie, at night.

There was little indication that the violence would spiral out of control and spread over two months, with the army conducting flag marches. After all, this was Bombay. I remember the anger on Mohammed Ali Road after Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao’s whistle-stop tour.

As Muslims poured out of the Mosque, the army officer in-charge asked us to leave quickly. We left only after being accosted by groups of people who were in no mood to answer any questions. We had to get curfew passes to travel through desolate streets, and the city that never

**THE LEGACY OF THE GHASTLY VIOLENCE WITNESSED BETWEEN DECEMBER 1992 AND JANUARY 1993 WEIGHS HEAVILY ON MUMBAI (THEN BOMBAY) AND A RAM TEMPLE IN AYODHYA IS NOT GOING TO ASSUAGE ITS WOUNDS.**

slept, was funereal.

The barbaric violence had barely subsided in December when the infamous Gandhi chawl incident revived it in January 1993. Two members of the Bane family and four of their neighbours, including a handicapped girl, were burnt to death at night. Naina Bane, who survived, became the “face” of the second phase of the riots. But the Shiv Sena, which exhorted Hindus to take revenge, hardly supported the Bane family later. Naina’s brother Sudarshan said the party didn’t even provide Naina with a house and all of them had to fend for themselves.

The scale of violence that swept the city was massive: People were killed inside homes and shops; many were burnt to death in taxis or in public places; shops were looted and establishments belonging to Muslims were targeted. A

city, which had provided refuge to many, became a hell on earth.

The timber godowns burnt for days at Reay Road and every day brought renewed clashes. I remember hiding while hearing the short bursts of gunfire in a Vikhroli slum. At night, we would travel home in office cars for safety, passing tense neighbourhoods where evidence of the day’s arson was still smouldering.

Opposite The Times of India office, Victoria Terminus (now CSMT) was bursting with people fleeing in trains packed beyond capacity. Some of them were never to return. Hospitals were packed with those injured from bullet and knife wounds. As reporters, we visited and counted the dead in Cooper and JJ Hospital. In long corridors or courtyard, yellowing bodies of young men were piling up, their religion no longer relevant. That was when we realised that nearly 500 had been killed in December 1992 - the police figure were much lower as it depended on the number of post-mortems they did in a day.

On the 25th anniversary of the riots in 2017, I got a message from Taher Wagle. “Happy Diwali. Mere bete Shahnawaz Wagle ka abhi tak kuch faisla nahi hua pls. Ap Moji sarkar ya phir CM sahib se milkar Shahnawaz Wagle ka case

open karne ke liye kuch raste nikale or pls koi faisla nikale (sic) (Happy Diwali, There is no justice in the case of my son Shahnawaz Wagle. Can you meet PM Modi or the chief minister and ask him to find a way to open the case and do something).“

Shahnawaz was allegedly shot dead by policemen, according to his sister Yasmin. It was only in August 2007, when citizens groups demanded justice, that Taher was called to record his statement.

The police registered 2,267 riot cases, of which, 1,371 were closed as true but undetected. A Special Task Force was formed to act on the Srikrishna report and the cases were re-examined by a committee headed by the director general of police.

Only 112 cases were reinvestigated. In only eight cases, fresh chargesheets were filed. Some 894 chargesheets were filed in courts. In 2007, 16 cases were expedited through special courts, while 93 dormant ones were revived. In 539 cases, the accused were acquitted or discharged. In 2010, 202 cases were sent to fast track courts, where some are still dragging on. Yet, justice remained elusive for many families.

The legacy of the 1992-93 violence weighs heavily on Mumbai and a temple is not going to assuage its wounds.



# Nuanced verdict brings closure: Prince of Arcot

The Prince of Arcot, Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali, has welcomed the Supreme Court of India's verdict on long-pending Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhoomi dispute.

Describing it as a nuanced judgement, the Prince said it has finally brought closure to what looked like an intractable dispute between the two major communities of India. He sincerely appealed to Muslim parties and the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) not to file a review petition against the Supreme Court's verdict. He said that the Muslim bodies must honour their promise of abiding by the court's ruling if it were to go against them, in all fairness to God and man, he said.

The Muslims must find solace in the fact that the Supreme Court did not agree with the contention that the Babri Masjid was built after demolishing a Hindu temple. He praised the Supreme Court for reiterating the fact that both the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and the surreptitious placing of idols in 1949 in the structure were illegal. Therefore, those responsible for the demolition must be brought to book.

The Prince also appealed to the people of India, irrespective of caste, creed or religion, especially the Hindus and Muslims to work together for

the steady progress and development of the country, which can be achieved only by improving the socio-economic conditions of the masses, not by creating conflicts over places of worship.

India today is a diverse and pluralistic society: multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-cultural. That is its great strength. It must be preserved. We are part of humanity with all its rich diversity of religions, languages, cultures, traditions and experience and India forms a large microcosm of the contemporary world, he said.

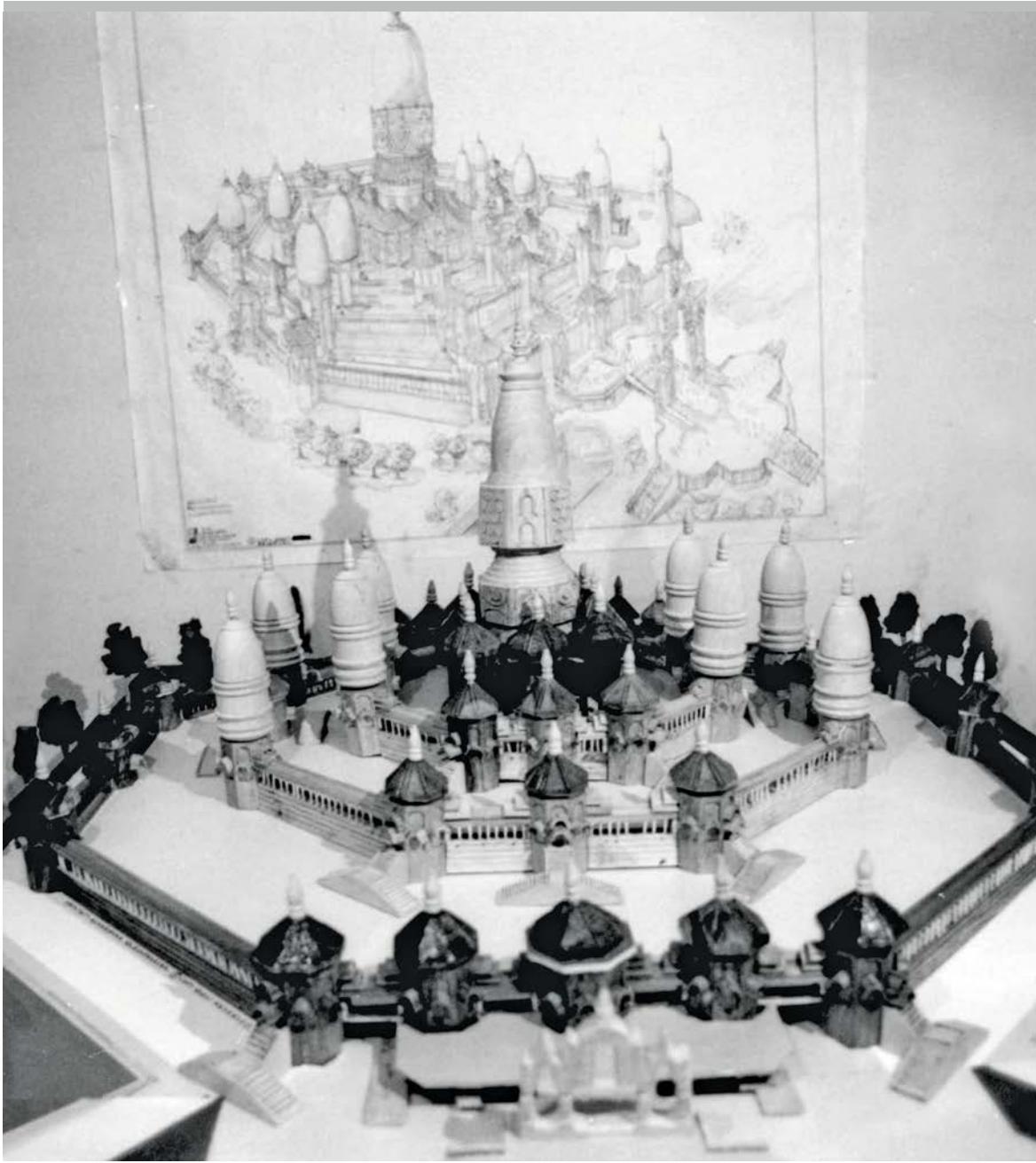
Let us remember, communalism brings death, destruction and horror in an expanding way. Indian law specifically prohibits the practice of communalism, the promotion of disharmony, enmity and ill-will between different religious communities and exploitation of religion.

The Prince appealed to all fellow citizens and said in a statement that "India's future is in your hands. Promote the spirit of tolerance and national integration. Let us not give any quarter to communalism and pseudo-nationalism. We must together resist all attempts to exploit religious sentiments for political purposes."

He called upon the people to join hands and stand up for communal harmony, secularism, fraternity and human solidarity. Let us build a strong, united, democratic, just and prosperous India, he emphasised.

India's future is in your hands. Promote the spirit of tolerance and national integration. Let us not give any quarter to communalism and pseudo-nationalism. We must together resist all attempts to exploit religious sentiments for political purposes

— PRINCE OF ARCOT



Model Ayodhya temple

One of the models of Sri Ram Temple displayed in New Delhi.

— SONDEEP SHANKAR

## 'Bhismacharya' won it for Ram Lalla

AGE CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, NOV. 9

"CJI: Do you want to sit & argue?"

92-yr-old Parasaran: It's ok. You're too kind. The tradition of the Bar has been to stand & argue, and I'm concerned about the tradition. My last wish before I die, is to finish this case."

That's one of many posts in social media to hail Senior Counsel K Parasaran, who at an advanced age of 92, fought the case for Ram Lalla in the Supreme Court, exhibiting awesome energy of mind and body through the 40 grueling days of final arguments, often dipping into his deep knowledge of the ancient scriptures to win all-round accolades.

