BABRI MASJID
LEST WE FORGET

Popular Front of India
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LEST WE FORGET

By the demolishing the 463 year-old Babri Masjid on
6th December 1992, the Hindutwa fascists have not only
destroyed a place of worship of Muslims, but trampled
the ideals and values of Indian Republic. The government
remained a mere spectator, the laws of the country wept
silently in the statute books and the judiciary happily or
unhappily became spectator too. The values of secularism
and democracy were mocked at. The demolition was
the gravest crime in independent India after Gandhiji’s
assassination. It was the day when India had to hang its
head in shame before the world.

This very day chosen by the fascist outfits was the death
anniversary of the architect of Indian Constitution, Dr.
B. R. Ambedkar. The fanatics did not pick the demolition
at random. It was a very well planned destruction of a
centuries old Mosque, an act that was hatched years back.
It was a major milestone in the Hindutwa march towards
marginalizing the Muslim community; and it proved to
be a major catalyst in pushing BJP to power. Yes, it was a
direct threat to the very existence of 200 million Muslims
of India. By demolishing a mosque used for worship by
Muslims for 420 years, the Sangh Parivar claimed that
they wiped off a stain that had been there for years. The
message was that Muslims were a dark stain on the body
politic of India.

The message was clear. They are out to flush out Muslims.
The attack on Muslims before and after the demolition was not a spontaneous mob fury, but well planned and well executed genocide showing the real intentions of the perpetrators of the gory spectacle. December 1992 - January 1993 Mumbai riots were not stopped by the interventions of any government agencies; they finally ended when the zealots were tired of killing, arson and destruction.

The Muslim community, who was bruised and left with the unhealed wounds of the destruction of Babri Masjid, was further subjected to continuous riots. In the year 2002, using full-scale government machinery, and under the supervision and patronage of the administration, the Muslims became victims of genocide in Gujarat. As the Sangh Parivar goons played holy with Muslim blood, the leaders who were asking the Muslims to forget Babri issue remained tight lipped. The whole nation had to listen in pathetic silence, the cries of innocent and helpless Muslims.

But we are not to let Babri Demolition and Gujarat Genocide fade from our mind with the passage of time. Fight against fascism begins when you preserve the memories. They are actually motivating factors for a community; a source of inspiration to fight against injustice. The amnesia just prepares ground for the growth of the fascist forces.
BABRI MASJID
IS NOT RAM JANMABHOOMI

At the invitation of Rajput Raja Rana Singh, Zaheerudheen Muhammad Babar came to India and defeated Ibrahim Lodhi, the Muslim ruler at Delhi at Panipath in 1526 C.E. marking the beginning of the Mughal Rule in India. The governor of Awadh (Ayodhya) Mir Bakhi, on the orders of Babar, built a Mosque, which later came to be known as Babri Masjid. This is the genesis of Babri Masjid.

Though there were at least a dozen places in Ayodhya that were claimed to be Ram janmasthan, the cunning British administrators could succeed in misleading a section of Hindus. Mahant Raghubhar Das filed a petition before the sub-judge of the Faizabad Pundit Hari Krishnan on 12 December 1885 seeking permission to build a temple on the platform outside the Mosque:

“I am the Mahant of Ram Janmasthan. The platform in front of the Masjid is the Ram Janmasthan. This is an open platform. We have difficulties in performing Pooja. Hence we wish to build a temple above it. But the government has prevented me from it.”
This petition was rejected by the Judge as stating that if the construction of the Mandir was allowed near the Masjid it would lead to problems:

“So the court also considers it to be proper that awarding permission to construct the temple at this juncture is to lay the foundation of riot and murder. Hence between Hindus and Muslims, which are two different religions, in view of justice, the relief claimed should not be granted.”

From these court proceedings, it is clear that at that time, the existence of Babri Masjid was acceptable to Hindus as well. There was a wall separating the Masjid and platform. This is also mentioned in the judgment by Pundit Hari Kishan as follows:

“In between the Mosque and Chabutra there is a wall which can be fully evident from the perusal of the corrected plan prepared by the Amin and it is clear that there are separate boundaries between the Mosq and Chabutra.”

Subsequent petitions submitted to the Awadh’s Judicial Commissioner and the District Judge were also dismissed. District Judge of Faizabad Col. J. E. A. Chamber inspected the site and on 26th March 1886 and dismissed the appeal of Mahant Rahgubar Das. Later, the appeal filed before the Judicial Commissioner of Lucknow, A. W. Young was also dismissed on 1st November 1886. That was the end the legal proceedings over the claim for building a temple on Chabutra (Platform). Not even once the Mahant claimed that Babari Masjid was Ram janmasthan. It is to be noted that the claim of Hindus at that time was not for Babri Masjid, but for the Chabutra in front of it. Muslims continued to perform Namaz in Masjid and Hindus continued Pooja on Chabutra. This status continued till 1949.
In 1936 Wakf Commission made an enquiry as per Uttar Pradesh Wakf Act and published the report on 20th of February 1944 in the Gazette. Babri Masjid was registered as the property of the Central Wakf Board. According to the order passed by Faizabad Civil Judge S. A. Ahsar on 23rd of March 1946, both Sunnis and Shiis could offer prayer at the masjid.

Muslims and Hindus of Awadh had lived in harmony for centuries. They had united behind Hindu and Muslim religious leaders and struggled against the British in 1857 war of independence. This unity was the major hurdle for the British to continue their rule in Awadh province. Hence the British agent Lord Dufferin (1884-1888) devised plans to turn Hindus against Muslims.

Using a Buddhist astrologer, they forged a tale that it was at the place of Babri Masjid that Ram was born and Sita had the kitchen there. However, the British bureaucrats continued with their plans to divide the Hindu and Muslim communities. Some of them spread the false claim that a temple had been destroyed by Babar to build the Masjid. In 1905 H.R. Neville, a British officer, further expanded the claim thus: “In 1528 Babar came to Ayodhya and halted there for a week, he destroyed the ancient temple and on its place built a mosque still known as Babri Mosque” (Faizabad gazettiers, p. 173). This deliberately concocted claim had strengthened the controversy over the Mosque. But there is not a single source of evidence available either in writing or as artifact that proves that there had been a temple upon the site of the Babri Masjid.

Later in 1934, prior to independence, there was a communal riot in Ayodhya. But it was in the name of cow slaughter and not on the issue of Babri Masjid.
India stepped into freedom in the year 1947. But on the flip-side, India had to bear the brunt of it being partitioned, being scalded by human tears and blood. And during the partition, many people from Faizabad and Ayodhya, migrated to Pakistan. The Muslims population in these places was statically reduced. In this chaos, the Hindu communal groups tried once again to kindle the Ram Janmabhoomi controversy as a national and religious issue of Hindus.

