BJP's

WHITE PAPER

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AYODHYA

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THE RAMA TEMPLE MOVEMENT

BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

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FOREWORD

Sri Rama is the unique symbol, the unequalled symbol of our oneness, of our integration, as well as of our aspiration to live the higher values. As Maryada Purushottam Sri Rama has represented for thousands of years the ideal of conduct, just as Rama Rajya has always represented the ideal of governance. There is scarcely a language in our country into which the Ramayana has not been translated. There is scarcely a folk tradition which does not celebrate the life and legend of Sri Rama. And one saint of our land after another, one saintly tradition after another has immersed itself in devotion to Him: the sacred Sri Guru Granth Sahib celebrates and invokes Sri Rama about two thousand four hundred times, Gandhiji died with His name on his lips.

It is natural therefore that the place of His birth has been an object of the deepest devotion for Hindus through the millennia — the inscription which has been found at the site and which speaks of a magnificent temple with a pinnacle of gold, dedicated to Lord Vishnu Hari who had humbled King Bali and defeated the wicked Dashanana, that is, Ravana; the record of the unremitting struggle of the Hindus to regain the site; the pathetic history of their worshipping the spot from a distance when they were denied access to it, of their circumambulating it — all these bear testimony to their deep and abiding, and indeed stirring, devotion to Sri Rama.

On the other hand, the structure which Mir Baqi put up on the orders of Babur never had any special significance from a religious point of view. It was purely and simply a symbol not of devotion and of religion but of conquest. Correspondingly, quite apart from its being an obstacle, preventing Hindus from worshipping the birthplace of their idol, Sri Rama, it was for the country the symbol of its subjugation.

As I mentioned, the Hindus had been trying for centuries to reacquire access to the spot and to reconstruct the magnificent temple. That was one stream of the Ayodhya movement — a stream that has been unbroken through centuries, one that predates by centuries all the persons and organisations which are today associated with the Ramajanmabhoomi movement. The Sadhus and Sants who set up the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas in 1986 — when no political party or organisation was seized of the matter — represent that continuous stream in our times.

But another powerful current arose among the people, and the confluence of the two has given the power to the Sri Ramajanmabhoomi movement which we see today. The manner in which the State bent to fundamentalists and terrorists, the manner in which self-styled leaders of minorities sought to revive the politics of separatism which had led to the Partition of the country, and even more so the manner in which Prime Ministers and others genuflected to them; and the double standards which came more and more to mar public discourse in India to the point that the word "Hindu" became something to be ashamed about,

to the point that nationalism became a dirty word — these ignited a great revulsion among the people. As all this was being done in the name of "Secularism", it led people to feel that what was being practised was not Secularism but a perversion. The people began to search for what true Secularism meant, they began to wonder how our country could at all survive if Nationalism was to be anathema.

Reconstructing the temple for Sri Rama became the symbol of this rising consciousness — ridding the country of the perversities to which it was being subjected in the name of Secularism, forging a strong and united country. The object of the movement thus became not just to construct yet another temple, the object became to put our country back on its feet, to purify our public life, our public discourse.

This is how in 1989 the Bharatiya Janata Party formally decided to lend its shoulder to the cause — the Party was responding to the deepest urges of our people.

But even though this tug of the people was what had led the Party to take up the cause, even though I had myself spelt out this perspective as I commenced the Rathyatra, my colleagues and I were surprised at the way our people responded. We were overwhelmed. It is only then that we saw how deep was their devotion to Sri Rama, how deeply they felt that they were not being listened to in their own country, how outraged they were at the politics of vote-banks and double-talk, and the talking down to them, of the preceding fifteen years.

The rest is history. Our governments refused to pay heed to the intense longing of the people with regard to Ramajanmabhoomi. And I regret to say that the Courts heeded our people no more. The governments remained lost in calculations; our leaders continued to be obstructive, and to put their trust in being clever; our courts allowed themselves to remain entangled in legalisms. The anger which had been welling up across the country, and which would have found a smooth and peaceful outlet if Kar Seva had been allowed on 2.77 acres of land adjoining the disputed structure, exploded on December 6. Disregarding the exhortations of the movement leaders, who had planned to shift the structure only after appropriate legislation, the Karsevaks pulled down the structure. For millions in the country, the construction of the temple had begun.

But the Karsevaks did more. They did not just erase a symbol of our subjugation. They did not just begin building a symbol of resurgence. They showed us as if in a flash how far we have to travel. For the country reacted in two diametrically opposite ways, as virtually two different peoples. For a handful — those in government, in political parties, and in large sections of the English Press, for instance, what had happened was "a national shame", it was "madness", it was "barbaric". For the rest of the country it was a liberation — a sweeping away of cobwebs. The depth of devotion to Sri Rama, the depth of anger at the recent politics, had surprised me, as I said; the depth of the chasm between these two nations — the microscopic minority at the top and the people — did not.

But as the organs of communication — Parliament, the English Press, Doordarshan

— were in the hands of the very persons whose politics and double-talk the Karsevaks were tearing down, calumny was rained down upon the Karsevaks, on the Ramajanmabhoomi movement, on the BJP in particular.

The Government's White Paper is part of this campaign of calumny. It is full of evasions and half-truths. Even within Government, voices were raised to protest at its concealments — it was pointed out, for instance, that the White Paper did not contain a word about the negotiations which the Prime Minister had conducted with the Sadhus and Sants, and with several of us.

The calumny called for the antidote of truth: it was necessary to save the great and mighty movement so that it would continue to be the vehicle of national resurgence, it was necessary to set the record straight. The BJP thus decided to prepare a true White Paper on the Ayodhya movement. A group of scholars was put together to study the documents, to obtain records — from within Government too — and to obtain the direct testimony of those with whom the Prime Ministers and their representatives had negotiated.

The result is in your hands. This is a unique narrative on at least two counts:

- It contains many hitherto unpublished, confidential documents — for instance, on pages 81-89, readers will find the internal confidential summary which the Prime Minister's own Special Cell had made of the case of the VHP and the AIBMAC, and they would be led to ask why the fact that the Special Cell had reached such conclusions was kept hidden from the country;
- It contains the first person testimony of the most eminent and pious Sadhus and Sants, as well as of others as to what transpired in the discussions the Prime Minister and his emissaries had with them.

Based as it is on such a wealth of primary evidence and given the meticulous care with which the Paper has been prepared, this document brings to light many facts which most of us would not have known. Few of us for instance would remember that while Shri Narasimha Rao sought time now to study the problem, he had himself been the head of the Committee of Ministers which Shri Rajiv Gandhi had set up to examine the Ayodhya issue in 1987, a little nugget which the Government's White Paper does not mention at all. Few of us would remember that as long ago as 1955 the courts had bewailed the fact that the issue was being entangled in litigation and had directed the concerned court to conclude the matter expeditiously. Few of us would remember that the High Court had itself said that many of the issues cannot be settled by the judiciary. Few of us would know the contrast that marked the handling of the issue by three Prime Ministers. Few of us would know how every time a solution was at hand — from the Ordinance of Shri V.P. Singh to the formula which a Minister of Rao's Government canvassed with my colleagues and me — the step was reversed and disowned. Few will remember the devices by which the courts have been, and have allowed themselves to be, enmeshed. All this and much more is documented to the dot here.

This White Paper thus is a document of record. It puts together primary evidence to garner which even historians will be turning to it years hence.

The Ayodhya movement, in particular the erasure of Mir Baqi's insignia of conquest and the commencement of the Temple of Sri Rama, has already occasioned deep reflection and rethinking in our country — on what a truly secular polity should be, on how a country can even survive if the deepest sentiments of 85 per cent of its people are spurned, on how we should find better ways to attend to such issues so that the people are not driven to force solutions on all. In no section is this rethinking deeper and more evident than the Muslims.

I am certain that this White Paper will further this process of national reflection. It is thus more than a document of record. It is the interim report of a movement for national resurgence.

I therefore commend it to all our countrymen wholeheartedly.

L. K. Advani

(L.K. ADVANI)

AN INTRODUCTORY PREFACE

It is with an extraordinary sense of fulfilment and satisfaction that this introductory preface to the 'White Paper on Ayodhya and the Temple movement' from the Bharatiya Janata Party is being written. The central concern of every page and line of this comprehensive and meticulous work is to document the full canvas of the Ayodhya movement and to give a true account of its course and direction; of its thrust and implications; of its supporters and detractors; and of the political and social changes the movement has decreed.

Key or Aid to the White Paper

1. The accompanying White Paper is a sincere effort to give a catalogue of the Ayodhya movement from its conception to its present stage; a true insight into its historic background and philosophic foundations. More specifically, it documents, again meticulously, how different governments, Prime Ministers, political parties and leaders have from time to time responded to the movement or have neglected it or issues that it made central to national discourse — and also how they changed overnight, ducked and dodged the core issues. This invaluable document also unravels the mysterious attitude of Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao to the Ayodhya issue particularly from July 1992, and more importantly graphs how the Prime Minister chose to act clever when this explosive issue demanded the greatest sincerity and candidness, how his conduct was the very reverse of what was required of him, and what his high office as the custodian of the nation implied. It also forthrightly documents how he saw in it only an opportunity to settle scores with, and do one up on, the dissidents in his party and government, and to outwit and turn tables on the Ayodhya movement leaders — and particularly how he could not rise above treating this great public issue as a purely political game with the BJP.

2. It also brings out how the courts confessed expressly and by implication that certain issues pertaining to Ayodhya were incapable of judicial determination; and yet how the Congress governments, particularly that of Shri Narasimha Rao, and the pseudo-secular parties and the self-styled leaders of the Masjid action groups, kept insisting on a judicial verdict, which they, as also the masses, knew would never come; and how despite its admission that some of the issues are doubtful of resolution in courts, the judiciary too was drawn into this politically controversial issue repeatedly; and whenever the judiciary was drawn in whether in November 1989 or in November 1991, or in July 1992, or in November 1992, the effect of the judicial intervention, regardless of its intent, was to prevent the Temple from coming up; although the judiciary was seized of the matter since 1950, and even condemned itself as far back as 1955 for not deciding it and directed that it be decided forthwith, yet it did not, even 37 years thereafter — and it is pending to this day at a stage earlier to trial. The White Paper also gives an instructive account of how, by dragging the judicary into a mass

movement, the Narasimha Rao government was merely using the high institution as a shield and as a weapon to make it coverture a controversy. It also establishes how the judiciary, acting on English jurisprudence with its bipartite legal system, could only treat the Ayodhya issue as a private property dispute; how all that was achieved by judicial cases on Ayodhya was delay of a kind unheard of in judicial history and non-decision that successfully prevented all other avenues for decision.

3. The BJP White Paper also stands out in complete contrast to the White Paper on Ayodhya put out by the Home Ministry of the Narasimha Rao Government. When the government's White Paper came out, the national press did not fail to notice the obvious fact that it had held back all details of the negotiations ceaselessly carried on by Shri Narasimha Rao. But it did not stop at that; it withheld far more, and suggested and stated more untruth than facts. The White Paper of the BJP, in contrast, discloses all that the government knew and ought to have said, but withheld, and more. In this sense, the BJP White Paper is also a White Paper on the government's White Paper — and a virtual audit of the government document. A brief summary of the contents of this White Paper follows.

4. This comprehensive document which virtually replays the Ayodhya movement since its inception before its reader is divided into nine chapters, each chapter dealing with a specific aspect of the movement:

Chapter I gives the background of the Ayodhya movement, its philosophic basis and its importance as a movement of national renaissance.

Chapter II sets out the relentless struggle of the Hindus to repossess the Ramajanmabhoomi.