The twitter post by @SirJadeja was recalling a widely reported incident in the court when Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi politely asked Parasaran, considering his advanced age more than his professional fame, if he would like to sit and argue his case. 'Padma Vibhushan' Parasaran, who had served as Attorney General of India for six long years till 1989, was even more polite in thanking the CJI and telling him he would rather not seek exemption from the "tradition of the Bar to stand and argue".

Such has been his deep commitment towards practising the right court manners while propounding his legal knowledge and professional competence, not to forget his famed practice of drawing heavily from the Upanishads, Gita and other scriptures to buttress his case arguments with traditional Indian values.

Some of those awestruck followers of the court events have tweeted a multitude of requests to the Union Government that this 'Bhismacharya' of

India's legal profession, this 'guru from Tamil Nadu' must be decorated with Bharat Ratna. "Periyar broke Ram statue in TN, Kalaigarnar said there is no proof for existence of Ram. But today, we have from the same TN (Srirangam), Shri Parasaran as leading counsel appeared for Ram Lalla Virajman. Lord Ram returns after 491 years of exile & we are blessed to see this", said one among the multitude of admirers on twitter:

The extensive media reportage during the 40 days of intense arguments in the court had a liberal dose of Parasaran's submissions before the Bench, his responses to the clarifications sought by the judges. He would go well prepared every day for the sessions that began at 10.30 in the morning and closed around 4 or 5 pm. And during those sessions, he would often face the mercurial Rajeev Dhavan representing the Muslim side. The veteran would forever stay calm, even when Dhavan tore up pages or termed as 'foolish' someone from the Hindu side. One media report refers to how when the arguments concluded on October 16 and the court reserved orders, Parasaran waited outside for 15 minutes to meet Dhavan and take a photograph with him. That was a great lesson not just for Bhishma's team but to the entire lawyer community.

"My last wish before I die is to see a logical end to this case", Parasaran had said during his court arguments, pleading with the Constitution Bench that the entire disputed land belongs to his client, Ram Lalla. Well now, he has achieved victory in the court and going by his robust physical and mental health, the grand old man of Mylapore is sure to score the century while getting several more cases to their logical end.



Parasaran

● The family of a karsevak Sadashiv Jadav who was killed in the 2002 Godhra train burning incident hailed the verdict. "Today, I am happy....My father's dream of Ram temple being constructed in Ayodhya will be fulfilled," said Jadav son Vilas.

● Deendayal Parisar, the BJP's headquarters in Madhya Pradesh, was decorated with earthen lamps on Saturday to "express gratitude" following the verdict.

● A Muslim organisation in Madhya Pradesh announced the cancellation of the traditional annual procession to mark Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, the birthday of Prophet Mohammed, to be held on Sunday. An organiser said the decision was taken in view of the verdict.

● The historic verdict of the Supreme Court coincided with the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

● The ministry of information and broadcasting issued an advisory to all television channels and cable TV operators in the wake of the verdict to adhere to programme code and ensure that debates, discussions and visuals do not incite any "divisive" or "anti-national" feelings

## 'No place for bitterness, fear in new India'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

India's credo of unity in diversity was visible in its totality after the Supreme Court verdict on the Ayodhya land dispute as all sections of the society accepted it with an open heart, the Prime Minister Modi said on Saturday, urging people to shun bitterness and negativity for the sake of a new India.

Addressing the nation hours after the top court gave its judgment, Mr Modi said the way each section of the society welcomed the verdict reflects India's ancient traditions of amity and harmony.

"It is a day of unity (jode ka din, referring to the opening of Kartarpur corridor, a historic event which opened access to



Narendra Modi

Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan for Indian Sikh devotees)," the Prime Minister said.

He said India's credo of unity in diversity is today visible in its totality.

The PM also expressed happiness that the five-judge bench was unanimous in its order. Mr Modi said peace, unity and amity are essential for development of India and described November 9 as a day to forget any bitter-

ness one may have. He said there is no place for fear, bitterness and negativity in new India.

Settling a fractious issue that goes back more than a century, the top court in a historic verdict backed the construction of a Ram temple by a trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya.

In a series of tweets in Hindi and English, Mr Modi also asserted that the judgment clearly illustrates that everybody is equal before the law.

"Be it Ram Bhakti or Rahim Bhakti (devotion to Ram or Rahim), it is imperative that we strengthen the spirit of rashtra bhakti (devotion to the country)," he said, adding "the verdict shouldn't be seen as a win or loss for anybody."

Noting that the temple of

justice (the apex court) has amicably concluded a matter going on for decades, he said the SC verdict will further strengthen people's faith in the judicial system.

"The calm and peace maintained by 130 crore Indians in the run-up to today's verdict manifests India's inherent commitment to peaceful coexistence. May this very spirit of unity and togetherness power the development trajectory of our nation. May every Indian be empowered," he said.

In a series of tweets, Home minister Amit Shah appealed to all communities and religions to accept the decision of the apex court with ease and remain committed to "Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat" (one India, great India).

# 2nd of 3 core promises by BJP done

NARASIMHAN VIJAYARAGHAVAN

Hand it to Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi. He is "Man of the Match" and now a man of history too. He was aware it would be a miracle if he could conclude the hearings for a verdict. He has performed a higher miracle in accomplishing a unanimous one. Just to capture the potency of the sensitivity of the issue, the 1,045 page verdict, including the Addendum, is authored by all five judges 'anonymously' - a never before occurrence.

The first appeals were kept boiling in the apex court for a decade. Mentions were made before one Chief Justice after another. None had the gumption, gall and confidence to list it. But Gogoi was made of sterner stuff. And from the pulpit, he carried authority. The judges met dissent, even personal barbs, but ignored them for a higher cause.

In a moment of 'utter judicial madness', as a twitter handle put it, Ranjan Gogoi chose to bite the bullet. After heated

arguments were rudely brought to an end with Rajeev Dhavan tearing up a map, just 3 days were given to all sides to furnish their submissions in relation to 'moulding the reliefs'. It is from these suggestions, and also from the contemporaneous mediation process led by Justice Ibrahim Khalifullah, the gentleman judge from Tamil Nadu, that the Supreme Court picked up its cues in the grant of reliefs. Truth to tell, reference to mediation has turned out to be a masterstroke, in appropriating the generosity of the Muslims, with an imprimatur from the Supreme Court.

Lord Ram may (as the Hindus believe) or may not (as the Addendum dissent suggests) have been born in Ayodhya. The top court said 'continued worship across centuries was no myth but real'. Equally, the Supreme Court did not dismiss the 'namaz practices of Muslims in the Babri Masjid'. The idol Ram accepted as juristic person (not Ram Janmabhoomi itself, as urged) was favoured with 'a decree of



THE FIRST APPEALS WERE KEPT BOILING IN THE APEX COURT FOR A DECADE. MENTIONS WERE MADE BEFORE ONE CHIEF JUSTICE AFTER ANOTHER. NONE HAD THE GUMPTION, GALL AND CONFIDENCE TO LIST IT. BUT GOGOI WAS MADE OF STERNER STUFF. AND FROM THE PULPIT, HE CARRIED AUTHORITY. THE JUDGES MET DISSENT, EVEN PERSONAL BARBS, BUT IGNORED THEM FOR A HIGHER CAUSE

entire 2.77 acres of disputed land'. And the Sunni Waqf Board's worship claims allied with illegal demolition of Babri Masjid got them 5 acres of alternate land in a prominent place in Ayodhya.

Coming to the 'moulding of reliefs', the Supreme Court embraced that panacea for all ills - provision in Art.142 of the Constitution which our forefathers had thoughtfully provided for, 'to do complete justice'. Supreme Court religiously tucked into it, based on the 'continued and unimpeded pos-

session and worship of believers in Ram's birth place', to vote on the entire 2.77 acres. However, they ruled that demolition of Babri Masjid being illegal, SWB would be entitled for reparation in '5 acres of alternate land' to be given by Central/State governments, for construction of a mosque.

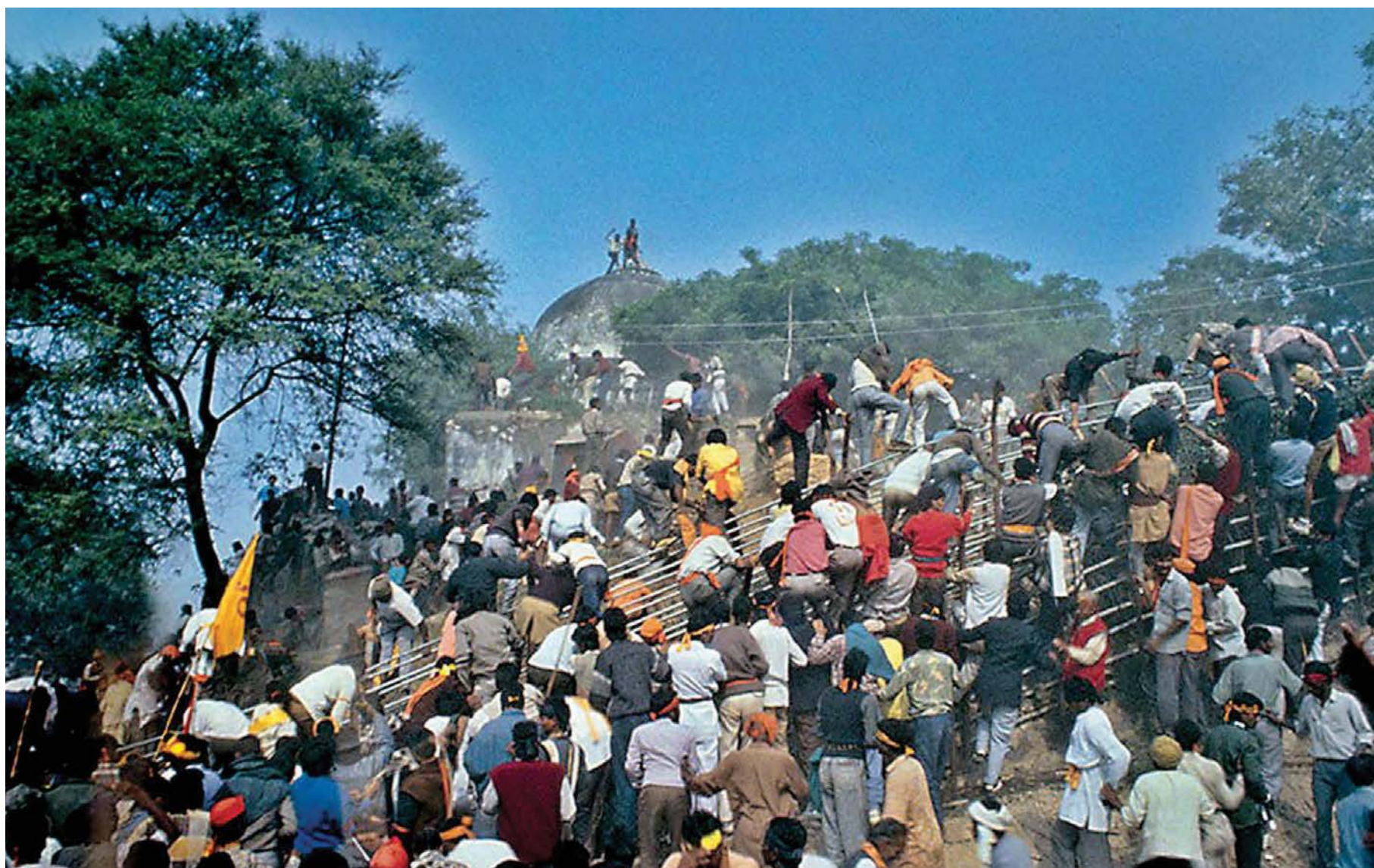
Modi, it appears, is destiny's child, for BJP, to fulfil their three core manifesto promises. Art.370 through Parliament, now, building of a grand Ram temple, via judicial benevolence and a Uniform Civil Code,