Sangh Parivar sources claims that in 1949 hundreds of thousands of people flocked there “to see the miracle of idols of Ramlala and Sita Devi which sprout them from earth”. Though this argument was raised before Liberhan Commission which enquired into the demolition of Babri Masjid, the commission rubbished this claim in their report as utter lie. Police documents including FIR also had underlined that the idols were established by a group of men who broke into the Masjid in dead of the night of 22nd December 1949.

In 1949, under the banner of Ramayana Mahasabha, Ramayana recitation for 9 days took place at Awadh. And Poojari Abhay Ramdas and his henchmen at the midnight of 22nd December 1949 forcefully placed an idol of Ramlala
inside the Babri Mosque. The then District Magistrate, K.K. Nair collaborated with these communal groups. K. K. Nair and his wife were later rewarded for this criminal connivance with the Member of Parliament post by the Jan Sangh (the forerunner of BJP).

After the forceful installation of the idol, District Magistrate K.K. Nair ordered sealing of the mosque with effect from next day, 23rd December 1949. He did not forget to appoint a ‘Poojari’ on government expenses. The Babri Masjid, a place of Muslim worship, was thereby dramatically transformed into a disputed issue. The law is not impotent in such cases. Section 295 and 297 of the Indian Penal Code call such acts as offences. Section 145 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) of 1898 empowers the magistrate to require the parties to file their claims in respect to the fact of the actual possession of the subject of dispute. He decides which of the parties was in possession. If a party has been “forcibly and wrongfully dispossessed”, the magistrate may treat it as in their possession. It is then restored in possession, leaving it to the aggressor to file a civil suit to establish his title to the property.

In Ayodhya this very section was used to sanctify the Muslims’ dispossession. Markandey Singh, Magistrate of First Class, ordered the attachment of the “said buildings” and appointed Priya Dutt Ram, Chairman of the Municipal Board, as “receiver” of the mosque. This was on December 29, 1949. On January 19, 1950, a civil judge, Bir Singh, issued an injunction restraining removal of the idols from the mosque and from interfering with the pooja carried on in the mosque since December 23, 1949. On April 26, 1955, the Allahabad High Court confirmed the injunction.

The only solace: an FIR dated 23-12-1949 was filed in police station of Ayodhya by the officer in charge Ram Dev Dubey
and a case was registered again the encroachers.

On 16 Jan 1950, Gopal Singh Visharad filed a claim over Masjid in Faizabad civil court. But the affidavit filed by Faizabad Deputy Commissioner J. N. Ugra in 25 April 1950 explicitly made the status clear as follows:

“Para 12– That the property in suit is known as Babri mosque and it has for a long period been in use as a mosque for the purpose of worship by Muslims. It has not been in use as a temple of Shri Ramchandraji.
Para 15 – That on the night of 22nd December 1949 the idols of Shri Ramchandranji were surreptitiously and wrongly put inside it.”

That was the beginning of a prolonged litigation for the ownership of Babri Masjid site between Hindu communal elements and Muslims.
MASJID OPENED FOR POOJA

On that fateful day of 1st February 1986, under the influence of the Hindutva forces, the District Judge, K.M. Pandey, passed a ruling at the end of court proceedings that lasted just a few minutes, directing the Masjid to be kept open for Hindus to perform ‘Pooja’, pandering to the wishes and designs of the Sangh Parivar. By this verdict, Muslims completely lost the Babri Masjid. Ironically, this judgment came while the case filed in 1961 claiming Muslim ownership of the mosque was still pending. It exposed double standards even on the part of the judiciary, absolutely siding with the fascists.

Meanwhile Hindutwa communal outfits intensified the movement for the Ram Temple, further widening the communal divide in the country. Under the leadership of Mahant Avaidyanath came “Dharmastana Mukhthi Yajna Samiti”, and “Ramjanmabhoomi Mukthi Yajna Samiti”, two frontline outfits of RSS. Babri Masjid was placed at the top of the list among the places of worship to be “reclaimed”. “Open the Locks” was the slogan of Ramjanmsthan movement run by VHP, which soon transformed itself into a violent campaign: “Break the Locks”. The Hindutva outfits began spreading their tentacles with Rath Yatras,
by which the venom of communalism was further spread into the veins of the nation. The Rath Yatras from 1983 to 1989, the “Shila Pooja” and “Shila Nyas” of 1989, and the most outrageous Rath Yatra headed by L. K. Advani from Somnath temple left hundreds of Muslims dead or wounded. Moreover the movement also helped communalize the urban middle class which later brought about untold miseries to the beleaguered Muslim community. “We will play holy with the blood of Babar’s descendants”; “Which ever Hindus’s blood doesn’t boil, that holding is nothing but water”. Such were the slogans devised to nurture communal hatred among ordinary Hindus. But, as we saw, they needn’t have worked hard for it. A compliant judiciary unfastened the locks on 1st February 1986.

And that phase of Hindutwa campaign culminated in the razing of the 463 year old Babri Masjid on the 6th of December 1992.
POLITICS OF MANDAL-MANDIR

The background to these developments is very interesting. A non-observing Hindu like L. K. Advani led the Ram Temple campaign to thwart a cataclysmic political intervention. In 1989, Prime Minister V.P. Singh decided to implement the Mandal Commission report.

The decision was revolutionary since the implementation of the report sought to redress the centuries old exploitation and subjugation of backward classes by the upper castes. It exposed the hollowness of the claims about a casteless Hindu society and revealed the real status of lower castes under the Hindu Raj. The decision to allow quota reservation of 27 percent for 52 percent OBC population was sure to fragment the caste-ridden Hindu society. The Sangh Parivar theory of Hindu Unity was hence crushed. There were intense protests against Mandal decision in the streets of Delhi staged by the Sangh Parivar and the urban Savarna middleclass, but it all failed to bridge the backward-forward (lower-upper caste) schism.

