

## Course correction – Averting polarisation: on SC pushing back Ayodhya verdict

The Supreme Court has judiciously pushed back the timeline for a verdict on Ayodhya

By declining to fix until January 2019 a date for hearing the Ayodhya case, the Supreme Court has judiciously diminished the possibility of a final verdict before the next Lok Sabha election. The adjournment is both welcome and necessary, as it pushes back the prospect of any judgment in the run-up to the polls. It hardly needs reiteration that regardless of which way it goes, any verdict would polarise the nation. When a three-judge Bench refused to refer some questions of law in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute to a seven-member Bench last month, it raised the prospects of an early final hearing in the appeals filed against the Allahabad High Court's judgment of 2010 in the main title suit. The court had then set October 29, 2018, for the next hearing. This had raised the hopes of aggressive proponents of Hindutva who have been expecting a favourable verdict for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya. While it is true that courts should not tailor their timelines to election dates, it is equally important that religious sentiments are not stoked and exploited during election season. The decision of a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi to put off even the exercise of fixing a date for the final hearing is quite pragmatic. In the eyes of the law, this may be just a title dispute. However, given the divisive effect the Ram temple movement has had on the country's politics and history, it would be unwise to equate this with any other judicial matter that can come up for disposal in due course.

A word of caution is in order. The postponement of the hearing does not preclude an aggressive campaign by those upset and impatient about what they see as a delay in achieving their objective of building a temple at the disputed site. Already there are voices clamouring, most imprudently, for an ordinance to enable the construction of a temple. These must be resisted, and the judiciary must be vigilant and resourceful in ensuring that the dispute remains within its jurisdiction. A solution, unless judicially driven, is unlikely to command constitutional legitimacy. Twenty four years ago the **Supreme Court** had resolutely refused to answer a controversial Presidential reference on whether a temple pre-existed the demolished masjid. It had restored the title suit and made it clear that the government is only a receiver of the land it had acquired in Ayodhya; and that it holds the land in trust, only to be handed over to the party that succeeds in the suit. This recourse to a judicial remedy should not be circumvented. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day address in 2014, had called for a 10-year moratorium on communal and sectarian issues. As long as he sticks to the spirit behind this appeal, it will not be legitimate for anyone to demand a pre-emptive law in favour of a temple.

### Meanings of Difficult Words :

- **Avert** - to prevent something bad or harmful from happening
- **Polarisation** - the act of dividing something, especially something that contains different people or opinions, into two completely separate groups
- **Push back** - to delay something so that it happens later than planned
- **Verdict** - an official judgment made in a court
- **Judicious** - showing intelligence and good judgment
- **Timeline** - a plan of when something should happen or how much time something should take
- **Decline** - to refuse
- **Hearing** - a meeting of a court of law or official organization to find out the facts about something
- **Diminished** - reduced in amount, size, or importance
- **Adjournment** - a pause or rest during a formal meeting or trial, or the act of giving a pause or rest

- **Prospect** - the possibility that something will happen
- **Run-up** - to make something very quickly
- **Reiterate** - to repeat something in order to emphasize it or make it very clear to people
- **Regardless** - without being affected or influenced by someone or something
- **Polarise** - to form two very different groups, opinions, or situations that are completely opposite to each other, or to cause this to happen
- **Dispute** - a serious disagreement, especially one between groups of people that lasts for a long time
- **Aggressive** - someone who is aggressive is very determined to win or be successful
- **Proponent** - someone who publicly supports an idea, policy, plan etc
- **Favourable** - giving someone or something an advantage or a benefit
- **Tailor** - to make or prepare something following particular instructions
- **Stoke** - to make a feeling stronger
- **Exploit** - to use a situation so that you get benefit from it, even if it is wrong or unfair to do this
- **Put off** - to delay doing something, especially because you do not want to do it
- **Pragmatic** - involving or emphasizing practical results rather than theories and ideas
- **Divisive** - likely to cause arguments between people
- **Unwise** - stupid and likely to cause problems
- **Equate** - to consider something to be the same as something else
- **Caution** - careful thought and lack of hurry in order to try to avoid risks or danger
- **Postponement** - to decide that something will not be done at the time when it was planned for, but at a later time
- **Preclude** - if one thing precludes another, the first thing prevents the second one from happening
- **Campaign** - a series of actions intended to produce political or social change
- **Disputed** - a disputed area is one that different countries claim belongs to them, so that there is a disagreement or war between them
- **Clamour** - to say that you want something and must have it
- **Imprudent** - not sensible, especially in relation to the way that money is spent or invested
- **Vigilant** - always being careful to notice things, especially possible danger:
- **Resourceful** - good at finding effective ways to deal with problems
- **Ensure** - to make certain that something happens or is done
- **Legitimacy** - the fact that something is legal
- **Resolute** - extremely determined
- **Demolish** - to deliberately destroy a building
- **Acquire** - to get something
- **Remedy** - a solution to a particular problem
- **Circumvent** - to find a way of avoiding a rule or law that limits you, especially using a clever trick that does not break the law
- **Address** - a formal speech
- **Moratorium** - an official agreement to stop an activity temporarily
- **Sectarian** - caused by disagreements among people from different religious groups
- **Spirit** - a particular way of thinking, feeling, or behaving
- **Legitimate** - fair and reasonable
- **Pre-emptive** - done or said to prevent something from happening