in part achieved through the Triple Talaq legislation. What next? A party that was branded as communal, came down to 2 MPs in 1984, could not last 13 days and 13 months, in government, in their early forays, today stands on the cusp of turning real each of the 3 impossible dreams. The opposition parties must be gasping for breath and Shiv Sena may have chosen an inopportune moment to test an ally.

Muslims may feel peeved that Art.142 was invoked to render 'complete justice' when it may be injustice to them, as the Supreme Court had conceded proof of their 'vested right' in worship and illegality in demolition of Bari Masjid. Therein lies the seeds of dissent and a possible review, but the score line being 5-0, it may turn out to be an exercise in futility. If peace and harmony reign, in the wake of this "wise and sagacious compromise like verdict", as a retired judge said, we may yet have the closure we deserve.

(The writer is a practising advocate in Madras HC)

**EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
Office of the Executive Engineer [M-Sh-(N)]-I  
D-1, Staff Qtrs. S.D.N. Hospital, Shahdara, Delhi-110095  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
NIT : EE-[M-Sh-(N)]-I/Acct/TC/2019-20/29 Date : 07.11.2019  
Last Date of Download of Tender : 20.11.2019 at 14.00 Hours  
Document upto  
Last Date of Bid Preparation : 20.11.2019 at 15.00 Hours  
and Hash Submission  
Close for Bidding : 20.11.2019 at 15.00 Hours to 20.11.2019 upto 17.00 Hours  
Date of Re-encryption of Online Bid from : 20.11.2019 at 17.00 Hours to 22.11.2019 at 15.00 Hours  
Opening of Financial Bid : 22.11.2019 at 15.30 Hours  
Executive Engineer [M. Shah (N)]-I on behalf of Commissioner, EDMC invites on line tenders for works given below :-  
S. No. : 1, Name of Work : Imp./Dev. of 10 Nos. Compounds in D-1 Block staff quarter Nand Nagri [-] by pdg 0 from in Ward No. 32 E/243 Shah (N) Zone. Head of Account : XL-VIII-S-(iii); Tender Amount : Rs. 29,89,017/-; Earnest Money : Rs. 59,800/-; T.O.C. : 3 Months; V.O.R. : 5 Months; Tender Cost : Rs. 500/-; Tender No. : 317294.  
The tender document can be downloaded online from the website <http://www.mcdonline.gov.in/> and also available on the website <http://mcdetenders.com> where bidding by approved and eligible contractors. Only the registered contractors of the MCD in the relevant categories are eligible to participate. CDR & EMD will be deposited in the Tender box at office of the S.E.-I/Shah. North Zonal Building, Keshav Chowk, near Shyam Lal College, Shahdara, Delhi-110032. RMC will be taken by the contractor from the plant of Cement Manufacturing Company. R.O. No. 91/DPV/East/2019-20 EE-[M-Sh-(N)]-I  
EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. : 155303



PICS: SONDEEP SHANKAR

## The Ram Katha...

While most people familiar with the destruction of the Babri Masjid in December 1992 know that the inscriptions on the mosque state that it was built in 1528-29 by Mughal emperor Babur's general Mir Baqi, how many are familiar with the many twists and turns in the history of a site that has been at the heart of a dispute for over 500 years? It may have only bubbled to the fore when after years of relative quiet, a Sant Digvijay Nath from the Gorakhnath math — the alma mater of the current UP chief minister, Yogi Adityanath — organised a nine-day recitation of the Ramcharitmanas, at the end of which idols of Rama and Sita appeared inside the mosque. The then district magistrate in charge of Faizabad district, K.K.K. Nayar, refused to remove the idols and police promptly locked the premises, with only Hindu priests allowed entry to perform daily rituals. Without further ado, the mosque was now a temple. The Sunni Wakf board objected. The ABRM filed a suit. But it wasn't until right-wing groups like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad began a movement to reclaim the site for a Ram temple, and it snowballed into a huge protest that led to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, that the Ramjanmabhoomi movement brought the BJP from the sidelines to national prominence. And with today's verdict, etched their name in the history books.

**1528** | Babri Masjid built by Mir Baqi, commander of Mughal emperor Babur.

**1885** | Mahant Raghubir Das files plea in Faizabad district court seeking permission to build a canopy outside the disputed structure. Court rejects the plea.

**1949** | Idols of Ram Lalla placed under central dome outside the disputed structure.

**1950** | Gopal Simla Visharad files suit in Faizabad district court for rights to worship the idols of Ram Lalla.

● Paramahansa Ramachandra Das files suit for continuation of worship and keeping the idols.

**1959** | Nirmohi Akhara files suit seeking possession of the site.

**1961** | UP Sunni Central Waqf Board files suit for possession of the site.

**1986** | **Feb. 1** | Local court orders the government to open the site for Hindu worshippers.

**1989 Aug. 14** | Allahabad HC orders maintenance of status quo in respect of the disputed structure.

**1992 Dec. 6** | Babri Masjid demolished.

**1993 April 3** | 'Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Act' passed for acquiring land by Centre in the disputed area.

● Various writ petitions, including one by Ismail Faruqui, filed in Allahabad HC challenging various aspects of the Act.

● SC exercising its jurisdiction under Article 139A transferred the writ petitions, which were pending in the High Court.

**1994 Oct. 24** | SC says in historic Ismail Faruqui case mosque was not integral to Islam.

**2002 April** | HC begins hearing on determining who owns the disputed site.

**2003 March 13** | SC says, in the Aslam alias Bhure case, no religious activity of any nature be allowed at the acquired land.

**2010: Sept. 30** | HC, in a 2:1 majority, rules three-way division of disputed area between Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla.

**2011 May 9** | SC stays HC verdict on Ayodhya land dispute.

**2017 March 21** | CJI J.S. Khehar suggests out-of-court settlement among rival parties.



BJP leaders Uma Bharti with Murali Manohar Joshi on the day the Babri Masjid was brought down on Dec. 6, 1992

**Aug. 7:** SC constitutes three-judge bench to hear pleas challenging 1994 verdict of the Allahabad HC.

**2018 Feb. 8** | SC starts hearing the civil appeals.

● **July 20:** SC reserves verdict.

● **Sept. 27:** SC declines to refer the case to a five-judge Constitution bench. Case to be heard by a newly constituted three-judge bench on October 29.

● **Oct. 29:** SC fixes the case for the first week of January before an appropriate bench, which will decide the schedule of hearing.

● **Dec. 24:** SC decides to take up petitions on case for hearing on January 4, 2019.



### 2019 Jan. 4

SC says an appropriate bench constituted by it will pass an order on January 10 for fixing the date of hearing in the title case.

● **Jan. 8:** SC sets up a five-judge Constitution Bench to hear the case headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and comprising justices S A Bobde, N V Ramana, U U Lalit and D Y Chandrachud.

● **Jan. 10:** Justice U U Lalit recuses himself prompting SC to reschedule the hearing for January 29 before a new bench.

● **Jan. 25:** SC reconstitutes 5-member Constitution Bench to hear the case. The new bench comprises Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S A Nazeer.

● **Jan. 29:** Centre moves SC seeking permission to return the 67-acre acquired land around the disputed site to original owners.

● **Feb. 26:** SC favours mediation, fixes Mar 5 for order on whether to refer matter to court-appointed mediator.

● **March 8:** SC refers the dispute for mediation by a panel headed by former apex court judge F M I Kalifulla.

● **April 9:** Nirmohi Akhara opposes in SC Centre's plea to return acquired land around Ayodhya site to owners.

● **May 9:** 3-member mediation committee submits interim report in SC.

● **May 10:** SC extends time till Aug 15 to complete mediation process.

● **July 11:** SC seeks report on "progress of mediation".

● **July 18:** SC allows mediation process to continue, seeks outcome report by Aug 1.

● **Aug. 1:** Report of mediation submitted in sealed cover to SC.

● **Aug. 2:** SC decides to conduct day-to-day hearing from Aug 6 as mediation fails.

● **Aug. 6:** SC commences day-to-day hearing on the land dispute.

● **Oct. 4:** SC says it will wrap up hearing on Oct 17, judgement by Nov 17.

- SC directs UP govt to provide security to state Waqf Board Chairperson

● **Oct. 16:** SC concludes hearing; reserves order.

● **Nov. 9:** SC grants entire 2.77 acre of disputed land in Ayodhya to deity Ram Lalla, possession of land will remain with Central government receiver. SC also directs Centre and UP govt to allot 5 acre land to the Muslims at a prominent place for building mosque.