The BJP ruled states were reluctant to implement Mandal
recommendations. A state of fear that the backward Hindus may capture power, gave many a sleepless night to Advani and company. The ways to mend the crack, to bridge the gap, created by the Mandal Commission Report between the upper and lower castes, racked the minds of the Hindutva elite. A solution hatched out was the Samnath-Ayodhya Rath Yatra of 1990 by L. K. Advani. This Yatra was successful in brining the Ramajanmabhooi issue to the forefront over Mandal Commission Report. It was indeed a victory of Kamandal over Mandal. A political atmosphere charged with communal fervor was created in UP and other parts of North India which ultimately culminated in the destruction of the Babri masjid on 6th December 1992 and Hindutva forces coming to power.
6 DECEMBER 1992: 
THE BLACK SUNDAY AND AFTER

6 December 1992 turned out to be a Black Sunday. That day could not be forgotten, for it was the day when history was held hostage. Only one event could be compared to the brutality and dreadfulness of the day - the killing of Gandhiji on 30 January 1948. Gandhiji had succumbed to three bullets from a Hindutva zealot. His bullets had ripped through not just a human body, but it had torn apart the hopes and aspirations of millions of the Indian people.

The RSS goons and the Sangh Parivar leaders were jubilant when the three domes of the masjid fell down. The camera footages clearly exposed L. K. Advani, Ashok Sanghal, M. M. Joshi, and Uma Bharthi ecstatically jumping around as the masjid was being pulled down. The same wicked jubilation was immediately evident in the streets of Mumbai which turned to urban horror for Muslims. They were killed with cricket bats and their dwellings were set ablaze. The same atrocious scenario was repeated in the streets and slums of Gujarat too in 2002 with more vehement force. Muslim women and children ran from pillar to post to save lives and limbs as the nation stood in fear and terror.

Truly, the demolition of Babri Masjid was a death blow to the nation and the ideals of the Republic. On 6 December 1992, all assurances from the Prime Minister of one of the strong democracies in the world, the Supreme Court of
India and the words of the political leaders that the Babri would be safeguarded turned out to be hollow. Babri Masjid was torn down, the military and paramilitary personnel sent to protect it were mute spectators. When the Masjid was being demolished, the then Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was said to be in his ‘Pooja’ room, perhaps praying for the quick completion of the dastardly act. Nobody was there in India with courage to ask the military to prevent those criminals from destroying the mosque.

However, the destruction of the mosque alone could not satisfy fascist forces; they then massacred 11 Muslims in Ayothdya, 5 mosques were also completely smashed. Many riots were sparked off at various places in India in which a large number of Muslims lost their lives, with about 2000 killed in Mumbai alone. Thousands lost their homes and property, forcing them to the ghettos; with many others maimed and molested. The Hindutva mobs either destroyed or looted properties worth millions of rupees. The community was being constantly threatened by the same forces that had razed their masjid. All this happened when the destroyers of the mosque were sitting pretty, with no harm done to them. And the Karsevaks from every nook and corner of the country returned home safely under full government protection. None of them were taken to custody for this collective crime.

A makeshift temple was erected at the site on the very day after demolition. The Union Home Minister, S. B. Chavan himself was there to visit the makeshift temple. The government agencies that are constitutionally bound to protect the mosque now guard this illegal temple!
DOUBLE STANDARDS PREVAIL

We have already seen that during the British period the judiciary was bipartisan and all its verdicts were in favour of Muslims who had inalienable right to the historic mosque. But later we see the judiciary of free India paving way for illegal possession of the Masjid by the encroachers which is unheard of in the annals of any law. Three investigations, some are still pending on different aspects of the issue in the aftermath of the demolition.

A. The case filed in 1961 relating to the ownership of the Masjid and its premises.
B. Enquiry of CBI against those who demolished the mosque.
C. Justice Liberhan Commission enquiry into the destruction of the mosque.

All three were moving at a snail’s pace. After 17 years of delay the Liberhan commission has submitted its report. The Allahabad High Court delayed the title suit case for more than six decades and finally pronounced an unjust verdict. If at all there was any sincere effort, it was to free Advani, Joshi and Uma Bharthi from the list of accused. No authority in India could dare arrest Thackeray, the “commander” of the anti-Muslim Mumbai riots in Mumbai, even after the Sri Krishna Commission clearly pointed out to it; but the accused in the Mumbai blasts that followed the riots, have been punished by court of law. Gujarat riot victims have seen no justice, while those accused in Godhra case languish in jail. All these are the clear reminders of the double standards of the India and administration and even judiciary.
LIBERHAN REPORT: NO ACTION

The Liberhan Report was submitted to the Prime Minister on June 30, 2009 but it was tabled in the Parliament on November 24, a day after some parts of the report were leaked out to the media. The Lok Sabha later debated the report. Though the Report itself was ready soon after the hearings were completed, Liberhan was given 48 extensions by both NDA and UPA governments and took 17 years to submit the report. And it has eaten away public money to the tune of Rs. 8 crore.

The Liberhan Report on the demolition, in brief, brings out the criminal culpability of the Sangh Parivar in clear terms, even though it fails to identify the leaders or the members of the Special Demolition Squads organized by it. The report only indicts some leaders of the Sangh Parivar present at Ayodhya as well as the bureaucrats stationed in Faizabad and Ayodhya who failed to do their duty.

Surprisingly, the report totally and absolutely exonerates the arch villain of the demolition, the then Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao. His behavior before, during and after the demolition, leads to only one conclusion that he was a party to the conspiracy, hand-in-glove with the
demolishers. He was acting in collusion with them. But without citing any evidence, Liberhan has criticized and abused Muslim leadership as a whole in general terms. Perhaps having blasted the Sangh Parivar, he had to malign the Muslim leadership to maintain ‘balance’.

The Action Taken Report (ATR) the Congress-led UPA Government presented while tabling the commission report really contained no action. In the past too, those indicted by different commissions for communal riots have gone scot-free as in the case of Sri Krishna Commission Report.

The Report has rightly placed individuals’ culpability for the demolition on a total of 68 persons, the bulk of them drawn from the Sangh Parivar. Therefore, it is high time that charges were filed and cases registered against them. The UPA Government should have acted against the Sangh Parivar outfits. There have been gang rapes and loss of innocent lives, and loss of private and public properties, perpetrated by communal elements at different places. Criminal cases must be initiated against these elements, and if already initiated must have expedited and those found guilty must have punished. The kith and kin of those killed in the aftermath of the demolition of Babri Masjid need the same treatment applied in the case of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots so far as their compensation and rehabilitation are concerned.