Chapter III deals with the Evidence and Dialogue on Ramajanmabhoomi.

Chapter IV gives a graphic description of the attitude of different governments, Prime Ministers, political parties and leaders, to the Ayodhya issue.

Chapter V deals with the attitude of the Narasimha Rao Government in the first phase, and details the circumstances leading to the Kar Seva and its suspension in July 1992 — the conciliatory phase.

Chapter VI gives an account of the circumstances leading to the Kar Seva and demolition in December 1992 — the confrontationist phase.

Chapter VII deals with the aftermath of Ayodhya and its fall-out.

Chapter VIII analyses the official White Paper on Ayodhya issued by the Narasimha Rao Government.

Chapter IX surveys the role of law and the judiciary in the Ayodhya case.

Chapter X encapsules the Conclusions.

CHAPTER I
THE BACKGROUND

Introduction

1.1. The Ayodhya movement is a watershed in Indian history. Indeed, it has been the greatest mass movement in recent history. The movement had a religious and cultural origin. But it has profoundly influenced the political destiny of India because of the insensitivity of the current political leadership to the spiritual and cultural aspirations of the Indian nation. To understand the Ayodhya movement and how it has struck so deep a chord in the Indian mind we must see how the Ayodhya issue was always a potentially political issue and eventually graduated into one; how the Indian leaders ignored history and wanted the people too to ignore it; how the provocative ocular effect of the invaders' monuments was underplayed rather than understood as to its political effect; how false unity was promoted instead of an understanding rooted in facts and resulting in assimilation; how the consequence was distorted secularism; how Rama and Rama Rajya are our national heritage whose potentiality is being realised only now; how the evolution from Somnath was suspended after the death of Sardar Patel and how Ayodhya is the recommencement from the point where the spirit of Somnath stood suspended.

What does Ayodhya symbolise ?

1.2. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had always affirmed that the Ayodhya movement was not just a plea for a temple for Sri Rama, that instead it reflected a far deeper quest for recapturing our national identity. The movement is firmly rooted in the inclusive and assimilative cultural heritage of India. It represents the soul of the nationalist thrust of our freedom movement. The post-independence political creed of the Congress and of most other political parties had come to regard every thing that inspired this nation in the past as less than secular — in fact, communal, and even anti-national. The movement for restoration of the Temple at the birthplace of Sri Rama evolved as a corrective to this distortion. It developed into a massive protest against the derailment of all that inspired the freedom movement — the elevating chant of **Vande Mataram** which **Maharishi Bankim Chandra** gave to this nation, the goal of **Rama Rajya** held out by **Mahatma Gandhi** as the destination of free India, the ideal of **Spiritual Nationalism** expounded by **Swami Vivekananda**, the spirit of **Sanatana Dharma** which **Sri Aurobindo** described as the soul and nationalism of India, and the mass devotion to the mother-land built around the **Ganapati festival** by **Bal Gangadhar Tilak.** The Ayodhya movement symbolised the re-establishment of these roots of our nationhood which had dried up due to post-independence politics and a spiritually bankrupt idiom. Indeed, 'secularism' became a perverted slogan — merely a means to catch votes, and a slogan to shout down every nationalist.

1.3. Thus, the BJP is convinced that the quest for a Temple for Sri Rama at Ayodhya, at the very place where the Maryada Purushotam is believed to have been born, is the expression of a brooding national conscience that had been held in check since the partition of India by pseudo-secular leaders and parties, that it is a symbol of the greatest national introspection and cultural resurgence of the present century. The people's participation in the Ayodhya movement and its reach cutting across all barriers of caste, religion, language and region showed and emphasised its national and political thrust.

People's Mandate for Ayodhya Temple

2.1. It is in view of its importance as a mass movement to correct the distortions which have derailed Indian nationalism and weakened the Indian Society and State, that the BJP decided in June, 1989 to lend support to the construction of the Temple for Sri Rama. The Manifesto of the BJP for the Parliamentary elections in 1989 and the Parliamentary and UP Assembly elections in 1991 clearly set Rama Rajya as the goal of the party and the nation, and made a commitment to erect a grand Temple for the great national hero, Sri Rama, elevated to the status of God. The Manifesto of 1991 had stated:

> "As the party of law, order and justice, it (BJP) would ensure the security of life, liberty and honour of all citizens. It seeks the restoration of Ramjanmabhoomi in Ayodhya only by way of a syn.bolic righting of historic wrongs so that the old unhappy chapter of acrimony would be ended and a grand national reconciliation be effected. Hindu and Muslims are blood brothers, but on account of historical reasons, their relationship has not been harmonious. It shall be the endeavour of the BJP to make all Indians fraternal and friendly once again.
>
> The BJP firmly believes that construction of Ram Mandir at Janamsthal is a symbol of the vindication of our cultural heritage and national self-respect. For BJP it is purely a national issue and it will not allow any vested interest to give it a sectarian and communal colour. Hence, the party is committed to build Shri Ram Mandir at Janamsthan by relocating the super-imposed Babri structure with respect."

Based on this commitment, the BJP secured an absolute majority in the elections to the UP Legislative Assembly. In the Parliamentary elections, also held in June 1991, the BJP secured over 25% of the popular votes, and 119 seats. The BJP had thus secured, and was, in fact, obliged by the mandate of the electorate to remove all hurdles in the way of constructing the Rama Temple at Ayodhya.

2.2. Despite the mandate, time and again, the BJP and also the organisers of the Ramajanmabhoomi movement, had maintained that, although the disputed structure at Ayodhya was not a mosque at all, the structure would be shifted with all reverence to another place, respecting the sentiments of the Muslims who believed — rather, who had been led to believe — it to be a 'mosque'. The BJP did not create or organise the Ayodhya movement. From 1983 to 1989, that is, before the BJP lent its support, the movement had already begun to stir the people. The commitment of the BJP to the electorate to remove the hurdles in the way of construction of the Temple at the very place where the idols of Rama were, and the

hostile and antagonistic stance taken by other political parties, were the mere consequences of a mass movement that had already taken shape, challenging the existing post-independence political practices of all parties other than the BJP.

How Ayodhya evolved as a Political Issue

3.1. The ruling Congress and its overt and covert allies in the opposition relentlessly charge the BJP with politicising the issue of the Temple at Ayodhya. This charge no doubt suits the pseudo-secular political parties in their competitive pursuit of Muslim votes, but clearly lacks substance and a sense of history without which no polity, and certainly not the polity of a nation with a known history extending back to 5000 years, can function at peace with itself. The erstwhile structure at Ayodhya, as was the one that existed at Somnath till 1947, were not built as symbols of a religious order as Saranath was, but as testimonials of the victory of the political order of the vandals who invaded our motherland. These structures and mosques are not — and were never intended to be — symbols of the purely religious sensibilities of Muslims which every Hindu ought to respect, but were intended to be, and are mementoes of the atrocities on this great nation perpetrated by the Ghaznavis, Baburs and Aurangzebs and of their victories, as also of the defeat of our countrymen and their spiritual and political humiliation. Thus, these mosques, unlike the hundreds and thousands in this country that vibrate only religion and not the visual evidence of political conquest, are not sanctified by religion, but by the invaders' might. Political intent is implicit in these invaders' testimonials. This is what acknowledged historians have had to say on these so-called religious monuments.

Invaders' Mosque on Hindu holy places — ocular demonstration of political victory over our country

3.2. Arnold Toynbee, one of the great historians of the present century, while delivering the Azad Memorial Lecture, said:

> "As I have been speaking, some vivid visual memories have been flashing up in my mind's eye. One of these is a mental picture of the principal square in the Polish City of Warsaw some time in the late nineteen twenties. **In the course of the first Russian occupation of Warsaw (1614-1915) the Russians had built an Eastern Orthodox Christian Cathedral on this central spot in the city that had been the capital of the once independent Roman Catholic Christian country, Poland. The Russians had done this to give the Poles a continuous ocular demonstration that the Russians were now their masters. After the re-establishment of Poland's independence in 1918, the Poles had pulled this cathedral down. The demolition had been completed just before the date of my visit. I do not greatly blame the Polish Government for having pulled down that Russian Church. The purpose for which the Russians had built it had been not religious but political, and the purpose had also been intentionally offensive.** On the other hand, I do greatly praise the Indian Government for not having pulled down Aurangzeb's Mosques: I am thinking particularly of two that overlook the ghats at Benares, and of one that crowns Krishna's hill at Mathura.

"Aurangzeb's purpose in building those three Mosques was the same intentionally offensive political purpose that moved the Russians to build their Orthodox Cathedral in the city centre at Warsaw. Those three Mosques were intended to signify that an Islamic Government was reigning supreme, even over Hinduism's holiest of holy places. I must say that Aurangzeb had a veritable genius for picking out provocative sites. Aurangzeb and Philip II of Spain are a pair. They are incarnations of the gloomily fanatical vein in the Chrsistian–Muslim–Jewish family of religions. Aurangzeb — a poor wretched misguided bad man — spent a lifetime of hard labour in raising massive monuments to his own discredit. Perhaps the Poles were really kinder in destroying the Russians self-discrediting monuments in Warsaw than you have been in sparing Aurangzeb's Mosques. Anyway, it is Aurangzeb, and not the Hindu holy ground on which his Mosques are planted, that suffers from their very conspicuous presence...

"Aurangzeb's Mosques are not outstandingly beautiful works of Indian Muslim architecture. But the standard of all Moghal works is high. I have noticed the loving care with which the Indian archaeological service looks after such world-famous masterpieces as the Taj Mahal, and the forts at Agra and here in Shahjehanabad (Delhi). Not only the Islamic world but the whole world ought to feel grateful to India for this. But the careful preservation of public monuments is perhaps not so meritorious when these are supremely beautiful, as it is when they do not have this intrinsic appeal. The British rulers of India followed their Muslim predecessor's practice of perpetuating the memory of their fleeting presence by leaving monuments behind them. Unfortunately for the British, the style of their epoch in India was no longer the Moghal's, it was the Victorian Gothic. If any of my countrymen still had a say in determining the policy of the Indian Ministry of Public Works, I suspect that they might press for the demolition of some of these Philistini reminders of the British phase in the history of India. But not so the Indian authorities. They are, so far as I know, being as tender to these British monstrosities as they are to the Taj." (*One World and India*, compiled by National Book Trust, pp. 59-61).

So the construction of mosques on Hindu holy sites pained even a scholar like Toynbee. He would not object if the Hindus had removed these political insults as the Poles had removed the Russian insult.

3.3. Summing up what the Mohammedan invasion of India meant in history, Will Durant has said:

"The Mohammedan conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in History, a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that civilisation is a precious thing whose delicate complex of order and liberty, culture and peace may at any time be overthrown by barbarians." (Will Durant, *The Story of Civilisation*, Vol. I, *Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 459)

History cannot be ignored — invaders' provocative monuments cannot have a peaceful appeal

3.4. This historical background of the Mohammedan invasion and the provocative ocular reminders of that violent and barbaric invasion were completely ignored even after the partition of India. This neglect resulted in the failure to evolve a sound basis for Indian nationalism and durable relationships between Hindus and Muslims. The effort was to suppress the historical facts from history books, and explain away irrefutable facts by falsehoods — such as claiming that Babur was secular and tolerant. If, instead, there had been an honest

admission that the invaders were foreigners and that the Indian Muslims, 90% of whom were converts from Hindus, were not their descendants but of the forefathers of their Hindu brethren, that would have prepared the ground for cultural and social assimilation and unity. On the contrary, the post-independence political leadership indulged in concealing and suppressing the truth in a desperate bid to promote false unity instead of an understanding based on truth. Far from persuading the Muslims to disown such provocative symbols, the political parties encouraged them to own them and to regard them to be symbols of Islam. The reason was evident: the pseudo-secular political parties regarded the Muslims merely as captive votes, and not as co-citizens of Hindus. They, therefore, fomented in Muslims feelings of separateness, and of insecurity. Having done so they presented themselves as the ones who were special solicitors of the separate identity of Muslims, and their only available saviours. The separatist mentality articulated by the Jinnahs of the Muslim League which kept the Muslim mind separate from the Hindus finally led to the partition of the mother-land. Any statesman would have learnt from this most grievous error of the past, seized the aftermath of partition to dissolve notions of the separateness amongst Muslims, and opened up the gates of cultural and societal assimilation that is the national tradition of India. But the post-independence political leadership of India particularly of the Congress and Communist variety, did precisely the reverse and, as a result, achieved even greater separation.