### Nov. 9, 2019

SC grants entire 2.77 acre of disputed land in Ayodhya to deity Ram Lalla, possession of land will remain with Central government receiver. SC also directs Centre and UP govt to allot 5 acre land to the Muslims at a prominent place for building mosque.



<< Jabalpur: Students of the Sanskrit Veda Vigyan Kendra watch Supreme Court's verdict on the Ayodhya case on a phone, in Jabalpur, Saturday, Nov. 9, 2019. The apex court on Saturday cleared the way for the construction of a Ram Temple at the disputed site at Ayodhya, and directed the Centre to allot a 5-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a mosque. - PTI

# DELHI SPECIAL

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2019

## SPORT | Cricket

Please leave  
Pant alone, says  
Rohit Sharma

16

## NATION

PM opens Kartarpur  
corridor, Manmohan  
among visitors

15

DELHI AGE

Matinee

Giorgia  
ready for  
Bollywood  
debut

25



### GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check  
them below.

**1** Who was the first  
American President to  
reside at The White House?

- Abraham Lincoln
- George Washington
- John Adams

**2** Who is the only British  
Prime Minister to have  
received the Nobel Prize in  
Literature?

- Anthony Eden
- Harold Macmillan
- Sir Winston Churchill

**3** The title of which Pink  
Floyd album is also a  
chapter in 'The Wind In  
The Willows'?

- Animals
- Wish you were here
- The piper at the gates of dawn

### SHORT TAKES

## 13 fail alcohol test in 2 weeks: DGCA

**New Delhi:** A CISF driver-constable and six airside workers failed the aviation regulator DGCA-mandated alcohol tests in the last two weeks, according to an official statement issued on Saturday. It also said 13 employees of different airlines and airports failed alcohol tests between September 16 and October 28. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in the statement, said that on November 2, a driver-constable of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), who was working at the Mumbai airport, tested positive in breath analyser examination. The aviation regulator on September 16 had issued rules for the tests to be conducted at all airports for airside workers, including those handling aircraft maintenance, air traffic control (ATC) and ground handling services.

## 22-yr-old snatcher held, aide escapes

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Police PCR unit has arrested a 22-year-old snatcher active in South Delhi area. The accused has been identified as Ram Sagar, a resident of Delhi's Chanakyapuri area. DCP (PCR) Sharat Kumar Sinha said that on November 8 at around 12 pm the staff comprising of ASI Duda Ram, woman constable Malti and constable Chet Ram were at Delhi Haat when a man approached them and said that two persons snatched his mobile phone and ran away. While chasing them, the police team reached near Sarojini Nagar where one snatcher was nabbed while another managed to flee with the snatched mobile phone, said the DCP. The accused has been handed over to local police of Sarojini Nagar police station.

## 1 arrested for firing over family dispute

**New Delhi:** A 22-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly opening fire and injuring a person in Dwarka's Shahabad Muhammadpur village, police said on Saturday. Shiv and his associates entered Sanskar's home and fired at him on November 2 because of a dispute with his uncle Vishal. During interrogation, it was revealed Shiv's elder sister was married to Vishal in 2016, but soon after the marriage, a marital discord took place and his sister left her marital home. After the incident, Shiv wanted to teach Vishal a lesson. A loaded country-made pistol was recovered from Shiv.

THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE

- The piper at the gates of dawn
- Sir Winston Churchill
- John Adams

Will help consolidating 'Hindu votebank', feels saffron party

## BJP hopeful SC verdict will favour it in Delhi elections

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

Desperately trying to revive its electoral prospects in Delhi, which is scheduled to face Assembly polls soon, the BJP is of the view that the Supreme Court's verdict on the Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid issue could help it in consolidating the "Hindu votebank," which otherwise gets divided into regional groups.

Already facing leadership crisis to take on Arvind Kejriwal led ruling AAP and also infested with factionalism, the BJP feels that the verdict will have a positive impact on its poll performance in Delhi, where the saffron party managed to win just three seats in 2015.

For the BJP poll managers, the apex court's verdict has come at a time when the AAP government has launched sops for its core votebank, including women, lower and lower-middle class, which have garnered a positive response. Though the BJP had retained the seven Lok Sabha seats but party's poll managers are of the view that they cannot repeat the same poll strategy in the Delhi Assembly polls as the voters will be more concerned about local issues.

The AAP had secured an absolute majority in 2015 by bagging 67 Assembly seats and a vote share of 54.3 percent. Interestingly, the BJP, which won just three seats, had managed a vote

## Cong, BJP & AAP welcome ruling, appeal for peace and harmony

SUNIL THAPLIYAL  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

For once, the AAP and the Delhi units of the BJP and the Congress were on the same page in welcoming the Supreme Court verdict on the Ayodhya dispute. Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said the judgement has ended the decades old dispute and appealed to people to maintain peace and harmony.

A meeting held at the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee office, under the leadership of DPCC president Subhash Chopra, passed a unanimous resolution honouring the verdict and asked the party workers to maintain restraint. Elated over the court order, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari took to harmonium to sing some verses for Lord Ram.

"We welcome the SC judgement. The dispute

share of 32.3 percent.

The BJP is also banking on the recent announcement by the Centre on providing ownership rights on properties to the residents of unauthorised settlements, which will benefit around 40 lakh residents.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had recently met some RWAs, told that the Centre will

**This verdict is not a victory  
or defeat of any community  
and you should maintain  
peace and harmony after  
the verdict**

— Manoj Tiwari,  
Delhi BJP president



of many years ended today. I appeal all to maintain peace and harmony," Mr Kejriwal tweeted. Mr Tiwari welcomed the judgment as "unprecedented and historic" and added it was not a victory or defeat of anyone. Mr Tiwari appealed to the people of Delhi to maintain peace and harmony.

"This verdict is not a victory or defeat of any community and you should maintain peace and harmony after the verdict," Mr Tiwari said. Ex-cricketer and BJP's East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir hailed the

Supreme Court's verdict and said the verdict was balanced.

"It's a historic judgement, this was a long pending issue. Further, I'd like to say that everyone should honour the court's decision. We must look forward to developing the nation and all communities and religions must work towards nation-building," said Mr Gambhir.

The AAP has urged all communities to respect the verdict and ensure that the social fabric of India, a country of "G a n g a - J a m u n a tehzeeb", is intact.

bring a bill in this regard in the upcoming winter session of the Parliament.

However, for the BJP, out of power in Delhi since 1998, the main problem area is not just leadership crisis or factionalism but also finding "winnable candidates."

Though the BJP is likely to improve its tally this time as some of the AAP

MLAs have been facing anti-incumbency or embroiled in some controversy, the ruling party, unlike the BJP, is not facing a leadership crisis. Speculation is rife within the Delhi BJP that the party's poll managers want to go without a chief ministerial face as their experience of going with a CM face in 2015 had been "disastrous."

## Air quality better, ₹90L fine on polluting units

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

Delhi recorded a decline in the pollution level on Saturday with the air quality moving from the "very poor" to "poor category" owing to favourable wind speed. The Central Pollution Control Board's daily bulletin registered the air quality index (AQI) at 283 at 4 pm, down from Friday's 330. Most of the 37 air quality monitoring stations in Delhi recorded air quality in the poor category.

Government air quality monitoring agency SAFAR said though the wind direction would be favourable for fire plume transport to the Delhi region, the wind speed is "expected to be on the higher side for the next three days, under the influence of a western disturbance".

The System for Air

Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) said the share of stubble burning in Delhi's pollution had been "very low" over the past couple of days.

The Supreme Court-mandated anti-pollution authority on Saturday said dirty fuel-based industries in Delhi and its suburbs will remain shut till November 11. The Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority also extended the ban on hot-mix plants and stone-crushers till November 11.

The Delhi government has imposed ₹90 lakh on polluting industries and those contributing to environmental degradation in industrial estates, an official said on Saturday. Executive engineer and junior engineer of Narela Industrial Area have been suspended for dereliction of duties.

## Divided opinion in JNU on SC ruling

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA  
New Delhi, Nov. 9

An uneasy calm prevailed in the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus soon after the Supreme Court pronounced its verdict in the Ayodhya dispute. While some students refrained themselves from commenting on the verdict, others had divided opinions over the matter.

An M.Phil student, with leanings towards the Left parties, refused to comment.

While having tea outside his hostel canteen, he said, "What's the point in talking about this matter when the court has

► There were, however, many students who felt that construction of both temple and mosque at the disputed site could have amicably solved this issue

already given its verdict?"

When asked what verdict he was expecting from the Supreme Court, he said, "Sorry, I do not want to comment on this controversial issue."

Another female student too refused to comment on the apex court's verdict.

"I am not satisfied with what the top court has decided. The judges could have taken a balanced approach while dealing with this sensitive matter," she said.

"We welcome this historical verdict and request fellow citizens to accept this verdict with grace. Now, as the path for the construction of the Lord Rama temple is clear, India will move forward by keeping people of all the faiths together," said Saurabh Sharma, the ABVP leader in JNU.

There were, however, many students who felt that construction of both temple and mosque at the

disputed site could have amicably solved this issue.

"I do not think either Hindus or Muslims would have objected to any such decision," said a Master's student, requesting anonymity. "I do not want my name to be dragged into any controversy. Already, our university is in news in connection with several controversial issues," she added.

Late in the evening, a student from a particular community staged a solo protest inside the campus as he was aggrieved at the verdict. A varsity official said, the student is alone and is not accompanied by anyone as of now.

## City Muslims not satisfied with apex court's ruling

'Temple, mosque at site would have been a better gesture'

SUNIL THAPLIYAL  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

Delhi's Muslim community is not satisfied with the Supreme Court's verdict paving way for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

A section of the Muslim community is of the view that the matter could have been amicably resolved had the top court allowed both the communities to construct their religious places at the disputed site.

There were others who said they feel betrayed as they had not been allowed to rebuild the mosque, which was destroyed by kar sevaks way back in 1992. "The best thing would have been to allow construction of both Ram temple and Babari mosque at the disputed site," said a middle-aged Showkeen Ahmed, who runs a shop in the Walled City. "Such a decision would have restored communal harmony between the two communities," he added.