Also Election Commission of India should have initiated action against the Hindutva political organizations, including BJP and Shiv Sena. But all these genuine rights of the victims have been ignored by the Central Government till now.
OWNERSHIP CASE FROM HIGH COURT TO SUPREME COURT

The verdict on the Babri Masjid title suit pronounced by the Lucknow Bench of Allahbad High Court on 30 September 2010 has invited mixed responses throughout the country. Fortunately, the verdict did not create any law and order problem. More than the elaborate security arrangements, the remarkable sense of restrain shown by the Muslim community in spite of its inner turbulence, has contributed much in maintaining social harmony at this crucial juncture. Interestingly, the Sangh Parivar which has earlier taken the stand that the Ramajanmabhoomi being a matter of faith could not be decided by court, declared that this verdict has removed the hurdles in the path of constructing Ram temple. Yes, they have enough reasons to rejoice.

The views expressed by judges Dharmveer Sharma, S.U. Khan and Sudheer Agarwal who constituted the Bench are varied on questions before them. When two judges claimed
that the area covered under the central dome of the Masjid is the birth place of Rama, the other judge shared the view that it is somewhere in a very large area of the premises. Justice Sharma has gone to the extent of stating that Babri Masjid was constructed against the tenets of Islam. Two judges were of the opinion that Masjid was constructed after demolishing a Hindu temple. The third judge while not accepting the temple demolition theory opined that the Masjid was constructed on the ruins of temples lying since a very long time. Nevertheless all the three judges unanimously admitted that idols were forcefully placed in the building on the night of December 22/23, 1949.

The majority judgment orders that the disputed land has to be divided among two sects of Hindu and the Muslim as follows: The area below the central dome in the inner courtyard of the demolished Masjid goes to Hindus for constructing the temple and the other half of the inner courtyard excluding this will be given to Muslims for Masjid. The portion covering Ram’s Chabutra, Sita’s Rasoi and Bhandar in the outer courtyard is declared as the share of Nirmohi Akhara. The open area within the outer courtyard shall be shared by Nirmohi Akhara and Hindus. Also the verdict says that rest of the 2.77 acres of land under dispute shall be divided among all the three parties with separate entry and exit for each party.

This judgment has been welcomed by certain sections as attempt towards reconciliation. But a good number of jurists, historians, writers and right activists have vehemently criticized it on various grounds.

- This judgment does not settle or resolve the issues. In an ownership title suit, the disputed land should be given to the deserving party as per records before the court and dividing the land among them as a compromise formula is not within judicial purview. None of the parties pleaded for the partition
of the land.

- This judgment is extra-legal also because it is based on myths and legends and not on the evidences on the record. It has relied more on the argument of faith manufactured during the past years by the Sangh Parivar with ulterior political motives.

- This judgment repeats that both Hindus and Muslims worshipped in the area covered by Babri Masjid. It is contradictory to historical facts. It was only Muslims who worshipped in the area under the three domes from 1528 to 1949 and Hindus stared worship only at the Ram Chabutra located in the outer courtyard in late 19th century.

- This judgment has not taken into account the fact that the building existed as a Masjid from 1528, till its demolition by Sangh Parivar on 6 December 1992.

- This judgment does not take into account the unanimous finding of the three judges that the idol of Rama was placed under the central dome of the Masjid by miscreants. Yet the judgment instead of ordering to remove the same has allotted the area for building the temple.

- This judgment, in fact, indirectly lends justification to the demolition of Babri Masjid by mobs led by Sangh Parivar on 6 December 1992. The question remains as to what would have been the court order if the judgment on the title suit were not delayed beyond 6 December 1992? A court order to demolish the Masjid and divide its inner courtyard area between Hindus and Muslims?

This is the unfortunate fate of the Babri Masjid title suit for which the country was in waiting for more than six decades. It is said that justice delayed is justice denied. But here it is injustice that is being delivered after much delay. No wonder that all sane elements in our country have expressed their agony and displeasure over the judgment. The reaction to the verdict was peaceful and no untoward incident reported from anywhere. From this it has
become evident that if sufficient police and paramilitary arrangements were made in December 1992 by central and state governments, the Sangh Parivar mobs could not have razed Babri Masjid, erected a makeshift temple on the site and subsequently engineered riots in different parts of the country causing about 2000 deaths and vast destruction of properties.

Always reconciliation is preferred to prolonged litigation. But how can it be achieved, till facts and evidences are brought back and faiths and myths are kept away with due respect! Also it is a social norm and historic lesson that lasting peace can be built only on the foundation of justice. The Allahabad High Court Judgment is a blot on the noble tradition of Indian judiciary.

All parties involved in the case as well as political parties have made it clear well before the High Court judgment that it would not be final and Supreme Court could be approached for final verdict. Later the U. P. Sunni Wakf Board has filed the appeal before the Supreme Court. The UPA government of the time decided to maintain status quo and wait till the final verdict from the apex court. Let us hope that the Supreme Court will ultimately correct the wrong findings to the lower judiciary and award justice in the Babri Masjid case.

The petition filed by various organizations such as Sunni Wakf Board, Nirmohi Akhare, All India Hindu Maha Sabha and Bhagwan Sri Rama Virajman against the judgment is still in the court. Since Supreme Court ordered to maintain the status quo, it is the Supreme Court orders passed in 1994 and 2002 regarding the 67 acres that is in effect now. The case has been included in the file for day-to-day in 2013. The order to start the trial in 2014 did not happen. On 15th of August 2015, Supreme Court observed that
it will take 15 years for organizing all the documents of ownership of the land. Chief Justice pointed out that the documents that are in Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit and Persian languages have to be translated to English.

On 26 February 2016 Supreme Court judges V Gopal Gowda and Arun Mishra accepted the petition of Hindutva leader Subramanya Swami who was never been a party in the case, requesting to allow the construction of Ram Temple on the site. Later Justice Gopal Gowda left the bench without citing any reason. On 17th of November Chief Justice T S Thakur made it clear that Swami’s request may be considered and the trial to be expedited. It created a controversy when Chief Justice suggested that out of court settlement was better in the case and that he himself would mediate the settlement. But he later confessed that he mistook Subramanya Swami as a party in the case.

The present status of the case is that the bench of Justice Deepak Mishra, Asok Bhushan, Abdul Nazeer will hear the case on December 5, 2017.