The effect of false unity instead of understanding rooted in facts — distorted secularism

3.5. The post-independence Indian leadership, while preserving those invaders' mementoes and even convincing the Muslims that they are a heritage of India, invented and legitimized every means by which the Muslims would feel different from the Hindus and also feel that the difference was their very essence and, in response, make the Hindus too feel different from the Muslims. The composite-culture theory as propounded and the Marxian discovery that India was not just multi-lingual and multi-religious, but a multi-national State, a geographical construct, were the two strands for rationalizing the stoking of separateness among Muslims. While normally one would not object to what Pandit Nehru had said namely, that Indian culture was a composite one, it was not intended to nor did it convey the meaning that our culture was one continuous flow into which several streams had merged. Instead, the concept of composite culture was cited to support and sustain distinct cultural and even political identities outside the mainstream. The more appropriate view nearer to truth is that Indian culture is one with continuity and change over 5000 years and if it has a name it is only Hindu. As Ramsay MacDonald had said, "India and Hinduism are organically related as body and soul, the culture of this nation is essentially and dominantly Hindu." In fact, Shri G.M. Syed the veteran Sind leader says that the culture of Sind dates back to the Vedas. The fact that this nation has interacted with various thoughts and civilisations which have added to its richness does not detract from its Hindu character, just as the Ganga from

Gangotri down through its course is only the Ganga, notwithstanding the fact that many tributaries have added to its flow — after its merger even the Yamuna is only Ganga and no more Yamuna and not even Ganga and Yamuna or a composite reiver. This is the true illustration of the assimilative cultural basis of India. Of course, the theory of distinct culture instead of a single cultural thought admirably suited the vote arithmetic of political parties. But a united Muslim vote bank and divided Hindu electorate pressed the political atmosphere to move away from the 5000-year old national and cultural roots. It is not that political power shifted to the Muslim masses or that their social, educational and economic conditions improved. On the contrary, there was deterioration in both and only the brokers of Muslim votes benefitted. The net result of this disastrous political consensus around a vote-inspired and distorted secularism was the sustenance and promotion of multidimensional separatism, relegating the assimilative aspects of Indian nationalism as narrow and even communal, and unacceptable to modern, secular statecraft.

The effect of distorted secularism

3.6. How did this dishonest and distorted secularism translate itself in practice? A separate — rather, separatist — Article 370 and Constitution and Flag for the only Muslim majority State (Jammu & Kashmir) in India; a proclaimed and uncontested statement that the Muslim League and that too in Kerala (where it had a bigamous and alternating political alliance with the Congress and Marxists) is secular; the legislative reversal of the Supreme Court finding that the Aligarh University was not a minority institution, to proclaim its minority character; the creation and legitimisation of Muslim majority Mallapuram District; the silent acceptance of the right of the Muslims to riot in religious matters like Hazrat Bal, and Al-Aqsa Mosque, and even non-religious matters so long as they could be given a religious column — like the hanging of Z.A. Bhutto in Pakistan; the legislative reversal of the Shah Bano ruling; the banning of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* on the ground that it was liable to offend Muslim sentiments; the Muslim militancy in Kashmir which rendered non-Muslims refugees in the streets of Delhi and Jammu for whom no Prime Minister, neither V.P. Singh nor P.V. Narasimha Rao, cared even to utter a word of consolation; the confession by the UP Government of its inability to abide by the binding judgement of the Supreme Court on the Varanasi burial ground case on the ground that the Sunni Muslims might riot; the setting up of a Minorities Commission to please essentially the Muslims; the undeclared political faith that the Personal Law of Muslims is inviolable and the constitutional directive of common civil code is not sacrosanct; the secularist opposition to the Assam movement against infiltrators and the deafening silence of the pseudo-secular parties on the Bangladesh infiltrators who have usurped large tracts in Assam and elsewhere. The list is unending, bearing undeniable testimony to the national drift.

3.7. The theory and practice of secularism (an intra-religious evolution in the West which

had no application to a multi-religious situation which always existed and existed peacefully till the invaders arrived in this great nation) resulted in greater erosion of our national identity and national consciousness than even under the rule of the invaders. The Ramajanmabhoomi movement was evolved by the very process of history as a corrective to this denationalised politics. The quest for the Temple of Rama at Ayodhya became the symbol of resurgent nationalism based on our indigenous ethos, just as the salt that Mahatma Gandhi picked became the symbol of the quest for the political freedom of India. The dormant national mind which had its centre of gravity in the spiritual centres of Indian history — the Ramayana and Mahabharata, Ayodhya and Mathura — which had been brooding for manifestation, found expression in the Ayodhya movement. This movement was not the product or the work of BJP. It was an evolution of history that gathered momentum and developed into a political movement. The BJP decided to support the Ayodhya movement a full six years after the movement had begun and after it had assumed mass dimensions incapable of being politically ignored.

3.8. The charge that BJP made the Ayodhya movement and Sri Rama a political issue is incorrect and betrays lack of appreciation of the cultural and integrative impact of Rama in India. Ironically, similar criticism was levelled by Mohammed Ali Jinnah against Mahatma Gandhi who drew inspiration from Rama and Rama Rajya for drawing up the national agenda for the freedom struggle. To the Mahatma, Rama and Rama Rajya were not religious expressions normally conceived but national symbols. Could it be said that Gandhiji politicised Rama? As for the Ayodhya movement, when the BJP began to support it, it had already become an issue of the people. If not the BJP, any other party, even the Congress which now champions the anti-Ayodhya thrust, could have supported it. How else would one explain the inauguration of the Congress Party's 1989 election campaign at Ayodhya instead of at Delhi, by the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi and his proclamation that the Party would establish Rama Rajya? That the BJP happened to be the first political party to support it does not mean that, but for its support, the Ayodhya movement would have had no political implications, or political support.

The Integrative effect of Rama, Rama Rajya and Ayodhya

4.1. No one — not even those who oppose the Ayodhya movement — can deny the fact that Sri Rama is not just an idol of worship, but provides cultural and spiritual, and even physical linkage throughout India and the psychological glue that animates and integrates the Indian mind cutting across the barriers of language, caste, religion and region. There is no language in India into which the Ramayana has not been translated or written. There is no caste or region which does not have names that do not include Rama in some form or the other. The Sikhs, the Jains, the Buddhists and the Arya Samajists have their own version of Rama and Ramayana. The Guru Granth Sahib celebrates and invokes the name of Sri

Rama about two thousand four hundred times. The Kutchi Memon Muslims have, in their only book *Dasavatar*, accepted and revered Rama as an avatar. Rama thus provided the finest illustration of national integration.

Ram Rajya as Mahatma Gandhi perceived it

4.2. No one realised this more than Gandhiji who admirably linked Rama to the movement for Indian freedom. His famous 'Ramadhun' was on the lips of every freedom fighter. This is how Gandhiji viewed Rama Rajya and equated Swaraj to Rama Rajya:

> "In my opinion **Swaraj and Ramrajya are one and the same thing.** However, I do not often use the latter expression before audiences of men.... They want Swaraj but not Ramrajya and of Swaraj too, they give strange definitions which, in my opinion, are absurd.... **The concept of Swaraj is no ordinary one, it means Ramrajya.** How will that Ramrajya come to be established? When will it come into being? We will call a state Ramrajya when both the ruler and his subjects are straightforward, when both are pure in heart, when both are inclined towards self-sacrifice, when both exercise self-restraint and self control while enjoying worldly pleasures and when the relationship between the two is as good as that between a father and son.... This is the true meaning of democracy. It is not democracy but something else that is reflected in the support received by some one like me who makes a vote catching speech. The democracy that I believe in is described with Ramayana in the essence that is derived from my simple and straight forward reading of it. What was the manner in which Ramachandra ruled? The rulers of today assume that it is their birthright to rule and they do not recognise the people's right to voice their opinion" (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXXV, pp. 489-90).

4.3. When Gandhiji set out to define the goal of the freedom movement, he held out Rama Rajya as the destination of the Indian polity. What is this Rama Rajya ? This is how a Roman Catholic, Father Premananda (a Sanskritised name, part of the indigenisation policy of the Church) defined Rama Rajya:

> "All Ram's subjects were equal. They were free from fear of any kind. They loved one another and were honest.... There was no need for magistrates to punish criminals for there was no crime. The staff (symbol of the power to punish) was used only by wandering sanyasins as a symbol of self-discipline.... Ayodhya the seat of King Ram excelled all other places in beauty and prosperity.... In Ram Rajya, not only human beings but every creature was happy and contented....
>
> "Tulsidas does not place all his hopes for an ideal society on a set of laws or structures to certain evil and promote good. Neither does he believe that abundance of material goods can make man happy. It is Bhakti, nearness to the Supreme source of good, Paramatman (the cosmic self) that makes the people good in themselves and good to others" (*Ramcharitmanas* by Father Premanand, pp. 113-115).

Thus, Rama as the ideal human being and Rama Rajya as the ideal governance are the heritage of Rama and Ramayana in India. No one can complain against Rama Rajya or equate it with a theocratic state like Dar-ul-Islam. Gandhiji who swore by Rama and Rama Rajya, did not even remotely suspect or suggest that it had any theocratic ingredients.

Rama and Rama Rajya as symbols of nationalism, of Swaraj and Swadeshi, as well as of religious pluralism

4.4. Thus Rama, Ramayana and Rama Rajya are great symbols of national integration and are national idioms which provided continuity consistent with the culture and ethos of this great nation. Whether the State in this country helped to make the temples of Rama or broke them as the invaders did, the loyalty of the nation was always to the values which Rama symbolised. The nation in India always remained Hindu, whether the State was controlled by Turks, Afghans, Moghuls, Portuguese, French, English or Nehruvian Secularists. The Ayodhya movement became relevant and inevitable when the post-independence digression in the national mind seriously undermined the ethos and traditions of the nation in India, and as a result, the state and the nation again got virtually divorced by the rupture of national identity and the mindless adoption of the Western as the modern. The Ayodhya movement is intended to recapture the lost identity and restore the national pride which is the basis for Swarajya (sovereignty) and Swadeshi (economic independence). The Ayodhya movement thus implies the recommencement of our national journey as a politically independent state for the attainment of Rama Rajya that is Swarajya by Swadeshi as codified by Mahatma Gandhi. The BJP firmly believes in this message of the Ayodhya movement.