Agreeing with Mr Ahmed, another resident of Okhla said the top court could have allotted more land to Hindus than Muslims.

"But the judges should have respected the sentiments of both communities by allowing construction of temple and mosque at the disputed site," he added.

Disagreeing with them, Hamida Sheikh, a resident of East Delhi, said that after the court verdict Muslims were feeling betrayed in the country.

"We are feeling insecure ever since BJP has come to power. Now, even the judiciary has disappointed us," Ms Sheikh said,

## No point in stretching issue further: Jama Masjid Imam

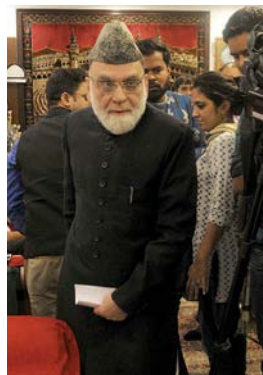
AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9

Accepting the Supreme Court verdict in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute case, the Imam of Jama Masjid in Delhi, Syed Ahmed Bukhari, said on Saturday that the matter should not be stretched further.

He said that Muslims in the country want peace and they had already said that they would accept whatever judgment the apex court delivers.

The Supreme Court, in a unanimous verdict on Saturday, cleared the way for the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya and directed the Centre to allot a 5-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a mosque.

"We accept the court order and the Hindu-Muslim issue which has



Imam of Jama Masjid  
Syed Ahmed Bukhari at a  
press meet on Saturday.  
— BIPLAB BANERJEE

been going on for several years should come to an end now," Mr Bukhari said in a press conference.

When asked about the possibility of a review petition being filed against the verdict, he said the matter should not be stretched.

adding that the mosque was demolished in the 19th century. "The entire demolition drive was captured on cameras. But there is no such proof to show the mosque was raised after demolishing Lord Rama's temple," she said.

Ms Sheikh's neighbour, Parvez, who works in a factory, said he too was disappointed with the Supreme Court verdict. "I was thinking that the judgement will be in our favour. But the court has

gone with the sentiments of the majority community of this country, which is very disturbing," he said.

West Delhi's Sushil Siddiqui said that all those people born after 1992 have grown up with the visuals showing how kar sevaks pulled down the Babari mosque. "It was for the judges to restore their faith in the judiciary by allowing the reconstruction of the mosque at the very same place," he said.

## 2 taken into custody for spreading rumours

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NOIDA, NOV. 9

Two people were taken into preventive custody on Saturday for allegedly spreading rumours on the Supreme Court's verdict in the Ayodhya land dispute case, police said.

"One of them had called up the police on its emergency number 100 to report a planned violence by a community but his claims were found untrue," SSP, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Vaibhav Krishna, said.

"The other is office-bearer of a local political outfit and has a history of making comments and remarks that incite communal discord," he told PTI, adding that both of them have been taken into preventive custody.

The district police chief warned that "anyone spreading rumours" which have an adverse impact on law and order "will be immediately arrested".

In a unanimous verdict, the court paved the way for the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site at Ayodhya, and directed the Centre to allot an alternative 5-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a new mosque at a "prominent" place in the holy town. — PTI

## DU students protest high-rise on campus

**New Delhi, Nov. 9:** Delhi University students on Saturday held a protest against the construction of a 39-storey building in the varsity's North Campus, alleging that it will overlook six women's hostels and invade their privacy.

The students have been on an indefinite strike against the construction of the building. Alleging corruption in the process of granting permission to the builder to construct the building, the students burnt two effigies — "Mr Corruption" and "Mrs

Corruption". The protest was also supported by the Delhi University administration, which has constituted a special task force for the matter.

"Land acquired for public purpose cannot be used for private profit under the law. The permission granted to the private builder is illegal and violates the statutory provisions of Master Plan of Delhi, 2021," said professor Bipin Tiwari, a political science teacher and member of the task-force. — PTI



Sexual abuse

A French former model and actress accuses Oscar-winning director Roman Polanski of raping her in a Swiss ski resort when she was a teenager



We have a duty to use all we have to defend what was so hard-won

— Mike Pompeo  
US secretary of state

IN BRIEF

Nawaz seeks nod to travel abroad

Islamabad: The family of former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif are trying to get a travel ban against him lifted so that he can go abroad for medical treatment, one of his close aides said. Sharif, Pakistan's longest-serving premier, was ousted from his third term in office in 2017 and later imprisoned on corruption charges. But his health deteriorated in prison. Last month, he suffered a minor heart attack, his party said, adding that he is suffering from an autoimmune blood disorder. Sharif also suffers from high blood pressure and his kidney functions are deteriorating.

'Iran enriching 5% uranium'

Tehran: Iran said on Saturday that it was now enriching uranium to five percent, after a series of steps back from its commitments under a troubled 2015 accord with major powers. The deal set a 3.67 percent limit for uranium enrichment but Iran announced it would no longer respect it after Washington unilaterally abandoned the agreement last year and reimposed crippling sanctions. "Based on our needs and what we have been ordered, we are currently producing five percent," Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said.

Brazil celebrates Lula's release

Brasilia: Brazil's leftist former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva left prison after a judge ordered his release, startling financial markets and reigniting both ends of the political spectrum with calls for demonstrations in coming days. As he walked out of the jail that held him for 19 months on a bribery conviction, Lula raised a defiant fist in the air to the cheers of a crowd of supporters from his Workers Party who waved red flags and held "Free Lula" banners. His release is expected to further polarize a country that elected far-right President Jair Bolsonaro last year in a vote that Lula said was "robbed" from his Workers Party, which governed the country from 2002 to 2016. Investors were jolted by the prospect of Lula returning to the political stage.

OZ BUSHFIRES DESTROY 150 HOMES, 2 DIE

Melbourne, Nov. 9: Two people have died, five are missing and at least 150 homes have been destroyed as bushfires rage across eastern Australia, authorities said on Saturday. The New South Wales Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) confirmed two people had been killed by a fire near Glen Innes. One body was discovered in a vehicle and a woman died after being found suffering from burns. Five other people remain unaccounted with Prime Minister Scott Morrison saying he feared the number of deaths could rise. "These fires have already claimed two lives and as we get access to further areas that have been cut off we are expecting worse news again," Morrison said. Reserve members of Australia's armed forces may be used to assist emergency services and support payments were being made available for those directly affected by fires. This is one of Australia's worst bushfire seasons and it is occurring even before the start of the Southern Hemisphere summer, with parts of the country already crippled by severe drought. — Agencies

FACEBOOK SORRY ABOUT BIAS AGAINST BLACK STAFF

San Francisco, Nov. 9: Facebook apologised on Friday after black employees anonymously shared feelings of workplace bias in an online post. The post shared at Medium by a "FB Blind" profile laid out perceived slights by managers, white colleagues, and the human resources department. "No one at Facebook, or anywhere, should have to put up with this behavior," corporate communications vice president Bertie Thomson said in response to an AFP query. "We are sorry. It goes against everything that we stand for as a company. We're listening and working hard to do better." Incidents described in the Medium post included being targeted for negative performance reviews or snide comments. "On the inside, we are sad. Angry. Oppressed. Depressed," the post read. "And treated every day through the micro and macro aggressions as if we do not belong here." The anonymous post maintained that the atmosphere at Facebook has worsened in the past year when it came to non-white workers being recognized, empowered and treated equitably. "The problem is not just with black employees of different genders," the post read. "We are remaining anonymous because Facebook creates a hostile culture where anyone that is non-white is made to feel fear for their job and their safety to report any bad behaviours." — AFP

■ The post shared at Medium by a 'FB Blind' profile laid out perceived slights by managers, white colleagues, and the human resources department

BLOOMBERG MAY BE IN U.S. PREZ RACE

Concord, Nov. 9: New York business tycoon Michael Bloomberg has paved the way for a shot at the US presidency, registering as a candidate in the Alabama Democratic primary race before deadline. Although the 77-year-old billionaire has not publicly announced his run, his inclusion among a crowded field kept his options open for mounting a concerted bid to topple a fellow New Yorker, President Donald Trump. Analysts say a Bloomberg candidacy could do the most damage to the prospects of frontrunner Joe Biden, but the former vice-president put on a brave face and said he was not worried Bloomberg would draw away centrist voters. Bloomberg's name was posted among 17 candidates on the Alabama Democratic Party's website. — AFP

Germans mark 30 years of Berlin Wall's collapse



People stuck flowers in remains of the Berlin Wall during a commemoration ceremony to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall at the Wall memorial site at Bernauer Strasse in Berlin on Saturday. — AP

India rejects Pakistan's Ayodhya ruling remark

VINEETA PANDEY  
KARTARPUR, NOV. 9

India has reacted sharply to Pakistan's statement on the Ayodhya verdict. "We reject the unwarranted and gratuitous comments made by Pakistan on the judgement of the Supreme Court of India on a civil matter that is completely internal to India. It pertains to the rule of law and equal respect for all faiths, concepts that are not part of their ethos. So, while Pakistan's lack of comprehension is not surprising, their pathological compulsion to comment on our internal affairs with the obvious intent of spreading hatred is condemnable" ministry of external affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said on Saturday minutes after Pakistan foreign ministry issued a statement on the Ayodhya judgment.

VERDICT WON'T CAUSE TENSION IN BANGLADESH, ASSURES FM

Dhaka: Bangladesh will study the Indian Supreme Court's historic verdict in the Ayodhya case, Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen said on Saturday and expressed confidence that it won't cause any tension in his country. "We won't be in any tension regarding this (Ayodhya land dispute verdict). We will expect that peace will prevail in India also," Momen told reporters on the sidelines of a sports event here. He said Bangladesh's heritage of interfaith harmony would help keep peace in the country. "All of us — Muslims, Christians, Hindus and (Buddhists) are living in harmony," he said about Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority nation. — PTI

ist ideology in India, based on the belief of Hindu supremacy and exclusion, is a threat to regional peace and stability," Pakistan statement said. It added that the Indian government should ensure the protection of Muslims lives, rights and properties and avoid being "again a silent spectator of Muslims becoming the victims of Hindu extremists and zealots." Pakistan has also asked international community, the United Nations and other human rights organizations to restrain India "from its pursuit of an extremist ideology and to ensure equal rights and protection of the minorities in India." Earlier, Pak Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi questioned the timing of the Ayodhya verdict that came on the same day when Kartarpur Corridor was to be inaugurated.