Throughout these 25 years Muslim community has been unanimously demanding justice to Babri Masjid. It is noteworthy here that at this crucial juncture, Sangh Parivar is trying to bypass justice by creating confusions, by fielding their own agents as mediators and using sellout elements in Muslim community on their side. As part of Sangh Parivar agenda, some members of the Uttar Pradesh Shia Wakf Board have recently come up with the strange suggestions that Ram Temple has to build on the Masjid site and a new Masjid can built elsewhere. A rumor was spread that All India Muslim personal Law Board approached Sri Sri Ravishankar for mediation which has been rightly denied by the Board. It is also part of the Hindutva agenda not only to divide Muslims, but also to
unduly influence the judicial process. All India Muslim Personal Law Board has once again made it clear that it waits for the final decision of the judiciary and negotiations will not solve the issue.
FATE OF CONSPIRACY CASES

The proceedings in the cases registered against the top leaders of Sangh Parivar in the aftermath of Babri demolition are moving at snail’s pace due to unholy interventions. The cases got delayed due to various controversies and legal entanglements. The trial of the main accused took a long time. The case moved from court to court back and forth, from Lalitpur Special Court in 1993 to Raibareli to Lucknow and back to Raibareli 2003. Court proceedings continue to get interrupted when the accused challenged the judgments of the lower courts in higher courts.

CBI which investigated the demolition case filed mainly two FIRs. There were 47 other cases too. Two special courts were constituted for the cases, one in Lucknow and the other in Lalithpur. One case as per FIR was against the anonymous Karsevaks who demolished the Masjid. Including this case, CBI submitted a single consolidated charge sheet against all the accused in 49 cases on the 5th of October 1993 in Lucknow Special Court. The second case was against BJP leaders including L K Advani,
Murali Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti, Vinay Kayar, Ashok Singal, Giriraj Kishor, Vishnu Hari Dalmiya and Swadhvi Rithambara for instigating Karsevaks to demolish the Masjid through provocative speeches. Bal Thackeray and Asok Singhal were excluded from the list due to their death.

All the 49 accused were found prima face guilty by Lucknow Special Court judge in the verdict on 7th September 1997. The court also directed to charge accused with Section 120 [B] of IPC for criminal conspiracy. In 2010, when High Court partly approved the special court judgment, chances for L K Advani and 20 others to be charged with criminal conspiracy was evaded. As the status of the case stands now, on May 25, 2017 CBI Special Court has asked L. K. Advani and Uma Bharti to appear in conspiracy case. But both were granted bail on May 30, 2017. With BJP in power in UP, efforts were continuously made to manipulate the case by excluding their leaders from the list of accused and the ultimate fate of conspiracy cases still remain uncertain.
WHO ARE THE CULPRITS?

Who are the main culprits? The Sangh Parivar – They are primarily responsible for the demolition and riots that followed. But truly, who cannot at least partly carry the blame? Don’t the Prime Minister, Central and state governments, courts, army, media, political parties, Muslim leaders have had their share of responsibility? Indian National Congress played a dirty game, the Prime Minister betrayed the country, and Supreme Court tried moving the ball to the Central government’s court. Muslim leaders stood idle, placing faith in vain in the so called secular parties and courts. Even the committee meant for the protection of Babri Masjid split after the Masjid demolition.

The Doordarshan played the role in creating communal fervor among Hindus, telecasting regularly to home the mega serials of Ramayana and Mahabharata thereby helping the anti-Babri campaign of Sangh Parivar. L. K. Advani was being called “Second Sardar Vallabhai Patel”, further spreading the cause of Hindutva among the public. Where had those parties gone hiding on and after 6 December 1992? What happened to those who issued grand
statements against BJP and Prime Minister on the days before demolition? Why they have not prevented the many Rath Yathras of Sangh Parivar? Why do they still make it convenient to forget the promise made in the aftermath of demolition that the Masjid would be rebuilt on the same site?

The secular parties, governments and judicial mechanism failed to learn anything from that eventful day, and failed to keep check on acts of spreading hatred. The assurance of the then Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to rebuild the mosque failed to materialise all thorough his term in office. He even failed to recollect that he had made such a statement!
25 YEARS OF BETRAYAL

Rebuilding the mosque on the same site would only serve justice. This was made clear by intellectuals, secular leaders, champions of social justice and eminent jurists. However, nothing bore fruit – the conditions remain same; many years of betrayal have passed. Why has this promise to the nations been neglected and set aside? Congress was ousted at the Centre and states in the meantime. But nation cannot forgive the Congress. Even though Muslims had voted for secular parties in every election, the disunity and opportunism among these parties nullified their efforts.

But the BJP took advantage of this situation, they grew stronger. Only a few parties had resisted the BJP onslaughts and this too was with an eye on the Muslims vote banks. The BJP was flying high after the demolition of Babri Masjid. The government so formed by 13 parties under its leadership lasted for one and half years, and later allying with 23 small groups as the NDA, they further ruled India. But the people of India were not ready to give the nation away to the Hindutva powers and BJP was ousted from power in subsequent elections. However, the Congress led UPA which rule India for two consecutive terms has not fulfilled their promise to rebuild the demolished
Masjid. Congress had only apologized to the Muslims for the demolition while they were in power. But after 2014 Lok Sabha elections, those of forces that demolished Babri Masjid governs the nation. BJP managed to gain absolute majority, despite with only 31% vote share. Disunity and opportunism among the secular parties helped BJP to single handedly gain power. However within three years of coming to power, the country is being pushed to an atmosphere of civil war.

The BJP has never deleted the construction of the Ram Temple from their political agenda. But the secular parties now dropped even a mention of reconstructing the Babri Masjid. The reconstruction of Masjid had been considered as the nation’s issue by the secular forces back then; now it has been relegated to a mere Muslim issue.

When idols had appeared during Nehru’s regime, he had instructed Govind Vallabha Pant, the then Chief Minister of UP, to throw the idols into the Sarayu River. Govind Vallabha Pant did not heed to the instruction. Years after, Nehru’s grandson Rajiv Gandhi, to overtake the mileage of Advani’s Rath Yatra, started his election campaign from Ayodhya. Not only that, on 10 November 1989, Rajiv Gandhi had taken the credit of shilanyas within the disputed site. The Congress had deceived the Muslims and the nation saying that the shilanyas was not on the disputed site. The Congress leaders after Rao also failed to reverse his acts. They simply stopped at saying sorry. The Congress is acting still as a B team of BJP, at least in the matter of Babri Masjid.

Even the Messiahs of the Dalits, apostles of Dravidian politics, anti-Brahmin Samaj Parties - all were ready to come under the BJP. Karunanidhi, Mayawati, Chandra Babu Naidu and even Farook Abdullah had joined the
bandwagon of the Babri destroyers at one time or other. Even the Left had done nearly nothing, thereby laying down their high deals and claims as protectors of secularism. CPI(M) even issued statements like a temple and mosque could be built adjacently at the Babri site and the Babri Masjid could be declared as a monument. Many times lockups and arrests greeted the Muslim youth who dared to protest against the continued perpetuation of injustice. Surely, this denial of democratic rights has to be questioned. This double standard should be exposed. Truth should be told aloud.
WHAT NEXT?