4.5. The Ayodhya movement also clears the confusion as to what is nationalism and what constitutes the ideal basis for inter-religious harmony. It asserts that it is not the spiritually bankrupt Western concept of secularism, but the assimilative Hindu cultural nationhood that is the basis for religious harmony. The pre-Moghul India, which had only the Hindu or Buddhist kings in power, but housed and harmonised all religions, is the ideal example of how only a Hindu nation could guarantee plurality and freedom of faith to all non-Hindu citizens. India was the only example of a multi-religious society since ancient times. Whether it was a religion like Zorastrianism of the Parsis or the religion of the Jews who had been persecuted elsewhere, or the proselytising religions like Islam and Christianity, India nation welcomed them and made them full members of an ever-expanding commonwealth of religions. It is the invasion by fanatic religious statecraft that intervened and introduced inter-religious disharmony and hatred towards all indigenous faiths. The surest way to restore inter-religious harmony is to disown and do away with symbols of fanaticism and bring back the values of 'Sarva Pantha Samabhava' (equal respect for all religions) which is rooted in the Vedic declaration, "Ekam sad viprah bahudha vadanti" (Truth is one, sages describe it differently). This is the spiritual injunction of the Hindu civilisation that operated on all religions and their followers, whether native or Semitic, in India. Thus, the Ayodhya movement defines, in terms of the native idiom, the tenets of Indian nationalism rooted in plurality of thought, religious and secular, rejecting Semitic intolerance and exclusivism. And Sri Rama is not just an abstraction to be worshipped. He is the living symbol of our nation, as well as of our dedication to our nation.

The Somnath Parallel — from Somnath to Ayodhya

5.1. The digression of Indian nationalism in the post-independence period into pseudo-secularism can be demonstrated by drawing a parallel between Somnath and Ayodhya. One of the first acts of the independent Government of India under the leadership of Shri Jawaharlal Nehru was the decision to restore the Somnath Temple at Prabhas Patan, a small town on the southern coast of Saurashtra in Gujarat.

5.2. Here was an ancient Temple which had been ravaged, looted, and ransacked repeatedly by foreign invaders from Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi to Emperor Aurangzeb. Every time the Temple was razed to the ground and a mosque put up in its place by the marauders, it sprouted again — only to be pulled down again. The last of such destructions took place in 1706 when Prince Mohammed Azam, the 39th Viceroy of Gujarat, carried out the orders of Aurangzeb "to destroy the Temple of Somnath beyond possibility of repair" (*Bombay Gazetteer,* Vol. XXII, p. 292). A small mosque was put up in its place.

5.3. The Somnath Temple at Prabhas Patan was part of Junagarh State. On the eve of Independence, the Nawab of Junagarh announced the accession of Junagarh, which had over 80% Hindu population, to Pakistan. The Hindus rose in revolt and set up a parallel government under Shri Samaldas Gandhi. The Nawab, unable to resist popular pressure, bowed out and ran away to Pakistan. The provincial government then formally asked the Government of India to take over. On November 9, 1947 the Deputy Prime Minister and Union Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, accompanied by Shri N.V. Gadgil, Minister of Public Works, went to Saurashtra. The very first thing Sardar Patel did was to declare at a public meeting that the first Government of free India would reconstruct the great Temple of Somnath and re-install the Jyotirlingam, the idol that originally adorned the Temple. At that time too, as now, there were anglicised intellectuals everywhere, even in the Archaeological Survey of India, who suggested that Somnath be declared a protected monument. Sardar Patel did not think of seeking judicial opinion, nor was he concerned about how many votes would be won or lost, and he rightly recorded:

> "The Hindu sentiment in regard to the temple is both strong and widespread. In the present conditions it is unlikely that the sentiment will be satisfied by mere restoration of the temple or by prolonging its life. The restoration of the idol would be a point of honour and sentiment with the Hindu public."

The iron man of India just shut up the mischief and proceeded to initiate steps to reconstruct the Somnath Temple at the same spot where the ancient temple stood. When Sardar Patel conveyed to Mahatma Gandhi the decision of the Government to reconstruct the Somnath Temple, **Gandhiji blessed the move, but suggested that the funds for the construction should be collected from the public and the Temple should not be funded by the State.** Thus, in Gandhiji's view, it was not the reconstruction of the Somnath Temple that would offend the secular character of the Indian State, but the State funding of such construction.

K.M. Munshi on Somnath — Nehru and Secularism

5.4. This is how Kulapati K.M. Munshi, who was the Union Minister of Food and Agriculture and also the head of the official committee to supervise the reconstruction recalls the Somnath renovation in his book *Pilgrimage to Freedom.*

> "When Junagadh fell, Sardar Patel, as Deputy Prime Minister, pledged the Government of India to the reconstruction of the historical Temple of Somnath. The cabinet, Jawaharlal presiding, decided to reconstruct the Temple at Government cost. But Gandhiji advised Sardar not to have the Temple reconstructed at Government cost and suggested that sufficient money should be collected from the people for this purpose. Sardar accepted this advice. The Government of India appointed me as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the reconstruction of the Temple, and I had also a hand in preparing the Trust Deed and participated in implementing the scheme.
>
> "Jawaharlal, more than once criticized me for working for the reconstruction of the Temple and I had to point out to him in a long letter that everything was done from the very beginning in accordance with the decision of the Cabinet taken under his guidance. When the time came to install the deity in the Temple as Sardar had passed away, I approached Rajendra Prasad and asked him to perform the ceremony, but added a rider to my invitation that he should accept it only if he was prepared not to fail us.
>
> "My correspondence with the Prime Minister was not secret to Rajendra Prasad. He promised that he would come and install the deity, whatever the attitude of the Prime Minister and added, 'I would do the same with a mosque or a church if I were invited.' This, he held, was the core of Indian secularism. Our state is neither irreligious nor anti-religious".
>
> "My foreboding proved correct. When it was announced that Rajendra Prasad was attending the inauguration of the Somnath Temple, Jawaharlal vehemently protested against his going to Somnath. But Rajendra Prasad kept his promise.
>
> "His speech at the time of the installation of the deity was published in all the newspapers. The speech is a masterpiece of literature by any standard. It briefly traced the role which the Temple had played in the past, analysed the true role of religion and took a pledge for the future. I shall give here only two passages which I have translated from the original Hindi:
>
> 'Even as the Creator of the Universe, Brahma, resides in the navel of Lord Vishnu, similarly in the heart of man reside the creative urge and faith, and these surpass in power all the armaments, all the armies and all the emperors of the world.'
>
> 'In the era, India had been a treasure-house of gold and silver.... Centuries ago, the major portion of the gold of the world was in the temples of India. It is my view that the reconstruction of the Somnath Temple will be complete on that day when not only a magnificent edifice will arise on this foundation, but the mansion of India's prosperity will be really that prosperity of which the ancient Temple of Somnath was a symbol.'
>
> (pp. 287-88)

When Pandit Nehru expressed his reservations about Dr. Rajendra Prasad participating in the Somnath function, Kulpati Munshi wrote a letter to Pandit Nehru in which he said:

> "You pointedly referred to me (yesterday) in the cabinet as connected with Somnath; I am glad you did so; for I do not want to keep back any part of my views or activities.
>
> "Yesterday you referred to Hindu revivalism.....I cannot value freedom if it deprives us of the Bhagwat Gita or uproots our millions from the faith with which they look upon our temples and thereby destroys the texture of our lives."

In the course of this letter Shri Munshi forcefully argued against the concepts which had started taking root after Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel whereby "secularism" was becoming only an euphemism for allergy to Hinduism. And describing how the word "secularism" was being distorted Kulpati Munshi said:

> "In its name, again, politicians in power adopt a strange attitude which, while it condones the susceptibilities, religious and social of the minority communities, is too ready to brand similar susceptibilities in the majority community as communalistic and reactionary. How secularism sometimes become allergic to Hinduism will be apparent from certain episodes relating to the reconstruction of Somnath Temple."
>
> "These unfortunate postures have been creating a sense of frustration in the majority community.
>
> "If, however, the misuse of this word 'secularism' continues, if Sanskrit, the bond of unity is not given a place in our language formula, if every time there is an inter-communal conflict, the majority is blamed regardless of the merits of the question, if our holy places of pilgrimage like Banaras, Mathura and Rishikesh continue to be converted into industrial slums by establishing huge industries, the springs of traditional tolerance will dry up.
>
> "While the majority exercises patience and tolerance, the minorities should learn to adjust themselves to the majority. Otherwise the future is uncertain and an explosion cannot be avoided" (Ibid., p. 312).

5.5. The symbol of the conquest of the country that was built where the Jyotirlingam had been, was replaced by a grand and imposing Temple. Yet how prophetic was Kulapati Munshi! It is also evident from the conduct of Pandit Nehru after the death of Sardar Patel that allergy to any thing Hindu had become an integral part of the precept and practice of secularism in India.

From Somnath to Ayodhya — the recommencement of a suspended evolution

5.6. The Somnath parallel is important to understand how, the very same secular government headed by the most respected 'secular' leader of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, took the initiative to rebuild the Somnath Temple on a site where an alien invader's symbol stood. No Muslim leader, no secular party, objected to the construction of the Somnath Temple. But the moment Sardar Patel passed away, the attitudes changed. Pandit Nehru now could not tolerate his colleague, K.M. Munshi, taking part in the Somnath Temple reconstruction although it was his own Governments' decision. Nor could he relish the idea of the President of India participating in the installation of the deity in the Temple whose construction was undertaken by a resolution of his own cabinet. This is how a beginning in the cultural reassertion of the nation that was made at Somnath, and which could have defined the national identity and properly directed the destiny of the country, was deliberately and consciously interceded and interfered with. This distortion later legitimised the vote bank "secularism".

5.7. No one could challenge the nationalist credentials of Sardar Patel or Kulapati Munshi or Dr. Rajendra Prasad. They symbolised the Somnath spirit. The Ayodhya movement is the continuation of the spirit of Somnath. That is why the BJP linked Ayodhya to Somnath when the then President of the party begun the Rathyatra in 1990.

5.8. This is the sweep and the canvas of the Ayodhya movement. And this is how the BJP perceives it. The Ayodhya movement and the quest for Rama's Temple at his birth-place has smashed the political censorship on any attempt to debate the width and scope of what is secularism and nationalism, and what is the role of minorities in India — whether they should for ever remain separate or join and merge into the national mainstream by processes which the sages of this country had evolved as an alternative to the annihilation which Semitic religions espouse. No one can stop the nation now from debating these vital issues. The legitimacy of the labels secular, communal, national with distorted meanings, have been seriously questioned as has been the credibility of those who had usurped the authority to issue the labels. Whatever the nation decides in this ongoing debate will be based on dialogue and not on labels that prevented the debate for so long.

Without this background, the origin of the Ayodhya movement and how it reached its crescendo on December 6, 1992 cannot be understood in proper perspective, nor can its full implication be appreciated. What happened on December 6, 1992 is the culmination of a battle that commenced not in 1989 when the BJP decided to join the Ayodhya movement, or in 1984 when the VHP launched the mass struggle to liberate the Janmabhoomi; it is the fruition of 400 years of Hindu struggle to regain their holy place.

CHAPTER II

THE RELENTLESS HINDU STRUGGLE FOR RAMAJANMABHOOMI

The Struggle in Three Phases

1.1. The Hindus have been waging unremitting struggle for centuries to repossess the birthplace of Sri Rama. It is indisputably clear that in the year 1528 Babur ordered his commandar Mir Baqi to erect a mosque at Ayodhya to make the spot a "place of descent of angels". It is the widely shared belief of Hindus that Mir Baqi established the mosque after demolishing the Temple of Sri Rama situated at the place of his birth known as Ramajanmabhoomi. Whether Mir Baqi did actually demolish the pre-existing temple and thereafter constructed the mosque is a matter of evidence which is discussed separately. However, the chronology of Ramajanmabhoomi brings out the unremitting struggle of the Hindus to recapture their holy place. This struggle itself indicated their pre-masjid reverence for the site. The struggle was in three phases.

