

## The Judgement

Lord Ram is still homeless, notwithstanding the headlines in the mainstream media hailing the 30 September judgement by the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court in the Ramjanambhumi–Babari Masjid dispute. The truth is that the contending parties are not happy, for neither the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—the temple crusader—has achieved victory nor is the legal battle over. In times to come the verdict is likely to create more problems instead of solving them. That the fall-out of judgement didn't boil down to communal frenzy was a welcome relief to the people of the country. Despite the balancing act awarding equal share of the real estate to all the three parties, there is ample scope to communalise the issue and the next assembly poll in North India and particularly in Uttar Pradesh cannot be anything but communally supercharged. The reason is simple. There are so many pressing issues and yet the world outlook of BJP revolves around the temple. There are people who never get tired to pamper minority communalism in the name of fighting majority communalism. So Mulayam Singh Yadav, the caste lord of UP is back in business. He is desperately trying to get back what he has lost—minority vote support. Maybe, he has now an opportunity to reverse political irrelevance he has been in for quite some time.

Justice S U Khan of Allahabad High Court said that muslims could use the situation to spread to the world the teaching of Islam. It is unlikely for the muslim clerics who utter the final word on anything religious, to listen to the advice of Mr Justice Khan.

For one thing the division of real estate into three parts to satisfy all the three aggrieved is no solution to the vexed question of religious passion cultivated over several decades. Muslims apart, two hindu parties don't see eye to eye over the land dispute. Without reconciliation and mutual accommodation this issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both communities. All political parties including the Congress that is no less responsible for the present mess, play with the gallery while maintaining a kind of equidistance from the controversy and any serious attempts to reach an amicable solution. If time is the best healer, it has not yet healed the Ayodhya imbroglio.

The verdict has created a peculiar situation : the parties involved in the dispute cannot oppose it totally, nor can they swallow it in its present form. So both BJP and Congress are now talking about 'out-of-court' settlement, which is a remote possibility because higher legal forum is easily available. And the Sunni Waqf Board and the All India Muslim Personal Law Board are not going to oblige the middle roaders like the Congress by abandoning their battle in the middle.

So is Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, one of the key parties to the Ayodhya title suit. Hindu religious leaders, most of them self-styled, are in a mood of jubilation, though subdued for the time being. They would like to felicitate Mr Justice Dharam Veer Sharma who was one of the judges in delivering the 30 September judgement in the Ayodhya title suit case. It is one way to tell the world that their contention has been vindicated. But this kind of veiled frenzy is likely to alienate the muslim community further while silently

aggravating communal polarisation. Not quite unexpectedly Congress and left parties finally reacted in their own machiavellian way without taking a clean-cut stand. In truth they heaved a sigh of relief because there was option for further litigation and land may remain in court for another few decades.

The point at issue is all contending parties may not be satisfied with the final outcome of the coming legal battle. In that event all of them might go back to the people's court through mass mobilisation to press their claims and counter-claims. No negotiations can succeed without 'give and take'. Kanchi Seer Jayendra Saraswati, who had at one stage played a mediatory role on the Ayodhya issue urged all religious parties, including Mutt leaders, Muslim Law Board, Waqf Board, the Nyas to hold discussions. But this much politics didn't work in the yester years and it is unlikely to cut ice now and to Waqf Board no solution is acceptable unless it complies with Shariat Law.

If the Bharatiya Janata Party loses the temple issue, it has no chance to bounce back in electoral gambit even in the cowbelt, not to speak of other regions. After all it is in steady decline because of its obnoxious political culture. Judgement or no judgement, the instability and communal divisions besetting the society in general just reflect the panic and disarray of the system under conditions of worsening economic and political crisis, with the war against the maoists clearly being further brutalised. □□□

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