The years that followed the demolition of Babri Masjid were not peaceful not only for Muslims but to the entire nation. The fact that Muslims are denied their rights of identity, security and equity is now proven by the Justice Rajinder Sachar Committee Report. Justice is still in waiting. Just because the Masjid has been razed, it does not cease to exist. If there existed a Mosque, it cannot be forcefully removed. It should be rebuilt where it was situated. As per Sharia law, while no Masjid can be constructed on a wrongful land, a Masjid once consecrated cannot be alienated in any manner - sold or leased or gifted. Even after the demolition, the Babri Masjid exists because the Masjid is its site, the land which has been consecrated for worship, and not the stones and bricks or the structure. And the site cannot be destroyed.

The day of the Babri Masjid demolition, 6 December 1992, is a day to be remembered at least by Muslim individuals and groups. The Hindutva zealots celebrate it as a day of triumph, victory and pride. leaders even in the aftermath of the most unjust Allahabad High Court verdict in title suit. There have been many spells of negotiations before
and after the demolition. Many compromises were offered by the Muslim side and many alternatives were considered, but all negotiations failed because of the demand of the Hindu leadership that the Muslims must anyhow surrender the Babri Masjid site to build a temple.

We have seen, there is no evidence to support the myth of Ayodhya being Ram janmabhoomi or the Babri Masjid site being his Janmasthan, or the existence of a Ram Mandir on the site in 1528 and its deliberate destruction by Mir Baqi, Babar’s commander, to build the Babari Masjid in its place. None of these inter-linked propositions bear any historical scrutiny. Moreover, the Hindutva forces make similar demands on thousands of other Masjids. But, they very generously for the present, claim only two more mosques in Mathura near the Krishna janmabhoomi temple and in Varanasi near the Viswanath temple. This means that even if the Muslims concede the VHP’s demand in Ayodhya, they have to face a protracted battle on other masjids.

We are confronted with people who ask “It’s been 25 years, should we speak still about Babri? Isn’t better for us to forget it and live our lives peacefully?” Such people have to explain what is wrong in questioning an injustice through legal and democratic means available to us, the atrocious act of demolishing a Masjid where people have worshipped for centuries and capturing a land that has been given as Wakf for the Masjid. We have to ensure that the system is strong enough to stop those forces that list out and threaten publicly to demolish thousands of Masjids, as part of their agenda to gain power using violence and polarization. When fascism is pulling down the pillars of the nation one by one, this is not a just a religious concern but a patriotic mission too.

Fascism spreads its roots through the forgetfulness. They
make it possible by changing facts and rewriting history. Creating confusions with blatant lies and half-truths as facts is a method they have always employed. Therefore it is a matter of vital importance to teach objective history of Babri Masjid to coming generations. Most of the Hindu believers are peaceful people who prefer communal harmony and amity to hostility and violence. They should be taught the reality of Babri Masjid so that they don’t fall into the trap of communal fascist elements that inject malice into the social fabric.

The rise of fascism and its cruelties are evident in its orchestration of violence. However, the Indian society and the religious minorities have not been able to fully analyze and comprehend the fascist motives and threats. We have already paid a very huge price for the lack of this comprehension. Only with the resurgence of a committed and dedicated community, We face the challenges confronting us. A total and equal empowerment of all sections of Indian society ensuring freedom, justice and security to all, is the only panacea left before us.

The most important step in fighting fascist agenda and in shattering their dreams is to pass down the memories to coming generations, with every detail of what culminated to the demolition of Babri Masjid. The coming generations will say to those who think that Babri Masjid has eventually erased, that its memories remain in minds of millions as a firm conviction to rebuild it on the same site. In fact, memory is the best defense.
The Indian dailies that reached people on December 7, the day after demolition of the Babri Masjid, strongly condemned the act, and suggested that Masjid be rebuilt as a gesture of national unity. Most of the dailies came out with front-page editorials denouncing the Bharatiya Janata Party and other organizations which led to the demolition. Several dailies were highly critical of the Indian Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narsimha Rao and said he should have dismissed the Uttar Pradesh government run by the BJP and not allowed the Kar Sevaks to assemble at Ayodhya. Excerpts from the editorial comments of a few national dailies are reproduced below. Many noted scholars, activists and leaders unequivocally demanded the reconstruction of the Masjid on the same site. With that said, the question is whether they hold the same opinion now, after 25 years of betrayal. Why not they stand by their earlier position now? Why is the demand to rebuilt Masiid now sidelined as a Muslim issue?
THE INDIAN EXPRESS

The Indian Express in its editorial said, “The outrage Ayodhya witnessed is an affront to our national honour. India’s principal opposition party now stands exposed as one only too willing to resort to deceit and dastardliness in its frantic pursuit of a religious goal.” It said India’s ruling party has set a new landmark in political pusillanimity.” If the Congress party had not turned its calculated ineptness into a shameful strategy of inaction, if the BJP had not hoped to gain political millage out of brinkmanship and subterfuge, India would have been spared this ominous fallout of all that has gone on in the name of mandir and masjid for these past few years,” the paper said. It said the shaken confidence of the nation has to be rebuilt. The paper advocated the construction of a monument symbolizing national unity and reconciliation at Ayodhya, in an act of collective atonement.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

The Times of India said, “The nation now looks to the Central government to demonstrate as firmly as it can that it intends to counter the forces of fanaticism, heal the wounds inflicted on Muslim minority and ensure that appropriate obeisance is paid to Lord Ram only in the framework of the constitution.” The dismissal of Kalyan Singh government is a first indication of government’s will, the paper observed. It said, “note must also be taken of the appeal of Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid to his coreligionists to remain calm. Finally the enormity of what transpired at Ayodhya would be obvious from BJP’s statement owing moral responsibility for the destruction of the Masjid. Many more forceful moves will have to be made in the days ahead if the republic is to be saved from the scourge of hate and bigotry,” the Times of India said.
THE STATESMAN

The Statesman questioned that “If the father of the nation (Mahatama Gandhi) were alive today he would ask that the Masjid be rebuilt preferably by the Hindus who destroyed it and suggest that the temple of Lord Ram be built nearby and urge Muslims to help with it.” Mahatama Gandhi was shot and killed on January 30, 1948. On Sunday, December 6 part of the dream that was India dies with him, the paper observed.