Firstly, by military expedition and war diplomacy, when barbaric aliens were ruling the country and there was no Rule of Law;

Secondly, by legal means, when the British established their model of Rule of Law (from 1885);

And thirdly, by mass movement from 1984, (alongwith legal steps) when Rule of Law became insensitive to their legitimate plea even under indigenous dispensation.

The ceaseless struggle to re-establish their rights and rebuild the temple at the Janmabhoomi implies their continued and persistent attachment to the site and such an attachment has no other explanation except that it was in continuation of an older tradition, namely a pre-Babar tradition, namely, their devotion to the place where Sri Rama was born. The chronology reveals that the Hindus never ceased claiming the site and brings out their relentless struggle to regain it.

The first Phase: military expedition and war diplomacy

2.1. There is clear and irrefutable historical proof available to establish that the Hindus had repeatedly attempted to recover the Janmabhoomi by military efforts and war diplomacy which were the only means available to fight the lawless alien rulers. There are unrecorded traditions of many military expeditions by the Hindus between 1528 and 1707 for repossessing the Janmabhoomi. For the present purpose the chronology is limited to the recorded history.

Battles for Ramajanmabhoomi in recorded history and war diplomatic efforts

2.2. The recorded history shows that at least from 1735 the Hindus had consistently attempted to recapture the Janmasthan and re-establish the Rama temple as the following chronology establishes.

2.3. A document enclosed with a letter dated 12th August, 1855 from Wazid Ali Shah, the king of Oudh, to the British Resident Major James Outram, carrying the seal of the Qazi of Faizabad, **in the year 1735** A.D., mentioned that a serious clash had taken place over the Masjid "built by the emperor of Delhi" (apparently a conflict of the kind that took place later in 1855) between Hindus and Muslims, during the time of Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Ali Khan, the first Nawab of Oudh (1707-1736) over the possession of this mosque (NAI, Foreign, Political Proceedings, 28th December, 1855, No.355, Enclosures No.5).

2.4. The Maratha documents show that one of the main objectives of Maratha operations and policy in North India was the liberation of the sacred cities of Ayodhya, Kashi and Prayag. **In the year 1751,** Maratha armies led by Malhar Rao Holkar, at the invitation of Safdarjang, the second Nawab of Oudh, defeated the Pathan forces in Doab. Immediately after his victory Malhar Rao Holkar requested Safdarjang to hand over Ayodhya, Kashi and Prayag to the Peshwa (A.L.Srivastava: *The First Two Nawabs of Oudh*).

2.5. Again, when, **in 1756,** the third Nawab Shujauddaula invited Maratha help against impending Afghan invasion, the Maratha agent at the Court of Oudh demanded the transfer of these three holy places including Ayodhya and the negotiations lingered on for more than a year on this one point. Ultimately, **in July 1757,** Shujauddaula agreed to transfer the holy cities of Ayodhya and Kashi to the Maratha leader Raghoba. But the transfer could not be implemented as Maratha armies got entangled in the conquest of the Punjab which ultimately led to the tragedy of Panipat (1761 A.D.).

2.6. But Peshwa Balaji Bajirao's eagerness to acquire Ayodhya is reflected in one of his letters dated **23rd February, 1759** to Dattaji Scindia, his General in the North, wherein the Peshwa reminds Scindia that "Mansur Ali's son (i.e. Shujauddaula) had promised to Dada (i.e. Raghoba) to cede Benares and Ayodhya and instructs him to take hold to those places alongwith Prayag (Cf. J.N. Sarkar: *Fall of the Moghul Empire*, Vol. II, Calcutta 1934, pp. 231-233).

2.7. Historians, Dr. A.L. Srivastava, Sir J.N. Sarkar, G.S. Sardesai and Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, who have studied this period of history very deeply, have concluded that "Had the Bhau (Sadashiv) emerged successful from Panipat, within a few years Kashi, Prayag and Ayodhya would have been emancipated" (Hari Ram Gupta: *Marathas and Panipat*, Chandigarh 1961, p.292).

2.8. **In 1767,** an Austrian Jesuite traveller, Joseph Tieffenthaler, found that in spite of the Mughal kings' efforts to prevent them, the Hindus had re-occupied the courtyard, raised the Rama Chabootra thereon, and were worshipping and celebrating Ramanavami there as well as under the domed structure (*History and Geography of India* (in French) by Joseph Tieffenthaler p.253-54).

2.9. **In 1854,** a British scholar, Edward Thornton, recorded in his Gazetteer exactly the same situation as Tieffenthaler had found (Gazetteer of the territories under the Government of East India Company, pp.739-40).

2.10. **In 1855,** there was a big armed encounter in which nearly 300 Muslims under Shah Ghulam Hussain took possession of the Babri mosque and tried to fix doors on it. On protest from Hindus, armed clashes started. Muslims attacked Hanumangarhi, but were driven back with considerable loss. Then the Hindus counter-attacked, stormed the Janmabhoomi and killed 70 Muslims. Shah Ghulam Hussain jumped over the wall and fled (*Hadiqai-Shahada* by Mirza Jan, 1856, pp. 4-7). The Gazetteer of Faizabad District shows that the Hindus were in possession of the Ramajanmabhoomi at the time of the fight in 1855. It says: "When the Muslims mounted an attack in 1855, they took possession of the Ramjanmabhoomi and attacked the Hanuman Garhi, but were repulsed. The king's army (Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's army) stood by. The Hindus retook the Ramjanmabhoomi and the structure there."

2.11. **In 1856,** the Muazzin of the Babri mosque admitted, in a petition before the British authorities, that the courtyard had been in possession of the Hindus for hundreds of years and that now they were interfering with the domed structure as well (Petition by Muhammed Asghar dated 30.11.1858 in Case No.884 to the British Government).

2.12. **In 1934,** serious Hindu-Muslim armed encounter occurred in and around the Babri mosque, occasioned by a cow-slaughter incident. Many people were killed and the structure seriously damaged. The damaged structure was repaired by the British Government which recovered the cost of the repair by a punitive fine on the Hindus (*Sri Ramajanmabhoomi Historical and Legal Perspective*, by Justice Deokinandan Agarwala: Cited in Ramjanmabhoomi/Babri Masjid: Historical Documents, legal opinions and judgement by The Bar Council of India Trust, pp. 5-6).

2.13. The above choronology establishes a vital truth, namely, that the Hindus have been relentlessly fighting to re-establish and keep their rights over the Janmasthan and that till 1855 they seem to have been in possession of it.

The Second Phase: Legal Battle for Ramajanmabhoomi

Even as military expeditions and war diplomatic efforts were continued by Hindus, not just from Ayodhya but from other parts of the country as well, after the British government and its judicial administration took shape and an element of Rule of Law was introduced in governance, the Hindus tried to invoke the law to re-establish their rights. The first such an effort was in the year 1885.

3.1. **On 25th May, 1885** Mahant Raghubardas appealed to the Faizabad District Judge that an order be given for the construction of Temple on the Ramajanmabhoomi. On 18th March, 1886 the District Judge, an Englishman, passed the following order:

> "I visited the land in dispute yesterday in the presence of all parties. I found that the Masjid built by Emperor Babar stands on the border of Ayodhya, that is to say, to the west and south. It is clear of habitants. **It is most unfortunate that a Masjid should have been built on land specially held sacred by the Hindus,** but, as that event occurred 356 years ago, it is too late now to agree with the grievances. All that can be done is to maintain the party in status quo. In such a case as the present one any innovation may cause more harm and derangement of order than any benefit."

It is the only attempt prior to the incident of 1934 to re-possess the Janmabhoomi by legal means, and that failed not because the Hindu case lacked merits but for other extraneous reasons.

The Judiciary grants right of worship to the Hindus in the year 1950:

After the idol of Rama had appeared on the night of 22nd and 23rd December, 1949 inside the main building, which had remained locked since 1934, the judicial proceedings for re-possession of Rama Janmasthan recommenced.

3.2. **On 29th December, 1949,** the District Magistrate of Faizabad, Shri K.K. Nayar, appointed the then Municipal Chairman as the receiver of the property. Iron rods and doors were fixed around the sanctum sanctorum, but pooja was performed everyday.

3.3. **On 16th January, 1950** Shri Gopal Singh Visharad and Paramahans Ramachandra Das filed two civil suits in the City Civil Court of Faizabad for injunction against removing the idol, and for pooja rights.

3.4. **On 19th January, 1950** an interim injunction was granted. By an order dated March 3, 1951 this temporary injunction was confirmed and blanket restraint on order prohibiting the removal of the idol and upholding the Petitioner's right to offer worship before the deity was granted. While confirming the injunction, the Civil Judge of Faizabad recorded:

> "...at least from 1936 onwards the Muslims have neither used the site as a mosque nor offered prayers there and... the Hindus have been performing their pooja etc. on the disputed site."

Allahabad High Court regrets delay and directs in the year 1955 that the cases be decided "forthwith"

3.5. A writ was filed against the above order 3 years later, in the year 1953. **On 26th April, 1955** the unrestricted right of the Hindus was upheld by the High Court when disposing the writ petition. Significantly, the High Court stated:

> **"It is very desirable that a suit of this kind is decided as soon as possible and it is regretted that it remained undecided after four years.** The delay appears to be principally due to the fact that the record of the proceedings in the trial court was summoned by this court in the year 1953 on the application of the present appellants; had that not been done, the suit would probably by now have been decided.
>
> "...We however consider **it extremely desirable that the suit should be disposed of at once and we accordingly direct that the record of proceedings is to be sent back to the lower court forthwith with a direction to the Learned Civil Judge to expedite the hearing."**

And yet the same case is pending even today

3.6. This was in the year 1955. At that time the High Court felt that had the appellants not appealed against the Order and the records had not been brought to the High Court, the matter would have been decided. The High Court could not tolerate the suit remaining undecided even by 1955, yet the very case remains undecided even today — 38 years after the Allahabad High Court had regretted that it was remaining undecided and felt constrained

to direct it to be decided forthwith, and 43 years after the original suits were filed in the year 1950. Not only the above-mentioned two suits, but also two more suits which were filed in the year 1959 are still pending.

The Sunni Waqf Board enters the scene twelve years later, in 1961, by frivolous litigations

3.7. In December 1961, the U.P. Sunni Central Board of Waqfs filed a suit in the Civil Court of Faizabad. This was the only substantive litigation against the Hindus' case on Ramajanmabhoomi. On this depended the entire chorus of judicial verdict as the solution. This suit was later consolidated with the three suits that had been filed in the year 1959 and were originally pending in the District Court. They were later transferred and all four suits are pending before the High Court. The Waqf Board suit was filed after the limitation period had ended in law after the 1949 event. This suit was from day-one a frivolous litigation whose only object was to delay the judicial determination of the issue.

The Mutawalli of the Babri structure, a Shia, wants the structure shifted and the Ramajanmabhoomi given to the Hindus

3.8. The Waqf Board Suit is void *ab initio* as, under the law, only Mutawalli of the Masjid is the authorised individual to initiate legal action. The Mutawalli of the Babri structure is a Muslim resident of a village, 10 miles from Ayodhya, and is a descendant of Mir Baqi. But he has declined to join the suit. The hereditary Mutawallis of the Babri Masjid have stated that the mosque was constructed by Mir Baqi and even today, his heir Mir Javvad Hasan is maintaining himself from the 40 acres of land situated in the village where Mir Baqi's Mazaar is situated. They have demanded the transfer of the mosque to that place so that they could offer prayers therein and the Janmabhoomi site could peacefully revert to Hindus. The present Mutawalli is the same Mir Javvad Hasan whose right to Mutawalliship was recognised by the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Board of Waqfs vide report dated December 10, 1949 and office note dated November 25, 1948 sent by the Board to Mir Javvad Hasan. Being a Shia, Javvad Hasan did not care to reply to the Sunni Waqf Board.

