

SC JUDGEMENT ON AYODHYA

Stand vindicated, moment of fulfilment for me: Advani

AGENCIES
New Delhi



"I join all my countrymen in wholeheartedly welcoming the historic judgement delivered by the the Supreme Court today in the Ayodhya matter"

BJP veteran L.K. Advani, the most prominent political face of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, on Saturday said the historic Supreme Court judgment on the Ayodhya issue has vindicated his stand and he feels deeply blessed over the verdict paving the way for construction of a magnificent Ram temple.

Describing it as a moment of "fulfilment" for him, Advani, who celebrated his 92nd birthday on Friday, said "God Almighty" had given him an opportunity to make his own humble contribution to the mass movement and stressed that time has come to leave all contention and acrimony behind and embrace communal concord and peace.

Terming the agitation for Ram temple the biggest since India's freedom movement, he said it was aimed

at the outcome which the verdict has made possible. "I stand vindicated, and feel deeply blessed, that the Supreme Court has given its unanimous verdict paving the way for the construction of a magnificent temple for Lord Ram at Ramjanmabhoomi in Ayodhya," he said in a statement, while "wholeheartedly" welcoming the judgement.

Stressing that Ram and Ramayana occupy an esteemed place in India's cultural and civilisational heritage and Ram Janmabhoomi (birthplace) holds a special and sacred place in the hearts of crores of countrymen, he said it is gratifying that their belief and sentiments have been respected.

Underlining that the judgement is the culmination of a long and contentious process over the last many decades, Advani, who has been the BJP's longest serving president, said, "Now that the prolonged Mandir-Masjid dispute in Ayodhya has come to an end, the time has come to leave all contention and acrimony behind and embrace communal concord and peace."

He appealed to all sections of India's diverse society to work together to strengthen the country's national unity and integrity.

Advani also welcomed the SC's decision that five acres of land be given at a prominent place for building a mosque in Ayodhya. "I join

all my countrymen in wholeheartedly welcoming the historic judgement delivered by the five-member Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court today in the Ayodhya matter," he said.

Struggling to find a space in the country's politics dominated by secular parties, the BJP under L.K. Advani hitched its bandwagon to the temple cause in its Palampur resolution in 1989, giving a defining Hindu edge to its politics which until then had lacked a popular cause celebre.

The issue combined with its alliance with anti-Congress parties in 1989 won the BJP 85 seats in Lok Sabha elections against mere two in 1984. Advani launched his famous 'Rath Yatra' from Somnath temple in Gujarat, drawing people in their thousands as his chariot rolled through the country's heartland rallying support for building Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya.

Building temple BJP's poll pledge since 1991

NEW DELHI: The Ram temple issue has been a part of the BJP's election manifestos since the 1989 Lok Sabha polls. However, at that time, the BJP did not speak about constructing the temple at the disputed site.

"By not allowing the rebuilding of the Ram Janma Mandir in Ayodhya, on the lines of Somnath Mandir built by the Government of India in 1948, it (government) has allowed tensions to rise, and gravely strained social harmony," the BJP manifesto had said then.

In the next elections in 1991, the saffron party said it firmly believed that construction of Ram Mandir at Janmasthan (birthplace) of Lord Ram was a symbol of the vindication of "our cultural heritage and national self-respect". In Dec 1992, Hindu mobs brought down Babri Masjid and built a makeshift temple dedicated to Ram.

In 1996, the year when the BJP first got power albeit only for 13 days, the party manifesto promised to facilitate the construction of "a magnificent Shri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya which will be a tribute to Bharat Mata". In 1998, when the BJP finally formed its broad coalition government, it repeated its promise to build "a magnificent Shri Ram Mandir" where a makeshift temple exists. It also said the BJP will explore all means towards this end. In 1999, when the BJP returned to power, the party kept away from the temple issue, more to please many of its allies. However, in 2004, the BJP manifesto said: "The NDA believes an early resolution of the Ayodhya issue will strengthen national integration. We continue to hold that the judiciary's verdict in this matter should be accepted by all. At the same time, efforts should be intensified for dialogue and a negotiated settlement in an atmosphere of mutual trust and goodwill."

In 2009, the BJP said there was an overwhelming desire to have a grand temple and it again promised to explore possibilities to facilitate such a construction. It repeated the promise in the 2014 and said it will "explore all possibilities within the Constitutional framework to facilitate construction of a Ram Temple in Ayodhya."

Focus will now shift to Babri demolition case

AGENCIES
Lucknow

Now that the Supreme Court has delivered its verdict in the much-awaited Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute case, the focus will shift to the second Ayodhya case pertaining to the Babri Masjid demolition that took place on December 6, 1992.

This case, related to the alleged criminal conspiracy behind the demolition of the mosque, is in the final stages of hearing in a Special CBI court in Lucknow.

Some high-profile names of Indian politics are the accused in the case, which has been going on for almost three decades now. Some of the accused persons in the case have already passed away. The first FIR in this case, related to the demolition of the Babri Mosque, was registered immediately after it was brought down on December 6, 1992.