## Course correction – Zia, cornered: on BNP facing setback in Bangladesh

### The BNP suffers yet another setback as Bangladesh's elections approach

Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's conviction in yet another case of corruption imperils her Bangladesh Nationalist Party's already meagre prospects in the coming parliamentary elections. She has been sentenced to seven years of rigorous imprisonment. With her son and acting chairman of the BNP, Tarique Rahman, in exile, and convicted in absentia and sentenced to life imprisonment for his alleged role in a grenade attack on an Awami League rally, the party's leadership has been effectively crippled. It is no wonder that the BNP has formed an alliance, the Jatiya Oikya Front, with other minor parties, under the leadership of secular icon and civil society leader Kamal Hossain to bolster its fortunes in what looks like a lopsided battle against the entrenched Awami League. The Awami League and the BNP have rarely engaged each other as healthy political rivals. There has been no love lost between the leaders of the two parties, Ms. Zia and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina: they have tended to view each other with a sense of vengeance. Yet it would be misleading to claim that the punitive actions ordered against the BNP's leaders by the judiciary are entirely due to any pressure from the ruling party. The BNP's last term in government, from 2001 to 2006, was marked by corruption, support for fundamentalism and repressive measures against the Opposition.

The BNP is now caught in a bind. It had boycotted the parliamentary election in 2014 to give the process a veneer of illegitimacy, leaving the Awami League as the only major political force in contention. But the BNP's decision backfired. Bangladesh under Awami rule has recorded steady economic growth and has had creditable successes in welfare delivery and public health measures, seen tangibly in the lowered infant mortality and fertility rates and in sanitation. There have been some misgivings too, as Prime Minister Hasina has increasingly tended to be authoritarian and impatient with critics. While the judiciary has found the BNP's leadership to be guilty of corruption and misdemeanours, the crackdown on the BNP rank and file, with thousands of activists targeted by the police, is a sign of the government's overreach. A new digital security law, most ominously, has been passed with stringent punishment to anyone secretly recording state officials and spreading "negative propaganda" about the Liberation War, among other things. This manoeuvre is clearly intended to have a chilling effect on the Bangladeshi media. A healthy democracy must allow for differences of opinion. The government must not pursue this quasi-authoritarian bent at a time when its leading opposition has been emasculated. This would only help delegitimise the formal aspects of democracy, such as elections, among the government's critics and the electorate.

### Meanings of Difficult Words :

- **Setback** - a problem that delays or that stops progress or makes a situation worse
- **Former** - used for describing someone or something that had a particular job, title, status etc in the past, but not now
- **Conviction** - a decision by a court of law that someone is guilty of a crime
- **Imperil** - to put someone or something in danger
- **Meagre** - smaller or less than you want or need
- **Prospect** - the possibility that something will happen, especially something good
- **Sentence** - when a judge sentences someone, they officially state what someone's punishment will be
- **Rigorous** - strict, or severe
- **Imprisonment** - the punishment of being put into prison