TAKEAWAYS FROM TRUMP IMPEACHMENT

■ A rough transcript of the call on July 25 between Trump and Zelenskiy confirmed the whistleblower's most damaging allegation: that Trump asked Zelenskiy to investigate whether Biden.	■ Text messages show that pressure was exerted on Zelenskiy to make a public statement committing himself to investigating Burisma before he would be allowed to meet with Trump at the White House, part of the "quid pro quo" — that is at the heart of the impeachment inquiry.	■ Sondland, testified to investigators that Trump largely delegated Ukraine policy to Giuliani, who at the time was seeking to dig up dirt on Biden, a leading candidate for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination.
■ Top US diplomat in Ukraine, William Taylor, said Trump made the release of US security aid to Ukraine contingent to Biden investigations	■ Trump's acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, acknowledged that the aid to Ukraine was linked but later contradicted himself in a statement from the White House that ruled out a quid pro quo.	■ The former US ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, testified that Trump had ousted her from her position based on "unfounded and false claims" after she had come under attack by Giuliani.
■ Trump has contended that he did not hold up the \$391 million in US military aid to pressure Zelenskiy.	■ Volker, the former special envoy to Ukraine, testified that he had helped to connect Giuliani with a top aide to Ukraine's president as the president's personal lawyer continued to seek information damaging to the Bidens.	■ Michael McKinley, a former adviser to Pompeo, testified that he quit a few days before his appearance before congressional committees because of departmental leadership's unwillingness to defend Yovanovitch from the attacks on her.
	■ Trump's former national security adviser John Bolton said he will not testify until a federal court decides whether current and former administration officials like him must cooperate with the investigation.	■ US national security. Army Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman said he heard Sondland pressure Ukrainian officials to investigate the Bidens in order to get a coveted meeting with Trump

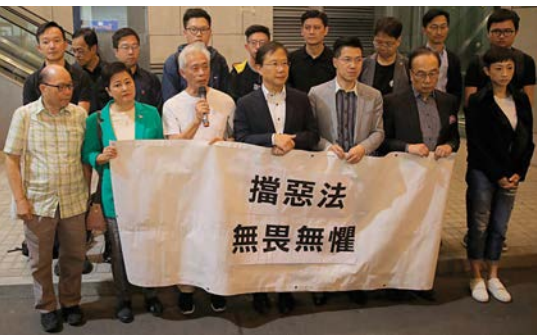


NEW | HIGH The plane is among the proud experiments Nasa has performed Nasa unveils first electric plane X-57



Edward Air Force Base. Nov. 9: Nasa, most prominent for its many Florida-launched exploits into space, showcased an early version of its first all-electric experimental aircraft, the X-57 'Maxwell', at its lesser-known aeronautics lab in the California desert.

Nasa also showed off a newly built simulator that allows engineers, and pilots, to get the feel of what it will be like to manoeuvre the finished version of the X-57 in flight, even as the plane remains under development. The Maxwell is the latest in a proud line of experimental aircraft the Nasa has developed over many decades for many purposes, including the bullet-shaped Bell X-1 that first broke the sound barrier and the X-15 rocket plane flown by Neil Armstrong before he joined the Apollo moon team. The Maxwell will be the agency's first crewed X-plane to be developed in two decades. While private companies have been developing all-electric planes and hovercraft for years, Nasa's X-57 venture is aimed at designing and proving technology according to standards that commercial manufacturers can adapt for government certification. Those will include standards for airworthiness and safety. — Reuters



Pro-democracy lawmakers Leung Yiu-chung (third left), Kwok Ka-ki (centre) and Gary Fan (third right) protest outside police headquarters against the arrest of their colleagues, holding a banner that reads 'defeat the evil law, fearless' in Hong Kong on Saturday. — AP

Pro-democracy lawmakers held after HK unrest

Hong Kong, Nov. 9: Seven Hong Kong pro-democracy lawmakers were either detained or faced arrest on Saturday, a move that could escalate public fury a day after the death of a university student linked to months of anti-government protests in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory. Protesters vented their anger over Chow Tsz-Lok's death and vowed not to give up their resistance at a police-approved prayer rally on Saturday night, with frequent chants of "Hong Kong people, revenge" and "Free Hong Kong." The 22-year-old died on Friday, succumbing to injuries four days after falling from a parking garage when police fired tear gas during clashes with protesters. Although the circumstance of his death is unclear, many blame police who have been accused of heavy-handed tactics including widespread use of tear gas and pepper spray since the unrest began in June. Police said three lawmakers were detained on Saturday and charged with obstructing the local assembly during a raucous May 11 meeting over a now-shelved China extradition bill that sparked five months of protests calling for democratic reforms. The others received summons to turn up at police stations Saturday to face arrest. All seven are to appear in court Monday. Pro-democracy lawmakers slammed the government clampdown as a calculated move after Chow's death to provoke more violence as an excuse to postpone or cancel Nov. 24 district elections — polls viewed as a barometer of public sentiment amid the unrest. "We'll say no to their plans," lawmaker Tanya Chan told a news conference. "It is a de facto referendum for all Hong Kong voters to cast their vote and say no to police brutality and say no to our unjust system." She said the district elections will also send a crucial message to Beijing, accused by protesters of interfering in the city's freedoms and rights promised when the former British colony returned to Chinese control in 1997. — AP

FB deletes name of 'whistleblower'

San Francisco, Nov. 9: The Facebook said on Saturday that it was deleting the name of the person who has been identified in conservative circles as the whistleblower who triggered a congressional impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump's actions. The company said Friday that mention of the potential whistleblower's name violates Facebook's "coordinating harm policy," which prohibits material that could identify a "witness, informant, or activist." Facebook said it was removing mentions of the alleged whistleblower's name and would revisit this decision if the name was widely published in the media or used by public figures in debate. The policy is not new. Facebook said it has been applying it to the whistleblower case and removing the person's name for a few days. On Twitter, though, the alleged whistleblower's name was circulating widely on Friday. The company does not have a policy against identifying whistleblowers by name and is not removing the posts. Some of the stories identifying the person came from the conservative news site Breitbart, which Facebook counts as one of its news partners in a newly launched news section on its app. However, the company said it was also removing identifying posts on the whistleblower from Breitbart. — AP

Wealth of world's richest people falls

Zurich, Nov. 9: The world's richest people became a little less well off last year, according to a report by UBS and PwC, as geopolitical turmoil and volatile equity markets reduced the wealth of billionaires for the first time since 2015. Billionaires' wealth fell by 4.3% globally to \$8.5 trillion last year, the UBS/PwC report found, with a sharp decline in Greater China, including Hong Kong, and the Asia-Pacific region more broadly. Private wealth in Hong Kong fell 4% in 2018 to \$319.8 billion, the report showed, with months of anti-government protests in the Chinese-ruled city and an economic recession clouding the outlook this year. Some Hong Kong tycoons have begun moving personal wealth offshore, Reuters reported in June, as concerns deepen over the protests. "We haven't seen any significant outflows, we have been tracking some of these numbers on a regular basis," said Amy Lo, UBS co-head of Asia Pacific wealth management. "Our clients have been diversifying all along, it's not in the last one year." Private banks including the world's largest wealth manager UBS have felt the effects of US-China trade tensions and global political uncertainties, as clients shied away from trading and taking on debt in favour of hoarding cash. — Reuters



## Development

**Survey of 575-km long Katra-Delhi express road corridor completed, says Jitendra Singh**



**Pakistan should not interfere in Kashmir and stop 'eyeing' Punjab**

— Amarinder Singh  
Punjab chief minister

## IN BRIEF

### SUV of Maha CM's aid stolen in Nagpur

**Nagpur:** The SUV of the head of a state-run corporation and a close aide of Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis was stolen on Saturday in Laxmi Nagar area of Nagpur in Maharashtra. The theft of Maharashtra state mining corporation chairman Sandip Joshi's Toyota Innova Crysta car took place in the morning from outside his house, an official said. "Mr Joshi gave the keys of the vehicle for washing to a man who came there claiming he had been sent by the regular car cleaner. He soon vanished with the car," he said. The regular car cleaner Mangesh told Mr Joshi he had not sent anyone for the work.

### 5 held for duping man in Odisha

**Bhubaneswar:** The cyber wing of Odisha police on Saturday arrested five people for allegedly duping a person on pretext of installing a mobile tower on his land, police said. The accused were arrested from Salt Lake, on the eastern fringes of Kolkata in West Bengal. The victim used to get calls from the accused impersonating as employees of a telecom operator and was lured by the promise of good returns for installation of a mobile tower on his land, Rourkela SP K. Siba Subramani said here.

### Youth can take India to pinnacle: Speaker

**Bhubaneswar:** Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Saturday said that India enjoys a huge demographic advantage over other nations and this would lead the country to new heights. "India enjoys demographic dividend and our young population is capable of taking the country to new heights," Mr Birla told the graduating students at the 15th annual convocation of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar. Bachelors, masters and PhD. degrees were awarded to 6578 students of 2018 - 19 graduating batch at the annual convocation, which was also graced by Odisha Assembly Speaker Dr Surjya Narayana Patro and Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha member Aparajita Sarangi.