THE HINDU

The Hindu in its editorial said the disputed Masjid was razed to the ground with a barbaric savagery reminiscent of the crude traditions of settling scores of medieval history. The demolition of the Masjid has delivered a lethal blow to the image of a secular and democratic India. It suggested that the first step would be to rebuilt the destroyed Babri Masjid as a gesture towards the minority community and as a reaffirmation of an unwavering commitment to the vision of a democratic India, free of any kind of bigotry.

THE PATRIOT

The Patriot said international repercussions besides the long term effects of Indian society and polity would be grave. Bigots by their insensate act at Ayodhya have imperiled the stability of the Indian state.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

The Hindustan Times observed that “the nation must hang its head in shame over what has happened in Ayodhya.” It said the storming and destruction of the Babri Masjid
by the Kar Sevaks is a blot on India’s liberal tradition and tolerant spirit Hinduism has always been known for. “The nation has lost a great deal on December 6 at Ayodhya. Its national unity is indeed in danger. The world is not going to shower praises on it nor wait for it to enable to gather its act again. No one waits for people quarreling among themselves.” Yet, this is the time when leaders of the Congress, Janata Dal, Communists -- and even the BJP - need to sit together and find a way out before more is lost. Immaturity tendency to score petty points, political ambitions and surrender to religious passions have led to December 6 tragedy.” “Will our leaders look beyond politics for a change and save the nation?” the paper asked.
30 SEPTEMBER 2010: WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT HIGH COURT VERDICT?

This is not a right verdict. The land should be given either to the Muslims or to the Hindus. Instead, three judges have divided the land into three pieces. The verdict is merely a trick. Judges should think and act beyond caste and community. The verdict raises doubts as to whether communalism has found place among them too.

- Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer (Retired Judge, Supreme Court)

“The judgment can be summed up in two words: Crime piece. In 1992, a crime was committed. The Babri Masjid was demolished. But assume that the crime had not been committed and the matter had gone to court. Do you think the court could possibly, under any circumstances, order that the land be divided? Frankly, the grounds on which the organized Hindutva plaintiffs went and asked for land, they should have been thrown out on the grounds of remediation. Legally speaking, the Sangh Parivar does not have a right even if a temple had been demolished to build the Babri Masjid, as the masjid existed before the period of limitation...It is time the secular political parties took a stand.

- Justice Rajindar Sachar (Retired Chief Justice, Delhi High Court).

“Some sort of an attempted compromise. Whether this compromise is strictly on the basis of law is a doubtful fact...The court had completely overlooked the fact that the idol of Ram was placed in the Masjid by use of force...
In fact, the judgment validates the aggression by one group of the claimants.

- **K.N. Panikkar (Historian)**

“It is tolerably arguable that the three judges, faced with the gigantic task of presiding over this mass of materials and documents, lost the wood for the trees... The easiest thing in the world for the three judges would have been to grant legal title to the Muslims, accept the 1881 judgment as res judicata and declare that the Muslims had not lost the site between 1949 and 1961 by which the time limitation had past; and the Hindus could not claim adverse possession. Curiously none of the judges accepted this simple argument which would have disposed of the case... It cannot be overlooked that this was a title suit. Most of the other issues were not legal issues in a strict sense.”

- **Rajiv Davan (Constitutional expert)**

“You cannot say that Lord Ram was born at one particular place and call it ‘Ramjanmabhoomi’. It is a case of theology, mixed with law and faith. You cannot say that god was born at this specific place... It is a fractured judgment. Judges have tried to please all the sections...”

- **Kuldip Nayar (Journalist and rights activist)**

“The verdict has created a precedent in the court of law that land can be claimed by declaring it to be the birth place of a divine or semi-divine being worshipped by a group that defines itself as a community. There will now be many such Janmasthans where very appropriate property can be found or a required dispute manufactured. Since the deliberate destruction of historical monuments has not been condemned, what is to stop people from continuing to destroy others? True reconciliation can only come when there is confidence that the law in this country bases itself not just on faith and belief, but on evidence.”
- Romila Thapar (Historian)

“It is a political statement, rather than a verdict based on evidence and sound legal principles... the High Court turning Ram Lalla - whose idol was installed under the Babri Masjid’s central dome in 1949 - into a human being by giving him a portion of the disputed land was most baffling and indicated the extent to which the illogical reasoning was stretched...It was hypocrisy to treat the people who demolished the Babri Masjid with the same standards applied to the other set of litigants in the title suits. This is the real threat to equality before law, to which we shouldn’t remain silent.”

- Arundhati Roy (Writer-activist)

The courts spoke reassuringly of maintaining the status quo. But the status quo has always altered - and always in favour of Hindus. In 1949, the installation of idols became the status quo. In 1986, the opening of the locks became the status quo. In 1989, the Shilanyas ceremony became the status quo. And finally, in 1992, the demolition of the mosque followed by the erection of the temple became the eternal status quo.”

- Vidya Subrahmaniam (Columnist)

Now RSS and its progeny is taking the line that Muslims should hand over the land of their share to RSS front, to see that the aspirations of ‘Nation’ are fulfilled and a grand Ram Temple is built there. It is not only Hindus who constitute the nation. All the Hindus of the nation do not hold any such belief about the birthplace of Lord Ram. All the Hindus do not want a Ram Temple there.”

- Ram Puniyani (Writer).
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS: 1528 - 2017

1528: Mir Baqi, the Mughal governor, builds Babri Masjid in honour of Emperor Babar. No account of destruction of any Hindu temple or association of Rama with the site in Medieval literature.

1534-1623: Tulsi Das writes popular Hindi version of Ramayana, Ram Charit Manas. Sri Ram is raised to the status of full deity, an Avatar (incarnation) of Hindu God Vishnu. Tulsi Das never mentions association of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya with Ram Janambhoomi.

1759-60: Raj Chaturman in his Chahar Gulshan (Four Gardens) first mentions of modern Ayodhya as a possible place of Sri Rama’s birth, but no association of Babri Masjid with it.

1788: Jesuit priest Joseph Tieffenthaler suggests the birth of Rama is believed to be in the vicinity of the Masjid. First mention of Masjid as possible place of birth, offers no reference or evidence. Several places in Ayodhya claimed to be Rama’s place of birth.

1859: The British administration erects a fence to separate the places of worship, allowing the inner court to be used by Muslims and the outer court by Hindus.

1885: The first suit was filed by Mahant Raghubir, seeking...
permission to build a temple on Ram Chabootra. But petitioners were rejected by the Faizabad District Court in 1886.