Lahore High Court and Privy Council have held such a suit as untenable

3.9. Thus, the Sunni Waqf Board suit is frivolous and unsustainable because, under Islamic law, a mosque is an ordinary property, and not a juristic person as in the case of a Hindu idol. A full Bench decision of the Lahore High Court laid down the rule where a mosque was adversely possessed by non-Muslims. The judgement says:

> "When a mosque is adversely possessed by non-Muslims, that is to say Hindus, the Muslims lose all the right in the land and the building, including the right of worship. The building cannot maintain the character of a mosque and no duty is cast upon the persons in possession thereof to maintain its original character or to maintain it even as a building. All the rights of the Muslims being thus extinguished, including their right to pray, the persons in

possession commit no wrong, much less a continuing wrong, by not permitting, or refusing the right of the Muslims to pray therein. A suit instituted by a Muslim as a beneficiary for the exercise of his right to pray at a mosque is a suit for the enforcement of an individual right and is not covered by the provisions of Order-I, Rule-8 of the Code of Criminal Procedure" (AIR 1930, Lahore 369).

3.10. This Judgement was appealed against, and the Privy Council confirmed the judgment and added:

"There is no analogy between the possession in law of a building dedicated as a place of prayer for Muslims, and the individual deities of the Hindus. The land and building of a mosque is ordinary property and not a juristic person. A suit could not be brought by or against a mosque in its name. The right of a Muslim worshipper at a particular mosque may be regarded as an individual right. It is not a sort of easement in gross, but an element in the general right of a beneficiary to have the Waqf property recovered by its proper custodians, and applied to its proper purpose. Such an individual may, if he sues in time, procure the ejectment of a trespasser and have the property delivered to the Mutawalli, for the purposes of the Waqf. But if the title conferred by the settler has come to an end by reason, that for the statutory period no one has sued to eject a person possessing adversely to the Waqf, the rights of all the beneficiaries are gone, the land or the place cannot be recovered by or for the Mutawalli and the endowment, or its terms can no longer be enforced. The individual character of the right to go to a mosque for worship matters nothing, when the place is no longer a Waqf and that right is no ground for holding that a person born long after the property has become irrecoverable, can enforce the ancient dedication, if any, or any part of it. The rights of worshippers at a mosque stand or fall with the character of the property being Waqf, and do not continue apart from their right to have the property recovered for the Waqf and applied to its purpose. As the law stands, notice of the rights of individual beneficiaries does not modify the effect under the Limitation Act, of possession adverse to the Waqf" (AIR 1940 PC 116).

If the rule of the Lahore High Court and Privy Council is applied, the possession of the Hindus in Ayodhya cannot be disturbed, and all the rights of the Muslims in the site stand extinguished.

The frivolous suit has been held untenable on another ground

3.11. Even this frivolous suit of the Sunni Waqf Board has been virtually rendered otiose by the preliminary finding given by the Civil Judge of Faizabad. On 26th April, 1966 on whether the disputed structure was Waqf property, the court held:

"No notification under Section 5(i) of the Muslim Waqf Act No. XIII of 1936 was ever made relating to the specific disputed property of the present suits and the alleged Government Gazetteer notification did not comply with the requirements of the valid notification in the eyes of law and serves no useful purpose of the plaintiff of the leading case."

On the 12th of January, 1990, Parmahans Ramachandradas appealed to the Supreme Court to dismiss the suit of the Waqf Board as time-barred. The Supreme Court suggested that the issue, whether it is time-barred, would be taken up as a preliminary issue and decided. But, contrary to the Supreme Court's advice, the High Court has refused to take up this as a preliminary issue for decision.

Ramchandradas withdraws the suit in disgust

Disgusted with the High Court's refusal to hear the preliminary point and because he was eighty years old in 1990 (he was 40 when the suit was filed), Paramhans Ramchandradas withdrew the suit saying that he had left everything to Lord Rama.

The judicially indeterminable issues and judicial delay leads to a mass movement by the Hindus — litigation and mass movement go hand-in-hand as two parallel lines of pursuit

3.12. The litigations initiated by the Hindus in 1950 and 10 years later in 1959, and the frivolous Waqf Board suit filed 12 years later in 1961, did not move at all and were pending virtually in a state of suspended animation. The Hindu Sants graudally lost faith in the capacity of the judiciary to decide the Ramajanmabhoomi issue by bipartite litigation procedure. Therefore, the Sants and the VHP formed the Ramajanmabhoomi Muktiyajna Samiti (Ramajanmabhoomi liberation front) in the year 1984 to campaign for the liberation of Ramajanmabhoomi. The details and the growth of the mass movement are discussed separately. As the movement grew in intensity, on 23rd October, 1985 the Ramajanmabhoomi Muktiyajna Samiti held out the threat that the Sants would forcibly open the locks to liberate the Janmabhoomi if the locks were not removed and the place of worship was not thrown open by March 8, 1986 i.e. by Sivaratri Day. This ultimatum was repeated on 19th January, 1986 from Lucknow, by the Sants who declared that if the locks were not removed by 8th March,1986, they would go there and break open the locks. Thus the unmoving judicial proceedings and the mass movement became two parallel lines of pursuit by the Hindus.

Government and the court respond to mass pressure and unlock the gates of the Temple

3.13. It was the mass movement — and not just points of law — which obviously moved the intransigent government through a subterfuge to undo the original wrong — and a legal perversity — of keeping the Sanctum Sanctorum of Ramalala and Ramalala Himself under lock on the pretext of a law and order problem. Till then, no attempt had been made to grant the genuine and legitimate plea of the Hindus for unrestricted worship of the idol. However, once the ultimatum was given, things started moving at lightning speed.

First, an unknown advocate (Umesh Chand Pande) filed an application on 21st January, 1986, within two days after the Sants' ultimatum in the Munsif Court at Faizabad;

Second, on 28th January 1986, the Munsif refused to pass any orders;

Third, an appeal was filed forthwith, in the Court of District Judge, Faizabad,

Fourth, on 1st February 1986 i.e. within three days of the Munsif Court order, the District Court passed an order directing the Government of Uttar Pradesh to open the locks and further directed that they shall not impose any restriction or hurdle in the darshan or pooja of the Hindu community;

Fifth, within hours of passing the above order, the temple was unlocked and even the Doordarshan cameramen were present to cover the occasion which was widely telecast all over India.

3.14. Why did the District Court pass the order to direct unlocking? Simple. The Congress Government told the court through the District Magistrate, Faizabad that there would be no law and order problem if the temple was unlocked. It took the Government 36 years to state the obvious. It is this that had held up the judicial order so long. Thus, it was the threat of direct action by the mass movement, and the deadline that made the Government respond in the manner it did.

3.15. **On 12th May, 1986** the Sunni Waqf Board filed another suit for cancellation of the order given by the District Judge on 1st February, 1986. But the Court refused to intervene.

3.16. **On 15th December, 1987** the Uttar Pradesh Government filed an application in the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court requesting that all the four suits pending in the District Courts be withdrawn for trial and disposal in the High Court.

The Court declare the VHP Vice-President as the next Friend (Guardian) of the deity at Ayodhya

3.17. **On 1st July, 1989** Shri Deoki Nandan Agarwala one of the Vice-Presidents of the VHP, filed an application on behalf of the Ramalala before the Civil Judge, asking for declaration that the Ramajanmabhoomi belonged to the Plaintiff deities, and for injunction against defendants from interfering with the construction of the Temple after demolition and removal of the existing buildings. In the second application, on the plea for appointment of a suitable person as the next friend of the deities, the Civil Judge ordered on 1st July, 1989, appointing Shri Deoki Nandan as the next friend of the deities.

All suits transferred to the High Court in July, 1989

3.18. **On 10th July, 1989** the Allahabad High Court allowed the application of the State Government filed in 1987, for the withdrawal of the four suits pending in the court of Additional Judge and its disposal by the High Court. The fifth suit was also likewise transferred. The Court also observed that the case may be disposed of by the Full Bench of the High Court, and recommended that the papers be placed for the Hon'ble Chief Justice for nominating the third Judge which would complete the constitution of the Full Bench.

The High Court observes as early as September 1989 that some questions in the case are not judicially determinable

The leaders of the movement had, in the meanwhile, announced on 1st February, 1989 that the Shilanyas (foundation-stone ceremony) would be held on 10th November 1989. This set off a flurry of activity everywhere, including in the courts.

3.19. After the constitution of the Full Bench the matter was first posted for hearing on **14th August, 1989.** On that date the High Court directed the parties to maintain status quo in respect of the property in question.

3.20. **On 7th November, 1989** the High Court passed a clarificatory order, stating that the order of 14th August, 1989 was in respect of the entire property mentioned in the suit, including the plot on which the Shilanyas had been proposed to be conducted on the 9th November, 1989.

3.21. Even as the Full Bench of the Allahabad High Court held that Shilanyas site was subject to status quo, the three judges — R.C. Agarwal, V.C. Srivastava and S.H.A. Raza made a significant statement. The judges said:

> **"It is doubtful that some of the questions involved in the suit are soluble by judicial process."**

The far-reaching effect of this statement was evident. The High Court has virtually admitted that the Ramajanmabhoomi case was outside the purview of judicial scrutiny and decision. This was precisely the stated position of not just the BJP, but of the entire Sangh Parivar. When the Sangh Parivar said precisely this, the pseudo-secular parties heckled them as lawbreakers and outlaws. The Congress and ex-Congress parties and their Marxist allies kept on chanting "judicial verdict", as did the Babri Masjid groups, as the final solution to the Ayodhya issue, when the High Court which had looked into the case was doubtful whether the case could be made amenable to judicial process at all. And yet the Government, the pseudo-secular parties and leaders, the Masjid groups, continued to insist on judicial solution even after 7th November 1989 when the High Court observed that judicial solution may not be possible.

3.22. **On 8th November, 1989** the Uttar Pradesh Government declared on the advice given by the Advocate General that the place for Shilanyas was not in the disputed land. This facilitated the Shilanyas to be conducted on the 10th of November, 1989. But, on the very next day i.e. **11th of November, 1989** the Kar Seva was stopped by an order of the District Magistrate. The movement leaders decided not to begin an agitation in view of the impending elections in the country.

3.23. By the year 1989, the Ayodhya movement had become a powerful expression of the disapproval of the post-independence distortion of national politics. In June 1989, the BJP adopted a resolution to support the movement and also made an electoral commitment to build the Rama Temple at Ayodhya. Along with the Bofors issue, the Ayodhya movement made all the difference to the electoral scene in the Parliamentary elections in November, 1989. The Rajiv Gandhi Government which was put in office in 1984 with an astounding majority of nearly 4:1 in Lok Sabha, was voted out, and the Janata Dal with 143 seats, followed by the BJP with 86 seats, dominated the political scene in 1989. The Ayodhya issue soon became the central issue in national politics and set the political agenda of the nation in the years that followed.

The V.P. Singh Government in Delhi and the Mulayam Singh Government in UP — confrontation over Ayodhya — the firing on Karsevaks on November 21, 1990 — the judiciary, a mute spectator

3.24. The confrontationist attitude of the Janata Dal Governments in Delhi and in Lucknow, during the Kar Seva in October/November 1990, completely exposed the secular pretensions of all political parties in India. The Rathyatra of Shri L.K. Advani acted as the barometer for the popularity of the movement. The judiciary, which would play an active role later in the years 1991 and 1992, was a mute spectator of the events of October/November 1990. In fact, no one, neither the Government nor the parties to the judicial cases, thought it fit to approach the judiciary to stop the Kar Seva. The judiciary as an instrument for thwarting the Kar Seva was a Congress (I) Government's discovery, which was fully exploited during 1991 and 1992 to hide the lack of political will of the ruling party.