This first FIR no. 197/92 was registered against un-

known "karsevaks" under Sections 395, 397, 332, 337, 338, 295, 297, 153A of IPC, and Section 7 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Minutes later, a second FIR no. 198/92 was registered under Sections 153A, 153B, 505 of the IPC against L.K. Advani, Ashok Singhal, Giriraj Kishore, Murlimanohar Joshi, Uma Bharti, Vinay Katiyar, Vishnu Hari-Dalmiya and SadhvirIshambhara. This was related to provocative speeches promoting enmity delivered ahead of the demolition.

Forty-seven other FIRs were registered in cases related to offences of assault on mediapersons, looting valuables like cameras and reporting gadgets etc. All FIRs were filed at the Ram Janmabhoomi police station in Ayodhya.

A few days later, the government recommended the demolition case no. 197 to the CBI, while the second case no. 198 was handed over to the CB-CID branch of the UP police. A year later, however, the second case was also transferred to the CBI.

How UP cops curbed hate speech

NEW DELHI: A social media monitoring team in each of the 75 districts in the state, proactive measures to sanitise WhatsApp and constant monitoring of certain groups helped Uttar Pradesh Police control the spread of hate speech and misinformation on various social media platforms as the Supreme Court delivered the historic verdict in the Ayodhya title suit, a top state police officer said on Saturday.

The UP Police ensured well in advance that no WhatsApp groups in the communally-sensitive areas were able to post fake, mischievous or hate messages and disturb the law and order situation. Ashutosh Pandey, Additional Director General (ADG), UP Police, and special in-charge of Ayodhya security, told IANS during an interaction.

PV: Architect of modern India or PM who watched Babri was demolished?

He may go down in history as the prime minister who put India on the path of liberalisation but P.V. Narasimha Rao will also always be remembered as the man under whose watch the Babri Masjid was demolished, jolting the foundations of secularism in the country.

The legacy of the late polyglot, scholar and politician with a difference will forever be tainted by the demolition of the 16th century mosque on December 6, 1992, when he was prime minister. Could he have stopped the demolition? The troubling question has been at the centre of a 30-year debate that con-

tinues till today.

On Saturday, another day for the record books, the Supreme Court delivered a historic verdict backing the construction of a Ram temple by a government-created trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya and ruling that an alternative five-acre plot must be found for a mosque in the town. The spotlight returned to the key political players - L.K. Advani, Uma Bharti and M.M. Joshi for putting their party on the arc of electoral wins. And inevitably, Rao, the Congress' first non-Gandhi leader to complete a five-year term as prime



minister, Rao, who passed away in 2004, was accused by several quarters of inaction in the face of the gathering movement for the demolition of the mosque. Though his prime ministerial tenure saw many landmark developments, the demolition is writ large on his legacy. According to Madhav Godbole, who was home secretary at the time, the MHA prepared a comprehensive contingency plan for the takeover of the structure by invoking Article 356 of the Constitution. It was emphasised that in order for cen-

tral paramilitary forces to successfully take over the Babri Mosque and the surrounding area, ensuring its security, timing and the element of surprise were of essence, he writes in his book "The Babri Masjid-Ram Mandir Dilemma: An Acid Test for India's Constitution". But Rao felt the contingency plan was not workable and dismissed it, Godbole says in the book. Former PM Manmohan Singh and ex-president Pranab Mukherjee at an event earlier this year, expressed the hope that history will judge Rao in a better manner than it has done till now.

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Rama lord of...

"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 judgement said, delivered at the end of a marathon 40-day hearing - the second longest in the history of apex court. Justice Gogoi is due to retire on November 17. "On the balance of probabilities, there is clear evidence to indicate that the worship by the Hindus in the outer courtyard" has continued unimpeded even before 1857 when the British annexed Oudh region. "The Muslims have offered no evidence to indicate that they were in exclusive possession" of the mosque before 1857, it said.

"The faith of the Hindus that Lord Ram was born at the demolished structure is undisputed," it added.

The verdict in the politically-sensitive Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute case, one of the most important and most anticipated judgements in India's history, runs into 1,045-page pages. The apex court bench also comprised Justices S.A. Bobde, D.Y. Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S. Abdul Nazeer.

As security was tightened at communally sensitive places across the country, Mohan Bhagwat, the chief of ruling BJP party's parent organisation RSS, said the verdict should not be seen as anybody's victory or defeat. The building of a Ram temple is a long-held objective of the BJP. There were no reports of violence or unrest from Ayodhya, where a massive police force was deployed, or any other part of the country. The verdict was pronounced on 14 appeals filed in the apex court against the 2010 Allahabad High Court judgment, delivered in four civil suits, that the 2.77-acre land in Ayodhya be partitioned equally among the three parties - the Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla.

The bench said the high court wrongly decided the title suit by resorting to partitioning of the disputed land in three parts. "The disputed site was government land in the revenue records," the court said adding, "The fact that there lay a temple beneath the destroyed structure has been established by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the underlying structure was not an Islamic structure." C.S. Vaidyanathan, lawyer for deity 'Ram Lalla', said the verdict is very balanced and it is a victory of people. But, the Sunni Waqf Board, one of the main parties, said it was not satisfied and will seek a review. "The verdict holds no value for us, it has lot of contradictions," Zafaryab Jilani, lawyer for the Board, told reporters. The Nirmohi Akhara said it has no "regrets" regarding the verdict. Home Minister Amit Shah appealed to all communities to accept the verdict and maintain peace and remain committed for 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' while Defence Minister Rajnath Singh urged everyone to take the verdict with equanimity and magnanimity. The Congress said it respects the verdict and is in favour of construction of Ram temple.