- **Acting** - someone who does a job for a short time while the person who usually does that job is not there
- **Exile** - a situation in which you are forced to live in a foreign country because you cannot live in your own country, usually for political reasons
- **Convicted** - proved to be guilty of a crime by a court of law
- **In absentia** - if something happens in absentia, the person involved is not present when it happens
- **Alleged** - claimed to be true, even though this has not been proved
- **Grenade** - a small bomb that someone throws or fires from a gun
- **Rally** - a public meeting that a lot of people go to in order to support someone or something or to protest against someone or something
- **Cripple** - to damage something severely, or to prevent it from working properly
- **Alliance** - an arrangement between two or more people, groups, or countries by which they agree to work together to achieve something
- **Minor** - not very important in comparison with people or things of the same type
- **Secular** - not religious, or not connected with religion
- **Icon** - someone who is very famous and who people think represents a particular idea
- **Bolster** - to make something stronger or more effective
- **Fortunes** - the things that happen to someone or something and the changing degree to which they are successful
- **Lopsided** - not equal
- **Entrenched** - entrenched attitudes or feelings have existed for a long time and are difficult to change
- **League** - a group of people or things that are similar in their quality, skills, or achievements
- **Rival** - a person, team, or business that competes with another
- **Vengeance** - the act of harming or killing someone because they have done something bad to you
- **Misleading** - intended or likely to make someone believe something that is incorrect or not true
- **Punitive** - relating to or causing punishment or great difficulty
- **Judiciary** - the part of government that consists of all the judges and courts in a country
- **Fundamentalism** - the belief that the original laws of a religion should be followed very strictly and not be changed
- **Repressive** - ruling or controlling people by the use of force or violence, or by laws that put unreasonable limits on their freedom
- **Boycott** - to not take part in an event, or to not buy or use something as a protest
- **Veneer** - a pleasant appearance, or a polite way of behaving that is not sincere
- **Illegitimacy** - not legal or fair
- **Contention** - an opinion or statement that something is true, especially one made during a discussion or argument
- **Backfire** - if a plan or idea backfires, it has the opposite effect to the one that you wanted
- **Creditable** - good enough to deserve some praise or admiration
- **Tangible** - important and noticeable
- **Infant** - a baby, or a very young child
- **Mortality** - the number of deaths within a particular area, group etc
- **Fertility** - a woman's ability to have babies

- **Sanitation** - conditions and processes relating to people's health, especially the systems that supply water and deal with human waste
- **Misgiving** - a feeling of fear or doubt about whether something is right or will have a good result
- **Authoritarian** - controlling everything and forcing people to obey strict rules and laws
- **Impatient** - annoyed because something is not happening as quickly as you want or in the way you want
- **Critic** - someone who does not like something and states their opinion about it
- **Guilty** - someone who is guilty has committed a crime
- **Misdemeanour** - an action that is bad or wrong, but not in a serious way
- **Crackdown** - strong action that someone in authority takes to stop a particular activity
- **Overreach** - to try to do more than your ability, authority, or money will allow
- **Ominous** - making you think that something bad will happen
- **Stringent** - stringent rules or conditions are strict and make you achieve high standards
- **Propaganda** - information, especially false information, that a government or organization spreads in order to influence people's opinions and beliefs
- **Liberate** - to make a place or the people in it free from soldiers who have been controlling it
- **Manoeuvre** - an action or movement that you need care or skill to do
- **Chilling** - making you feel suddenly very frightened or worried
- **Pursue** - to follow a course of activity
- **Quasi** - partly
- **Authoritarian** - controlling everything and forcing people to obey strict rules and laws
- **Emasculate** - to reduce the power or effectiveness of something
- **Delegitimise** - to make something seem not valid or not acceptable
- **Electorate** - all the people who are allowed to vote in an election

### SOME IMPORTANT IDIOM AND PHRASES

#### 1. Be on cloud nine

**Example** – I will be on cloud nine when I pass UPSC exam this year.

**Meaning** – Be very happy

#### 2. Fool's paradise

**Example** – They were living in a fool's paradise, refusing to accept that they were facing poverty.

**Meaning** – False sense of happiness or success.

#### 3. Give cold shoulder

**Example** – The principal has given the cold shoulder to the proposal to arrange an inter-school dance competition.

**Meaning** – To ignore

#### 4. Get a raw deal

**Example** – It is very sad that the backward class poor children get a raw deal in education.

**Meaning** – not to be treated as well as others.

#### 5. Hit the nail on the head

**Example** – He always hit the nail on the head in troubled situations.

**Meaning** – to do the correct thing

**6. Hand to mouth**

**Example** – Heavy rainfall led the farmers to live hand to mouth.

**Meaning** – Live on only basic necessities.

**7. Hit the bull's eye**

**Example** – Your suggestion hits the bull's eye in the exam.

**Meaning** – To be exactly right about something or to achieve the best result possible.

[ **Hit the bull's eye** also mean to hit the very center of a circular target. *For example;* The Bowman hits the bull's eye three times in a row.]