The BJP-led Uttar Pradesh Government's efforts to solve the Ayodhya issue by legislative measures — thwarted by judicial proceedings

3.25. The Ayodhya tornado that followed the firing on the Karsevaks at Ayodhya swept the BJP into power in Uttar Pradesh in July 1991, and Shri Kalyan Singh became the Chief Minister. The BJP, having made an electoral pledge and won the public mandate to build the Temple at Ayodhya, adopted legislative means to solve the issue.

3.26. The Kalyan Singh Government decided to delink the decision on the disputed structure from the commencement of the construction of the Temple — treating the former as a long term issue and the latter an immediate one. The approach of the BJP was fortified by its political will to solve the problem, and its efforts were justified by the observation of the High Court two years earlier, namely that some aspects of the Ayodhya problem might not be amenable to judicial solution, thereby legitimising legislative solution as an inevitable step to commence the construction.

3.27. Consequently, as part of the fulfilment of its electoral pledge to remove the obstacles in the way of construction of the Temple at Ramajanmabhoomi, the Uttar Pradesh Government acquired 2.77 acres of land adjacent to the Babri structure by a notification under the Land Acquisition Act "for providing amenities to pilgrims and facility and for development of tourism" on 7-10 October, 1991. The acquisition, the UP Government later told the court, was to facilitate the construction of the Temple.

3.28. The acquisition was challenged in a Writ Petition, and on 25th October, 1991, the High Court passed an order allowing the Government to take possession of the notified land, and make arrangement for the purposes notified, but directed that no structure of permanent nature shall be put up, although structure of temporary nature may be put up. The High Court further directed that the possession should be subject to the further orders of the Court and the land shall not be alienated. The judicial injunction set at naught the well-meaning move of the Kalyan Singh Government to deal with the issue.

The Supreme Court expected the High Court to decide the writ against acquisition by December, 1991

3.29. Another Writ Petition challenging the acquisition was filed in the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court by order dated November 15, 1991, ordered the Writ Petition filed before it to be transferred to Allahabad High Court, and while so transferring, made the following observation:

> "We are of the view that when the High Court has part entertained the matter, made an interim order, and **as stated at the Bar, is taking the case for final disposal some time in December of this year,** it may not be necessary and justifiable to transfer the writ petitions pending before the High Court to this Court."

Later in August, 1992 and on 28th November, 1992, the Supreme Court requested the High Court to expedite the case, and deliver the judgement. But the final disposal of the case which the Supreme Court expected in December, 1991 came a year later i.e. on December 16, 1992, and this is perhaps the most proximate reason for what happened on the 6th of December, 1992. This aspect is dealt with in another place.

The legal battle frustrates the Hindus and highlights the truth admitted by the judiciary itself, that the issue is beyond judicial domain

3.30. Thus, the judicial and legislative efforts of the Hindus to re-possess Ramajanmabhoomi, which had commenced as early as 1885, which was pursued vigorously from 1950 onwards, and which was expedited through land acquisition by the BJP Government to build the Temple as a part of its electoral mandate, could not proceed beyond adjournment, and interim injunctions, and stay orders. The chronology of the legal battle over Ayodhya clearly brings out the fact that the judiciary applied bipartite legal jurisprudence to a mass religio-political issue, and exposed the truth, admitted by the judiciary itself, that the Ayodhya issue was incapable of resolution by the judiciary. Despite this admission, the Rajiv, Singh and Rao governments kept on insisting that the issue must be judicially resolved even as the Court, the very Court that was asked to resolve it, had said that it was not judicially soluble. The Congress Government, as did the V.P. Singh Government, sustained the false impression, by false propaganda, that the issue should be judicially adjudicated, when they knew that it was beyond the domain of the judiciary. The Rao Government went one step further — it used Courts not just as a defence, but as a weapon against the Ayodhya movement. The impact of this political strategy of involving the judiciary, and an unwilling judiciary at that, has been discussed in detail in the chapter on the circumstances leading to the suspension of Kar Seva and to events on December 6, 1992, as also in the chapter on the role of the judiciary.

The Third Phase: Mass movement for Rama Temple at Ayodhya — the continuation of history and the result of intransigent Government and insensitive judiciary

4.1. The people of India, under the leadership of Sants and Sadhus, have launched the biggest mass movement in the history of India to regain the Ramajanmabhoomi and to construct the Temple. The mass movement was the logical sequence and consequence of the unsuccessful and partially successful military and war diplomatic efforts, the intransigent government and insensitive legal procedures, and the consequent delay, with no hope of any decision explicit or implicit in the judicial proceedings.

4.2. Thus the Hindus failed to secure permanently the Rama Janmasthan by military efforts and war diplomacy, and were later forced into a maze of frivolous legal disputes, under a system that can only resolve bipartite disputes, and has no second rule to decide issues of mass emotive interest. The cases could not proceed even to trial stage and were frozen in interlocutory orders. This compelled the Hindu society to mobilise itself for creating favourable public opinion for the construction of the Rama Mandir at Ayodhya. The potency of Sri Rama, the provocative structure built by the invaders, and the mindless, and vote-inspired defence of that structure by the pseudo-secular political parties and leaders, (who had a diametrically opposite rule to apply to the Muslims), transformed the movement into an unprecedented one in scale and emotive depth.

The genesis of the movement for opening the locks — the movement takes shape

4.3. The Ayodhya movement was conceived, in the year 1983, when, in a meeting at Muzaffarnagar, attended among others by the former Union Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda and Professor Rajendra Singh of the RSS, the question of liberation of Ramajanmabhoomi was raised by Shri Daudayal Khanna, who was formerly a Minister in Uttar Pradesh. Thereafter the mass movement took shape as under:

4.4. **On 7-8 April, 1984** over 530 Sants and Sadhus took part in the first Dharma Sansad in Delhi and unanimously resolved for the liberation of the birthplace of Rama.

4.5. **On 18th June, 1984** at the meetings of Sants held in Ayodhya, Shri Daudayal Khanna was declared as the Convener of the Ramajanmabhoomi Muktiyajna Samiti (Ramajanmabhoomi liberation front).

4.6. At a meeting held again at Ayodhya on **1st July, 1984,** Mahant Avaidyanath was declared as President, Shri Daudayal Khanna as General Secretary, Mahant Nritya Gopal Das and Paramahans Ramachandradas as Vice-Presidents, and Onkar Bhave, Mahesh Narayan Singh and Dinesh Tyagi as secretaries of the Samiti unanimously.

4.7. **On 25th September, 1984** Srirama-Janaki Rathyatra was started from Sitamarhi in Bihar to create awareness amongst people about the movement.

4.8. **On 7th October, 1984** thousands of people assembled on the banks of the Sarayu in Ayodhya and took a vow for the liberation of the birthplace of Rama. They also demanded opening of the locks of the temple.

4.9. **On 14th October, 1984** an unprecedented reception was given for Srirama-Janaki Rathyatra in Lucknow, and a representative of the Samiti held talks with Shri Narayan Dutt Tiwari regarding the liberation of the Ramajanmabhoomi.

4.10. **On 31st October, 1984,** on the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Rama-Janaki Rathyatra programme was suspended in Ghaziabad.

4.11. **On 26th March, 1985** the Samiti decided to enroll 50 lakh devotees of Rama for liberating the Janmabhoomi.

4.12. **On 18th April, 1985** it was declared by Paramahans Ramachandradas, that if the locks were not opened before the Ramanavami in 1986, he would immolate himself.

4.13. **On 23rd October, 1985** the Rama-Janaki Rathayatra was re-started on the Vijaya-dasami day.

4.14. **On 31st October, 1985** the second Dharma Sansad meeting was held at Udipi, and 851 Sants participated and planned for the liberation struggle.

4.15. **On 19th December, 1985,** on a call given by the Bajrang Dal, the State of Uttar Pradesh observed total Bandh in support of the demand for opening the locks of the Temple.

4.16. **On 19th January, 1986,** in a conference of Sants held at Lucknow, it was decided to commence the struggle on 8th March, 1986 (Sivaratri Day) and break open the locks, if the locks were not opened by that time.

4.17. It was thereafter that the Government gave in and the judiciary too, responded with lightning speed — an application to open the locks was filed within two days, i.e. on 21.1.1986; it was rejected on 28.1.1986; an appeal was filed and an order in appeal for unlocking the doors of the structure was made within three days, i.e. on 1.2.1986; the order was implemented within hours with full-scale publicity by Doordarshan. Would anyone believe that it was the very courts, and the very Government, that were handling the issue since at least 1949 — were acting in 1986?

The Brokers of Muslim vote-banks react — the Babri Masjid Committees are formed

4.18. On opening of the locks by the judiciary the communal elements began to organise the Muslims against the Temple.

4.19. **On 14th February, 1986** the Muslims observed a black day in order to express their resentment against the opening of the locks. Many temples were destroyed in Kashmir and there was violence throughout the country.

4.20. **On 15th February, 1986** the Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC) was constituted.

4.21. **On 21-22 December, 1986** the BMAC decided on a series of agitational measures, including boycott of Republic Day, all-India Bandh on February 1, 1987, massive rally at the Boat Club on March 30, 1987, and a Muslim March to Ayodhya.

4.22. **In January 1987,** the BMAC called for the boycott of the Republic Day.

4.23. **On 16th January, 1987,** the BMAC withdrew the Republic Day boycott.

4.24. **On 1st February, 1987,** partial Bandh was observed in response to the call by the Masjid group.

4.25. **On 30th March, 1987,** a large rally organised by the BMAC was held at the Boat Club in Delhi, and in which highly provocative speeches were made by some leaders, particularly the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid in Delhi.

The Rajiv Government constitutes a Group of Ministers under Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao to find a solution

4.26. **On 27th April, 1987,** the Ramajanmabhoomi issue was considered by the Cabinet Committee of Political Affairs, which decided to set up a Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Shri P.V. Narashima Rao, to suggest steps for resolving the controversy.

4.27. **On 8th May, 1987,** the Home Minister, Shri Buta Singh, wrote to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, requesting him to work out the steps to be taken with a firmly laid-out time-table to resolve the issue.

4.28. **On 21st May, 1987,** the GoM met under the chairmanship of Shri P.V. Narashima Rao, and decided that it would be better to leave the matter to be settled at the local level by local initiatives.

4.29. **On 8th October, 1987,** the GoM met again, and was also attended by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. It was decided that efforts should be made to insulate local opinion from the impact of the controversy, and prepare it to accept judicial verdict. It was thought proper to await the judicial verdict. A statement was to be prepared, setting out the stand taken by the various groups, in order to determine a common ground and come to an agreed settlement.

4.30. **On 31st March, 1988,** the Home Minister held discussions with the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, to prepare different alternatives for resolving the issue.

4.31. **On 22nd May, 1988,** the Masjid groups decided to go on a mini-march to Ayodhya on August 12, 1988, and then a long march to Ayodhya on October 14, 1988.

4.32. **On 4th July, 1988,** it was decided by the Sants at Haridwar to oppose the agitational programme of the Masjid groups.

The Rajiv Government begins behind-the-scene conclaves, with particularly the Masjid groups and Muslim leaders

4.33. **On 14th July, 1988,** the Home Minister holds meeting with a group of intellectuals led by Col. B.S. Zaidi.