### BULBUL CYCLONE: HEAVY RAINFALL LASHES ODISHA

**Bhubaneswar:** As cyclone Bulbul on Saturday slowly moved towards the Odisha coast, several coastal districts in the state experienced heavy rainfall and gusty winds reaching up to 110 km per hour. The rains began from Friday midnight and continued in coastal areas on Saturday. Heavy rains accompanied by gusty winds left a trail of destruction at Paradip, Dhamdra and coastal parts of Odisha. As per reports, standing paddy crops in several hectares of agricultural land were damaged. Several roads in Paradip and Dhamdra were blocked due to uprooting of trees. Paradip Port authorities suspended operations partially from Friday midnight till Saturday noon because of heavy rains and strong winds. Special relief commissioner (SRL) Pradeep Jena claimed that Dhamra in Odisha's Bhadrak district recorded a wind speed of 110 Kmph. Over 2000 people in different parts of Jagatsinghpur and Balasore districts were evacuated to safer places as a precautionary measure by Odisha.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi eats langar after inaugurating the passenger terminal building of the Kartarpur corridor on the Indian side, also known as Integrated Check Post, in Gurdaspur on Saturday. — PTI

# PM opens Kartarpur corridor

**Modi flags off first 'jatha' of pilgrims, Manmohan Singh among visitors**

**Dera Baba Nanak, Nov. 9:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the Kartarpur corridor, flagging off the first batch of over 500 Indian pilgrims here, including former prime minister Manmohan Singh and union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal. The corridor links Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, to Dera Baba Nanak shrine in this Punjab district.

Modi flagged off the first batch of pilgrims led by Akal Takhat Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib through the corridor, which was thrown open days ahead of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev on November 12. The Prime Minister inaugurated the passenger terminal building of the corridor on the Indian side, also known as the Integrated Check Post, where pilgrims will get clearance to travel through the newly-built 4.5

■ **THE state-of-the-art passenger terminal has been constructed on 15 acres of land**

■ **THE FULLY air-conditioned building, akin to an airport, has over 50 immigration counters for facilitating about 5,000 pilgrims a day**

km-long corridor.

India had signed an agreement with the neighbouring nation on October 24 on the modalities for operationalisation of the corridor at 'Zero Point' of the international boundary at Dera Baba Nanak.

The first batch of pilgrims included Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, former chief minister Parkash Singh Badal, Sukhbir Singh Badal and Navjot Singh Sidhu. Shiromani Gurd-

wara Parbandhak Committee members and all the 117 MLAs and MPs from Punjab were also part of the 'jatha' (delegation).

Before dedicating the corridor to the nation, Modi partook langar (community kitchen) along with Punjab Governor V P Singh Badnore, Amarinder Singh and state Congress president Sunil Jakhar. Modi, who donned a saffron coloured turban was shown a model of the Kartarpur corridor.

At the time of flagging off the jatha, Modi met Manmohan Singh, who was accompanied by his wife Gursharan Kaur.

The state-of-the-art passenger terminal building, with a design inspired by 'Khanda', a symbol of faith in Sikh community, has been constructed on 15 acres of land.

The fully air-conditioned building, akin to an airport, has over 50 immigration counters for facilitating about 5,000 pilgrims a day.

— PTI

## PAKISTAN USES OPPORTUNITY TO RAKE UP KASHMIR ISSUE

**VINEETA PANDEY  
KARTARPUR, NOV. 9**

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and his foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Saturday used the Kartarpur Corridor opening as an opportunity to raise the issue of Kashmir.

Mr Khan said that India and Pakistan need to sit and resolve the issue to make a new beginning just the way Kartarpur Corridor dream of the Sikh community has been fulfilled. However, no one from the Indian side talked anything controversial or mentioned Kashmir. In fact, Navjot Singh Sidhu and Giani Harmet Singh, head of the Indian jatha were the only two who spoke at the event.

The Indian delegation, had travelled through the Kartarpur Corridor



Imran Khan

inaugurated on the Indian side by PM Modi.

"Today what has happened is that our relationship (India and Pakistan) has come to a halt. If Narendra Modi is listening to me then he should understand justice brings peace. Give justice to Kashmir. If borders are opened then think of progress and peace it will bring. Leaders unite people. They do not spread hatred. Those who spread hatred for votes are not leaders," said Mr Khan.

## Congress rally in Delhi postponed

**AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 9**

The Congress Party on Saturday postponed its rally, on the economic slowdown scheduled for December 1, citing the increased security measures in view of the Ayodhya verdict.

Sources said that a new date would be announced shortly. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Congress working committee, which was held on Saturday morning to decide the party strategy on the Ayodhya issue.

The Supreme Court directed the Centre to make necessary arrangements for the construction of a Temple at the disputed site by forming a trust and to give five acres of suitable land to Sunni Waqf Board for a mosque at an alternate location in Ayodhya.

Congress had decided to keep up the pressure on the government on the economic front and had decided to hold a massive

► **The decision was taken at a meeting of the Congress working committee, which was held on Saturday morning to decide the party strategy on the Ayodhya issue**

rally at Ramlila Maidan when the winter session of the Parliament would be on. The party had also roped in other Opposition parties.

Congress leaders, along with the representatives of 12 opposition parties, had a meeting on November 4 at the Constitution Club where they discussed the issue of economic slowdown and distress in the farm sector and agreed to stage a united protest.

Congress has also been holding block level and district level protests across the country on the economic slowdown and the agrarian distress from November 5, which would continue till November 15.

## Sonia Gandhi thanks SPG for service, terms it 'outstanding'

**New Delhi, Nov. 9:** Congress president Sonia Gandhi termed the Special Protection Group (SPG) an "outstanding" force, and thanked it on Saturday for protecting her and her family with dedication for 28 years. In a letter to SPG director Arun Kumar Sinha, Ms Gandhi expressed her deep appreciation and gratitude to the force for protecting her and her family with "dedication, discretion and personal care". The elite SPG security cover given to Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul and daughter Priyanka

was withdrawn on Friday, 28 years after the elite force's continuous deployment, and it was replaced by the 'Z-plus' security of the CRPF. "Ever since our security was put in the hands of the SPG, my family and I have felt a great sense of reassurance and confidence that we are in the best possible hands. Every day, for the last 28 years, we have experienced the unfailing high professionalism, dedication to duty and sincerity with which the SPG protect us," she said in her letter. — PTI

## Many believe former cricketer Sidhu was man behind Kartarpur Corridor

# Sikhs across world excited on opening

**VINEETA PANDEY  
KARTARPUR, NOV. 9**

Sikh community from all over the world is excited about the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor. Many Indian Sikhs have come to Pakistan through the Attari-Wagah crossing to take part in the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Devji.

Kartarpur is Guru Nanak Dev's final resting place while Nanakana Sahib is his birthplace. In the absence of place available to stay in Kartarpur, the pilgrims are staying in Nankana Sahib.

Many of the pilgrims, who have come to the Kartarpur Gurdwara in the past, find a complete transformation of the area. Initially, there was no complex, but the gurdwara now stands in between a massive complex that has dormitories and medical rooms as well.



Pakistan's PM Imran Khan with Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu in Kartarpur on Saturday.

"I had come here earlier too, but today I can see a big change. 7 years back, it was just the gurdwara in middle of paddy fields with frogs jumping all around. This place is completely transformed," said 70-year-old Raghubeer Kaur from Australia. She is a part of the group of 80 Indian Australians, who are vis-

iting Nankana Sahib and Kartarpur.

Similar groups have come from United Kingdom, New Zealand, Germany, Canada, Italy, Malaysia, United States and India.

Most of them have come in big groups. In fact, one group from UK consists of 300 people.

"It's a great moment for

us. We are very happy to be here. The Corridor will make it easier," said Manjeet Singh from Haryana.

However, many feel that Kartarpur Corridor is only one part of the overall pilgrimage. For Nankana Sahib and other gurdwaras, they still have to come through Wagah route as people coming through corridor cannot enter Pakistan in any other way or travel to Nankana Sahib.

People were thankful to Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan for creating such an infrastructure. They also believe that the former Indian cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu was the man behind the Kartarpur Corridor, which became possible due to his relationship with Imran Khan.

However, amid euphoria is also a tension. Politicians from Punjab have apprehension to the security.

Bharat Bhushan Ashu, MLA from India's Punjab, who came through the Kartarpur Corridor as part of jatha, said that there is always a possibility of misuse by certain elements and the government has to be on toes. His concerns are reasonable given the fact that one of the pilgrims — Jaygreet from Sangroor — turned into Sikh militant, famously known as Jarnail Singh Bhinderewala, as a young leader.

However, the majority of the pilgrims felt that the Corridor would help connect people and promote brotherhood. Interestingly, the opening day of the corridor saw a unique combination of multi-faith people under one roof at Kartarpur — Sikh pilgrims, Hindu devotees, Christian diplomats, and Muslim assistants along with management staff. "Faith unites", said one of the pilgrims from Germany.

The former NRC coordinator by Assam police following complaints of wrongful exclusions in the citizens' list published on August 31.

A native of Madhya Pradesh, Mr Hajela is a 1995-batch IAS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre with B.Tech in Electronics from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. Before the NRC posting, he had held the position of mission director, national rural health mission; commissioner and secretary, health and family welfare. A total of 3,30,27,661 people had applied to be included in the NRC.

The former National Register of Citizens coordinator had courted several controversies ever since the exclusion of 40 lakh people from the draft list. His report to the Supreme Court, suggesting that those now seeking inclusion into the list be allowed to submit only 10 out of the original 15 "list A" documents, had also earned the wrath of several civil society organisations.

The final NRC, which was published on August 31, found a total of 3, 11, 21,004 persons eligible for inclusion in the registry leaving out 19, 06,657 persons.



## Support for BCCI

The BCCI has got a shot in the arm after England Board chairman Colin Graves intimated ICC that they will not support the global body's bid to have a flagship event every year from 2023 to 2031



There is a hint of MS Dhoni in his captaincy. He uses part-time bowlers like Dhoni.