**8. Let the cat out of the bag**

**Example** – John had planned a surprise party for his wife. But their five-year-old son let the cat out of the bag and ruined the party.

**Meaning** – To reveal the secret carelessly or by mistake.

**9. Make a face**

**Example** – Do you have any better suggestion? If not, then don't make a face.

**Meaning** – To show dislike or disappointment through facial expression.

**10. Don't put all your eggs in one basket**

**Example** – Try to invest in different ways. Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

**Meaning** – Do not put all your resources in one place.

**11. To be a good Samaritan**

**Example** – I was stuck in the middle of the highway, and then a good Samaritan offered me a ride.

**Meaning** – To be kind and compassionate to someone in distress.

**12. To put in a nutshell**

**Example** – One of my lecturers is expert in teaching the topic in a nutshell.

**Meaning** – To say in a few words./ To make something concise.

**13. To pour oil on troubled waters**

**Example** – The argument between Jack & David has turned worse, so I tried to pour oil on troubled waters but failed to do so.

**Meaning** – To do or say something in order to make people stop arguing and become calmer.

**14. To move heaven and earth**

**Example** – The ACP ordered the police to move heaven and earth to find the murderer.

**Meaning** – To do everything possible to achieve the result.

**15. Bear the palm**

**Example** – India may bear the palm in the Champions Trophy.



**Meaning** – to win.

*NOTE: Palm leaves were formerly used as symbols of victory.*

#### **16. To egg someone on**

**Example** – My classmates egged on me to talk with the principal.

**Meaning** – To urge someone to do something that is usually negative.

#### **17. On the spur of the moment**

**Example** – I decided to go on the spur of the moment.

**Meaning** – Suddenly, without any planning

#### **18. A man of straw**

**Example** – In today's match, the opponent team members are like men of straw.

**Meaning** – A person or idea that is weak and easy to defeat.

#### **19. Cut the mustard**

**Example** – Mr. Bansal appointed Rajesh as the project manager, but can he cut the mustard?

**Meaning** – To succeed./ To come up to expectations.

#### **20. To fish in troubled waters**

**Example** – My uncle is fishing in troubled waters by buying shares of that software company.

**Meaning** – Involving oneself in a difficult situation in the hope of gaining some personal advantage.

#### **21. The green-eyed monster**

**Example** – She criticized Maya's effort of presenting the demonstration. Do you think it is valid or is just a case of green-eyed monster?

**Meaning** – The feeling of being jealous.

#### **22. End in smoke**

**Example** – He is trying to figure out the programming error since two days. But unfortunately, all his efforts end in smoke at last.

**Meaning** – No concrete or positive result.

#### **23. To get into hot water**

**Example** – Rajesh gets into hot water after he had a fight with the manager.

**Meaning** – To get into trouble.

#### **24. To bury the hatchet**

**Example** – These two teammates should bury the hatchet to win the final match.

**Meaning** – To forget about arguments and disagreements with someone.

#### **25. To wet one's whistle**

**Example** – You must be tired after all days work. Would you like to wet your whistle?

**Meaning** – To take a drink, especially an alcoholic drink.

## 26. Cloak and dagger

**Example** – How many days you will cloak and dagger like this? Why don't you tell your boss about your new job?

**Meaning** – Involving or characterized by secrecy or mystery.

## 27. A bread and butter letter

**Example** – After I came back from the tour, I have decided to write a bread and butter letter to the tour organizer for such an amazing service.

**Meaning** – A thank you letter./ A letter or note to follow up on a visit.

## 28. Thick and thin

**Example** – From last ten years, we have been together through thick and thin.

**Meaning** – Including both good times and bad times.

## 29. Cool one's heels

**Example** – When you were busy in the meeting, I was cooling my heels in the waiting room.

**Meaning** – To wait for something to happen.

## 30. Take fancy

**Example** – I think Maya has taken a fancy to you.

**Meaning** – Suddenly start to like something or someone.

☞“THERE ARE ONLY TWO WAYS TO LIVE YOUR LIFE. ONE IS AS THOUGH NOTHING IS A MIRACLE. THE OTHER IS AS THOUGH EVERYTHING IS A MIRACLE.”☞