**Dec 22, 1949:** Idols of Ram Lalla were installed inside Babri Masjid in the night by a group of Hindus.

**Jan. 5, 1950:** The District Magistrate K.K. Nair ‘attaches’ the Masjid, locking the doors and appointing Ayodhya Municipal Corporation as a ‘Receiver.’ Nair who later became MP on the Jan Sangh ticket, gives Hindus permission to worship and take care of their deity. Muslims were forbidden to get closer than 300 yards to their own Masjid.

**1950:** A petition was filed by Hashim Ansari in the Faizabad court asking for the mosque gates to be opened and namaz allowed, soon after which Gopal Visharad and Mahant Paramhans Ramchandra Das filed a suit asking for permission to offer prayers to deities at Asthan Janmabhoomi

**1959:** A suit was filed by the the Nirmohi Akhara (headed by Mahant Bhaskar Das) in the Faizabad court asking to remove Priya Dutt Ram from the management of the “temple” and take charge himself.

**1961:** Another suit was filed by the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board asking for the restoration of the Muslims’ right to pray in the Masjid

**1964:** All three suits filed by Hindus and the one filed by the Waqf Board are consolidated as suite No. 12/196, becoming the main case in the dispute

**1984:** Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) launched a massive
movement for opening the locks of the Masjid whose ownership was claimed by fanatical Hindus who said it was the site of an ancient Ram temple that was razed by Mughal emperor Babur.

1984: VHP forms a panel to ‘liberate’ the disputed site and build a Ram temple there

Feb. 1, 1986: Acting on the petition of U.C. Pandey, on behalf of Hindus to be able to perform public worship, Mr. K.M. Pandey the district judge, on recommendation of Mr. T. K. Pandey, the District Magistrate, grants Hindus the permission for general worship (without regard to the Muslims opinion). In full glare of media and publicity the Masjid is handed over to Hindus

Nov 9, 1989: The then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, allowed shilanyas’, or ground-breaking ceremony, at Ayodhya.

Nov 11, 1989: The Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) coalition lays foundation stone (Shilanyas) for temple on adjoining land claimed by Muslims as part of Waqf (Islamic trust). Bloody ‘Rath Yatra’ fuels hatred, incites anti-Muslim sentiments and provokes widespread riots. Dispute is pending before the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Sep 25, 1990: The then BJP president L. K. Advani launched a Rath Yatra from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh.

November 1990: Advani was arrested on the way in Samastipur in Bihar, following which the V.P. Singh-led coalition government, propped by the Left and the BJP, fell after the BJP withdrew support.
1991: The BJP comes to power in Uttar Pradesh

Oct. 7, 1991: BJP government of Uttar Pradesh (UP) expropriates 2.77 acres of Muslim waqf land adjoining the Masjid and starts construction. Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, ignores many directives of the Supreme Court to stop the work.

July 23, 1992: Prime Minister comes to agreement with Sadhus (Hindu holy men) to stop construction to enable him to find a solution. Chief Minister of UP assures status quo and protection of Masjid.

Nov. 28, 1992: L. K. Advani, the BJP leader, asserts that work in construction of temple would continue irrespective of Supreme Court decision.

Dec 6, 1992: BJP, VHP, and RSS decide for Kar Seva. 300,000 fanatics from all over the country gather for Kar Seva. Police do not intervene. Babri Masjid, a place of Muslim worship and a monument of history destroyed brick by brick. The incident triggered widespread communal riots in the country and led to the loss of more than 2000 lives.

Dec 16, 1992: M.S. Liberhan Commission was set up by the government to probe the circumstances that led to the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

Jan 7, 1993: After the demolition, the President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma sends a single-point reference under Article 143 to the Supreme Court to decide whether a Hindu temple existed in the area on which “the structure” stood.

Oct 1994: The SC declines to answer the Presidential Reference and returns it. The criminal cases are still on hold against 49 persons, including L.K. Advani, Murli
Manohar Joshi and UmaBharati. They are accused of conspiring to demolish the BabriMasjid on Dec 6, 1992.


2001: Tensions rise on the anniversary of the demolition of the mosque. VHP pledges again to build Hindu temple at the site.

Jan 2002: Vajpayee sets up an Ayodhya cell in his office and appoints a senior official, Shatrughna Singh, to hold talks with Hindu and Muslim leaders.

April 2002: Allahabad High Court bench comprising three judges begin hearings on determining who owns the Babri Masjid site.

March 12, 2003: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) began excavation in Ayodhya on the directions of the Allahabad High Court to ascertain whether a temple existed at the place where the Babri Masjid stood.

Sept 2003: A court rules that seven Hindutva leaders should stand trial for inciting the destruction of the Babri Mosque, but no charges are brought against L K Advani, Deputy Prime minister, who was also at the site in 1992.

2004: NDA loses power: Congress-led United Progressive Alliance forms the central government.

Nov 2004: A court in Uttar Pradesh rules that an earlier order which exonerated L. K. Advani for his role in the destruction of the mosque should be reviewed.

June 30, 2009: The Liberhan Commission submitted its
report to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh after 17 years of its formation and 48 extensions.

**Sept 8, 2010:** The Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court says it will pronounce its judgment on case on September 24.

**Sept 23, 2010:** The Supreme Court orders an interim stay till Sept 28 on the pronouncement of the Ayodhya verdict.

**Sept 28, 2010:** The Supreme Court rejects the plea for the deferment of the verdict.

**Sept 30, 2010:** The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court pronounce the verdict. It suggests the division of the disputed land into three.

**15 August 2015:** Supreme Court observed that it will take 15 years for organizing all the documents of ownership of the land. Chief Justice pointed out that the documents that are in Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit and Persian languages have to be translated to English.

**26 February 2016:** Supreme Court judges V Gopal Gowda and Arun Mishra accepted the petition of Hindutva leader Subramanya Swami who has never been a party in the case requesting to allow the construction of Ram Temple on the site.

**20 July 2016:** Oldest Muslim litigant in Babri Masjid, Mohammad Hashim Ansari who witnessed placing of idols by miscreants inside the Majsid in 1949 passed away at the age of 96.

**17 November 2016:** Chief Justice T S Thakur made it clear that Swami’s request may be considered and the trial to
be expedited. It created a controversy when Chief Justice suggested that out of court settlement was better in the case and that he himself would mediate the settlement. But he later confessed that he mistook Subramanya Swami as a party in the case.

25 May 2017: CBI Special Court asked Advani and Uma Bharti to appear in conspiracy case and both were granted bail on May 30, 2017.

December 5, 2017: The present status of the site ownership case is that the supreme court bench of Justice Deepak Mishra, Asok Bhushan, Abdul Nazeer will hear the case on this date.
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