The Supreme Court's verdict marking the de-nouement of the vexatious Ayodhya dispute might have riled or relieved the warring parties, but L.K. Advani, the hawk-turned-dove BJP patriarch, must be a happy man.

The apex court verdict, which has paved the way for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya, came just a day after he celebrated his 92nd birthday. Nearly three decades ago, on October 23, 1990, his 'chariot', a swanky air-conditioned monster of a vehicle, was stopped on track by the orders of an ebullient Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad at little-known town of Samastipur, setting off a string of events that would shape the country's politics in years to come.

Advani's attempt to galvanise Hindus through his 'Ram Rath Yatra', and Lalu's act of having him arrested, was a watershed moment in the country's history that gave birth to the 'Mandal-Mandir' politics which left society cleaved on both religious and casteist lines.

The arrest of Advani, then the BJP president, was as dramatic as its effects were cataclysmic. "It was early in the morning when my telephone rang. I was surprised to find the chief minister on the other side. He was his usual chatty self. He asked me kitna sotehain (how long do you sleep). Knowing that Prasad himself was a late riser, I enquired what made him rise so early," reminisced S.D. Narayan, a veteran journalist who then headed the Patna bureau of PTI. "Baba ko pakadliya (we have caught the old man) was his terse response. Governments across the country and in many states were feeling the heat of Ram Rath Yatra and were itching to do something to bring it to a halt. Finally, the flamboyant chief minister of Bihar chose to bite the bullet," said Narayan.



Residents of Sadatganj burst fire crackers to celebrate SCs judgement in Ayodhya on Saturday PTI

An arrest that bled India but gave BJP political heft

SAMASTIPUR

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Janmabhoomi movement-engineered by Singhal & charioted by Advani

The Ram Janmabhoomi movement which catapulted the BJP to the national limelight in the 1990s was conceived by Ramchandra Paramhans, engineered by Ashok Singhal and charioted by L.K. Advani.

An engineer by profession, former VHP president Singhal built the movement over years for the construction of a Ram temple at the site where the Babri Masjid stood in Ayodhya. Till then, there was a cause advocated by sant Ramchandra Paramhans who headed the Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas and some other small Hindu groups. In the late 1980s, Advani became the political face of the movement, giving it heft and wide publicity. The SC in a historic verdict on Saturday backed the construction of a Ram temple by a trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya.

In its judgement, the court said the faith of Hindus that Ram was born at the site was undisputed, and he is symbolically the owner of the land. Talking about the role of various personalities in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, journalist Hemant Sharma described Singhal as the brainchild. Advani made it a political issue and brought it to the forefront of the country's discourse, while Ramchandra Paramhans was pioneer of the agitation. Singhal came to the forefront of the movement in 1984 when he organised the first 'dharamsansad' and mobilised sants and seers in support of the Ram temple issue.

He later became VHP's working president and shaped the movement in such a manner to make it acceptable to masses. Singhal's strategies en-

sured a rise in the popularity of the RSS's Hindutva ideology.

He acted as the link between sants-seers, Sangh leaders and the BJP on the issue. Singhal persuaded the BJP to introduce the issue in its manifesto in the 1989 Lok Sabha election. The party included the Ram temple issue in its manifesto in 1989 under the leadership of Advani. After taking the charge of party, he charted a shift in the BJP's ideology towards hardline Hindutva, which resulted in the change of fortunes for the party from two to 85 seats in Parliament.

The party's shift in ideology exemplified by the Ram Rath Yatra led by him in 1990 as part of an effort to generate electoral support by appealing to Hindu nationalism.

Ayodhya verdict coincides with 30th anniv of fall of Berlin Wall

NEW DELHI: The historic verdict issue on Saturday coincided with the 30th anniversary of the fall of Berlin Wall, a fact highlighted by PM Modi as he urged people to shun any bitterness and come together to build a new India.

Settling a fractious issue that goes back more than a century, the apex court in a historic verdict backed the construction of a Ram temple by a trust at the disputed site, and ruled that an alternative five-acre plot must be found for a mosque in the Hindu holy town. The landmark verdict on Saturday coincided with the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall 30 years ago, a pivotal event in world history which signalled the beginning of German reunification. "Today is Nov 9 when the Berlin Wall fell and two different streams had come together and taken a new resolve," Modi said. "Today is also the opening of the Kartarpur corridor, in which both India and Pakistan have a partnership."

NAME CHANGE

Spelling of my name is changed from SREELAKSHMI S. NAIR to SREE LAXMI S. NAIR as per school certificate and aadhar card. ADD: NEAR AGRAWAL PUBLIC SCHOOL, 138, SANJANA PARK, BICHOLI MARDANA, INDORE (MP)

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