— Irfan Pathan on Bangladesh skipper Mahmudullah Riyad

### SHORT TAKES

## BCCI AGM to be held on Dec. 1

**New Delhi:** The BCCI will have its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in three years under Sourav Ganguly's leadership in Mumbai on December 1 where the old guard of the BCCI would like to revisit the amended constitution as per Supreme Court's August 9, 2018 order. Since it's the prerogative of an elected body to call an AGM, the BCCI had to wait for the newly-elected set-up under Ganguly to take charge at a General Body meeting in Mumbai on October 23. "We have received a circular from the BCCI that the AGM will be held on December 1 in Mumbai," an office-bearer of a prominent state unit said on conditions of anonymity. Among the points that the members would like to revisit are age-cap of 70 years, cooling off period of three years after a period of six years along with curtailing powers of the executives including the Chief Executive Officer. However for any amendment in the registered constitution as per Supreme Court judgement on August 9, 2018, the BCCI will have to appeal to the Apex court for the particular change. "Obviously the old guard of BCCI wants to come back in power. Therefore all the principal points of Lodha Reforms will be reviewed," said a member of the state association. — PTI

## Barty crush Garcia to level Fed final

**Perth:** Ashleigh Barty played the "best match of her life" to crush Caroline Garcia 6-0, 6-0 and haul Australia back into contention at the Fed Cup final Saturday after France's Kristina Mladenovic whipped Ajla Tomljanovic. The world number one, fresh from winning the WTA Finals in China, came on court in Perth under pressure after the nervous Tomljanovic was thrashed 6-1, 6-1. But in searing 38 Celsius (100 Fahrenheit) heat she kept her cool to embarrass a stunned Garcia in a rare double bagel, with the Frenchwoman having no answers to the Barty armoury in front of 13,000 fans. It left the tie evenly poised at 1-1 ahead of Sunday's reverse singles and a doubles clash if needed, with Australia targeting an eighth title and first in 45 years, while France are seeking a third, their first since 2003. "This is remarkable, I couldn't have asked for a more perfect match. I think that's the best tennis match I've ever played in my life," said Barty. "I felt like I served really well, made a lot of returns. Most importantly I played the big points well. I really wanted to assert myself and I was able to do that really well today." The French Open champion, capping a breakthrough season, was imperious, firing down pinpoint first serves and effortlessly pushing Garcia around the court, forcing errors. She set the tone by breaking Garcia's first service game. — AFP

## SATWIK-CHIRAG GO DOWN TO WORLD NO.1 PAIR IN SEMIS

**Fuzhou, Nov. 9:** The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's impressive run came to an end after they lost to three-time defending champions Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo of Indonesia in the semi-final of \$ 700,000 China Open here on Saturday. The world number 9 Indian pair lost 16-21 20-22 to the top seeds and world number one Marcus and Kevin to bow out of the BWF World Tour Super 750 tournament here. This was the eighth successive loss for Satwik and Chirag against the Indonesian pair. Satwik and Chirag, who had won their maiden

Super 500 title at the Thailand Open in August before reaching the finals at the French Open Super 750, played their hearts out during the 40-minute final but it was not enough in the end. This was Satwik and Chirag's third loss this year against the world number 1 pair. The Indian duo opened up a 7-4 lead early on but they lacked the angles in their attack as their opponents managed to enter the break with a 11-9 lead after Satwik faltered with his return. Kevin was simply brilliant near the net as the Indonesian duo quickly jumped to 14-9. The Indonesian pair dominated the fast-paced rallies. — PTI

## India and Bangladesh face off in T20 decider today

**Nagpur, Nov. 9:** India will be eyeing their first T20 International series win at home this season when they take on Bangladesh in the decisive third game here on Sunday, with the hope that their fringe players contribute significantly to a victory. In the absence of some senior players, including skipper Virat Kohli, India's primary objective of the T20 series was to identify the core of players for the T20 World Cup next year. Not much was achieved on that front in the first two games barring the successful comeback of leggie Yuzvendra Chahal, who once again proved his wicket-taking ability in the middle overs. After Chahal and Co. restricted Bangladesh to 153 for six in Rajkot, skipper Rohit Sharma blew the opposition away with a sublime 85 to level the series 1-1. Washington Sundar, who has been



Rishabh Pant



(From left) India bowling coach Bharat Arun, captain Rohit Sharma and head coach Ravi Shastri are in an animated discussion during a training session in Nagpur on Saturday. — AP

### LIVE on TV

India vs Bangladesh  
3rd T20  
on Star Sports 1, HD  
FROM 7 PM

preferred to chinaman Kuldeep Yadav, has kept things tight but has not been as threatening as Chahal. Pacer Khaleel Ahmed leaked runs in both the games, increasing the possibility of Shardul Thakur partnering Deepak Chahar on Sunday. Krunal Pandya, who has been a regular in the Indian T20 squad for a

while, is yet to pick up a wicket though he has not had much to do with the bat. Rohit fielded the same

team in Delhi and Rajkot, leaving the likes of Manish Pandey, Sanju Samson and Rahul Chahar to warm the bench. If not in Nagpur, they could get an opportunity in the following home series against the West Indies next month. Even when the senior players return after this series, India will have plenty to

ponder over their team composition, especially in the batting department where they lack the firepower in comparison to teams like Australia and England. Shreyas Iyer has looked impressive in the limited time he has spent in the middle while K L Rahul is yet to make an impact, just like rookie all-rounder Shivam Dube. — PTI

# Please leave Pant alone: Rohit

**Nagpur, Nov. 9:** Stand-in India captain Rohit Sharma on Saturday strongly backed an under-fire Rishabh Pant, urging critics to "leave him alone" as he is only trying to execute the team management's strategy. Pant, whose shot selection has come under the scanner on several occasions, became the centre of unwanted attention due to his poor

glovework in the second T20 against Bangladesh in Rajkot. He botched up a stumping of Liton Das with the third umpire ruling that his hands were slightly in front of the stumps, when he dislodged the balls. "You know there is a lot of talk happening about Rishabh Pant every day, every minute. I just feel that he needs to be allowed to do what he wants to do on the field. I would

request everyone to keep their eyes away from Rishabh Pant for a while," skipper Rohit said. "He is a fearless cricketer and we (team management) want him to have that freedom. And if you guys take your eyes off him for sometime, it will allow him to perform even better," added Rohit. Not so long ago, Pant was the preferred choice in all three formats but Wriddhiman Saha played

ahead of him in the three Tests against South Africa at home last month only on the basis of superior glovework. "He is a young guy, 22, trying to make his mark in international cricket. Every move he makes on the field, people start talking about him. It is not fair. I think we should allow him to play his cricket which actually he also wants to do," Rohit said. — PTI

## Target India's bowling, says Bangla coach

**Nagpur, Nov. 9:** Bangladesh coach Russell Domingo on Saturday said his team will be targeting a rather inexperienced Indian bowling attack to upstage the hosts in the T20 series decider here on Sunday. The Indian team is without the services of injured pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Hardik Pandya with Khaleel Ahmed, Deepak Chahal and W. Sundar shouldering the bowling responsibilities in the three-match series. "It's no secret that they got reasonably an inexperienced bowling attack. If we bat well, stick to our strategies we can put their bowling attack under pressure," said Domingo.

"So look, they are good side but we do think that if we bat up potentially, we can put their bowling attack under pressure." Team batting second ended up as the winner in both the games, making toss all the more crucial. "I think dew has affected (the games). Toss has played a role, both teams batting second have come around top." — PTI



Bangladesh players during a training session at Nagpur. — AP

### BOXING OLYMPIC QUALIFIER

# No trials, coach for consistency

**GANDHARV KAMALA**  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 9

The Boxing Federation of India may be lining up a trial bout between Mary Kom and Nikhat Zareen to settle the high-profile selection dispute but it may not be all about them. There are two more boxers in fray who will vie to win the four-woman contest to be held on December 29 and 30 in New Delhi and make it to the first Olympics qualifying event in China.

The much debated trials in the women's 51kg category will have Mary Kom pitted against three boxers — gold and silver medalists from the senior nationals, and another pugilist picked by coaches based on her performance at the national camp and boxing league. Currently, Mary is No.1, Nikhat second, Vanlal Duati third and a fourth one would be named by the coaches. The semifinals will see No.1 vs No.4 and No.2 vs No.3, which means Mary and Nikhat can only clash for the coveted Olympic Qualifier spot if they make the final at the Trials.

BFI's High Performance Director Santiago Nieva preferred consistency over trials though. "I don't believe in selection trials. It's a mere waste of time and energy to be honest. If boxers want to train in India or overseas they will not be able to give their 100 per cent either in the gym or in the ring. The constant burden of having to prove themselves at a trial and not in the ring, adds pressure," Santiago told this newspaper from Goa. "Let's say there is a major tournament in a month's time and a boxer is preparing for the same. Will the



Mary Kom

boxer have a single-minded dedication towards training or would she/he be worried about trials? And what happens if the boxer is injured during trials? You lose your best boxer in that weight category to an injury. What next? You send the second or the third best but not the best boxer in that weight! So I think we should do away with the selection trials and reward the consistent performer at international events," the Argentine explained. "In August, 2019 both Rafael Bergamasco (foreign coach of the women's team) and myself suggested a road map for 2020 Olympics. We proposed that gold and silver medalists in the women's categories at the Worlds will get a direct entry for the first Olympics qualifiers in China. So, world medalists Amit Panghal (52kg) and Manish Kaushik (63kg) will not have to attend trials," he said. "A spot in the rest of the six men's categories (57kg, 69kg, 75kg, 81kg, 91kg, +91kg) and all the weight categories in women's (51kg, 60kg, 64kg, 69kg, and 75kg) are up for grabs," Santiago informed.

# Chelsea's sixth win on the spin

## Weakened City offer Liverpool chance to increase EPL lead

**London, Nov. 9:** Chelsea secured a sixth straight Premier League win to move up to second as the inform Tammy Abraham and Christian Pulisic struck to beat Crystal Palace 2-0. Abraham ended Palace's dogged defensive resistance with a simple finish from William's deft through ball seven minutes into the second half before Pulisic headed home a loose ball 11 minutes from time to seal all three points. Chelsea edge a point clear of Manchester City and to within five of leaders Liverpool, who host City in a highly-anticipated clash on Sunday.

**Liverpool, Nov. 9:** Liverpool have lived through many false dawns in the 29 years since last lifting a league title, but the class of 2019/20 have the chance to prove they are the real deal when champions Manchester City visit Anfield on Sunday. City's relentless hunger to push the bar

to new heights under Pep Guardiola has kept Liverpool waiting. Despite posting the third highest points tally in English top flight history last season with 97, Liverpool lost out by a solitary point as City backed up their 100-point campaign with 98 to retain the title. — AFP

A 4-4 draw with Ajax on Tuesday took the tally of goals Chelsea's prior 18 games this season to 70 at an average of nearly four per game. However, the



Crystal Palace's defender James Tomkins (left) vies with Chelsea's striker Tammy Abraham — AFP