4.34. **On 30th July, 1988,** the Home Minister held review meetings with the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. **The meeting was attended by Shri Kurshid Alam Khan and Syed Shahabuddin.**

4.35. **On 8th August, 1988,** the Babri Masjid groups decided to postpone the march to Ayodhya, slated for August 12, 1988, in response to the call of the Home Minister for negotiated settlement or legal solution.

4.36. **On 17th August, 1988,** the Home Minister held **meetings with Muslim MPs of the Congress (I).** Important points made at this meeting were:

a. all parties should be involved in the resolution of this issue;
b. if a solution is not possible through talks, the judicial process should be expedited, preferably by the creation of a Special Bench in the High Court;
c. the judicial proceedings should be held in camera; and
d. **a cut-off date in respect of ownership of religious places should be fixed.**

4.37. **On 19th August, 1988,** the Home Minister held meeting with important leaders of the Coordinating Committee of Babri Masjid Movement (CCBMM). The representatives of the Masjid groups made the following points:

a. **the idols should be taken out of the mosque;**
b. a solution was not possible through negotiations, as the hardliners among the Hindus will not budge an inch from their known stand;
c. the Administration at the local level is to be built up, so that it became impartial;
d. **the Muslims detained under NSA should be released;**
e. the Government should take steps to expedite the legal process, if the issue is not resolved peacefully.

4.38. **On 1st September, 1988,** the Home Minister met important members of Ramajanmabhoomi Muktiyajna Samiti. In this meeting the representatives of the Samiti made the following points:

a. The question of negotiation of Ayodhya does not arise, as it is one of the three most sacred places of Hindus;
b. Hindu scriptures and available historical evidence, establish, that the premises had been a temple and used as such for a hundred years;
c. The elements necessary for a mosque, such as minarets, are not seen in the premises; and Hindu religious signs are found to be engraved on the walls of the structure;
d. Islam does not permit sharing of mosques for observance of the practices of other religions.

4.39. **On 7th September, 1988,** the Home Minister **again met Muslim Members of Parliament belonging to Congress (I).** The views expressed in this meeting included:

a. all party meeting should be convened so that the respective standpoints of different parties on this issue become clear;
b. an appeal should go from Muslim Members of Parliament to contending parties to give up confrontationist stance.

4.40. **On 1st October, 1988,** the Home Minister held informal talks **with Syed Shahabuddin, Sulaiman Sait and Khurshid Alam Khan.** At this meeting, Shahabuddin made the following points:

a. Legal process should be expedited, as it was very unlikely that a common ground

would emerge in view of the stand of the Dharma Sansad of the Ramajanmabhoomi movement.

b. There will not be any compromise on the issue of Babri Masjid/Ramajanmabhoomi;

c. The efforts for solution of the problem through talks and judicial process must go hand-in-hand.

4.41. **On 8th October, 1988,** the Home Minister again held meetings with **the representatives of the Masjid groups.** It was also attended by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. At this meeting the points stressed earlier by Syed Shahabuddin at the previous meeting were reiterated . The only new point made by him was with regard to historical/legal documents furnished to the Ministry by Ramajanmabhoomi Muktiyajna Samiti. Shahbuddin said that the document did not substantiate the two points, namely, that a temple existed on the spot where the masjid stood today, and that Babar visited Ayodhya and destroyed the Temple. The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh said that the situation was tense, and that riots had broken out in Ajmer and Muzaffarnagar. He expressed apprehension that if the proposed long march by Muslims was held on 14th October, 1988, it would further aggravate the situation.

4.42. **On 8th October, 1988,** the Bajrang Dal sponsored Bandh in educational institutions in Uttar Pradesh, to protest against the long march of the Babri Masjid groups, was total.

4.43. **On 12th October, 1988,** the Home Minister held meetings **with the members of the Masjid groups,** and impressed upon them to call off their long march slated for October 14, 1988. The Masjid groups wanted a re-assurance that the Government would expedite the hearing of the title suit after the festival season was over. In view of the assurance given, they agreed to postpone the long march.

4.44. **On 13th October, 1988, all Babri groups, other than Syed Shahabuddin,** withdrew the proposed long march.

4.45. **On 14th October, 1988,** complete Bandh was observed in Uttar Pradesh in opposition to the long march.

4.46. **On 26-27th November, 1988,** All India Babri Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC) was launched with Shri Sultan Owaissi as Chairman.

4.47. **On 7-13th December, 1988,** the VHP organised Rama-Janaki Rathayathra in Bhopal, to create Hindu awareness on the Ramajanmabhoomi issue.

4.48. **On 25th December, 1988,** the Home Minister met the representatives of the Ramajanmabhoomi Muktiyajna Samiti.

4.49. **On 31st January, 1989,** the AIBMAC decides to form 'Hifajati Dastas' to prevent VHP's move to construct the Temple.

The VHP decides on Shilanyas

4.50. **On 1st February, 1989,** over one lakh Sants assembled on the occasion of Kumbha Mela, and made a declaration that the foundation stone for construction of Rama Temple

would be laid, on November 10, 1989. It was also decided that Ramashilas (bricks for construction) would be brought from lakhs of villages.

4.51. **On 29th March, 1989,** the Home Minister held a meeting with senior leaders of the opposition parties on this issue. The meeting was attended by P.V. Narashima Rao, H.K.L. Bhagat, Shivshankar and Smt. Sheela Dikshit on behalf of the Congress. The BJP could not attend the meeting because of communication gap. The representatives of the opposition parties were required to spell out their stand on in this issue in the overall interest of communal peace and harmony.

4.52. **On 15-16th May, 1989,** the Home Minister held meetings with the leaders of the opposition parties on the subject of communalism. The Babri Masjid issue also figured in the discussion. There was general consensus on the point that talks should be started with concerned parties, and this could go side by side with the court proceedings.

4.53. **On 27-28th May, 1989,** in a meeting of Sants, the decisions on the Shilanyas taken on 1st February, 1989 were confirmed.

A turning-point in the Ayodhya movement — the BJP decides to support the Temple construction efforts

4.54. The decision of the BJP to support the Ayodhya movement was a turning-point in the course of the movement. This decision was taken at the National Executive meeting of the Party in Palampur in June, 1989. The chronology of the Ayodhya movement from 1984 to 1989 reveals how the movement had already become a sensitive political issue. The rally organised by the Masjid groups on March 31, 1987 at which threats of violence were held out, and the covert and overt confabulations of the Congress Government with the Muslim League, Masjid groups and fundamentalist Muslim MPs like Syed Shahabuddin and Sulaiman Sait had already made the issue a deeply political one. In fact, the Political Affairs Committee of the Cabinet had been dealing with the Ayodhya issue since 1987 and even a Group of Ministers under Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao had been asked to find a solution to the problem. Bandhs and rallies were being resorted to by the Masjid groups and the Temple movement leaders, as the movement had assumed mass dimensions. By the middle of 1989, the Ayodhya movement had reached a state and status in Indian public life when it was no more possible to ignore its effect in politics, including electoral politics. As part of its permanent avocation of appeasing the Muslim leaders, and using the Ayodhya issue, the Congress Party had also launched a campaign against the VHP and also the BJP, accusing them of defying the judicial determination of the Ayodhya issue. At that point, it became inevitable for the BJP to take a clear and formal position on the Ayodhya issue and also to educate the public on how the Congress was taking an anti-Hindu stance again under the veneer of secularism in order to appease the communal Muslim leadership. Surveying the Ayodhya issue and assessing the Congress Government's response to it as another instance of its allergy to the Hindu sentiments, the National Executive of the BJP proclaimed:

"The National Executive of the Bharatiya Janata Party regards the current debate on the Ram Janma Bhoomi issue as one which has dramatically highlighted the callous unconcern which the Congress Party in particular, and the other political parties in general, betray towards the sentiments of the overwhelming majority in this country — the Hindus.

"...Though efforts have been continuing to persuade Muslims to respect the feelings of the Hindus and abandon their claim to the site, this site has also been subject matter of prolonged litigation.

"Lately, the Congress Government has unleashed a virulent campaign against the BJP and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which has been representing the Hindu point of view in the negotiations with Government, alleging that while other sections of opinion have accepted reference of the dispute to the Allahabad High Court, the BJP and the VHP are unwilling to abide by a judicial verdict in this case. This propaganda is slanderous, and is based on a total misrepresentation of facts.

"The BJP holds that the nature of this controversy is such that it just cannot be sorted out by a court of law. A court of law can settle issues of title, trespass, possession etc. But it cannot adjudicate as to whether Babar did actually invade Ayodhya, destroyed a temple and built a mosque in its place. Even where a court does pronounce on such facts, it cannot suggest remedies to undo the vandalism of history. As far back as in 1885 a British Judge Col. F.E.A. Chamier disposing off a civil appeal relating to the site observed in a helpless vein: 'It is most unfortunate that a Masjid should have been built on land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but as that occurred 356 years ago it is too late to remedy the grievance...' (Dated 18th March, 1886, Civil Appeal No.27 of 1885, District Court, Faizabad).

"In this context, it should not be forgotten that the present turmoil itself stems from two court decisions, one of 1951 and the second of 1986. "On March 3, 1951, in Gopal Singh Visharad versus Zabur Ahmad and others, the Civil Judge, Faizabad observed, inter alia, that '...at least from 1936 onwards the Muslims have neither used the site as a mosque nor offered prayers there, and that the Hindus have been performing their Pooja etc. on the disputed site.'

"Then on 1st February, 1986, District Judge Faizabad referred to this 1951 order and directed that as "for the last 35 years Hindus have (had) an unrestricted right of worship" at the place, the locks put on two gates in 1951 on grounds of law and order should be removed. (Civil Appeal No.6/1986).

"The 1951 order had provoked little reaction. Till then, secularism had not yet become a euphemism for Hindu-baiting, as it has become today. It is noteworthy that around this very time the Government of India, under the leadership of Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel, and with the blessings of Gandhiji, had itself decided to undo a similar act of vandalism and to restore the great Somnath Temple at Prabhas Patan (Gujarat).

"When the Jyotirling was formally installed at Somnath, the country's Rashtrapati, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, participated in the ceremony.

"However, by the time the second court order of 1986 came, secularism had come to be equated with an allergy to Hinduism and a synonym for minority appeasement. The Muslim League lobby in the country had acquired a new militancy and aggressiveness. The campaign launched by this lobby against the Supreme Court's judgement in the Shah Bano Case in 1985 had brought it rich dividends. A panic-stricken Government had amended the criminal law; the Supreme Court judgement was legislatively annulled. Having thus tasted blood, this lobby set up the Babri Masjid Action Committee, and mounted a vicious assault on the decisions of the Faizabad Court, and went to the length of boycotting Republic Day celebrations in protest against these orders. A rally organised by this lobby in front of Parliament House actually held out threats of violence unless these orders were reversed. It is significant that most of the members of the Babri Action Committee belonged to the Congress (I).

"Against the above background, the reference made to the High Court is just an expedient device to sweep issues beneath the carpet. The move satisfied the Muslim League lobby, and so is electorally convenient. It certainly does not reveal any earnest desire on the part of Government to solve the problem.

"The BJP believes that theocracy is alien to our history and tradition. It is, therefore, that in 1947 even though India was partitioned on religious grounds and even though Pakistan declared itself an Islamic state, India opted for the present Constitution, and guaranteed equality to all citizens irrespective of their religion.

"Secularism, according to our Constitution-makers, meant Sarva-Dharma-Sama-Bhava. It did not cannote an irreligious state. It certainly did not mean rejection of our history and cultural heritage.

"The National Executive records its appreciation of the attempts made by some Shia leaders to persuade the community that it was contrary to the tenets of Islam to have a mosque built upon a place of worship of another religion, and that, therefore, the site in dispute should be handed over to the Hindus and a mosque built at some other suitable place. The BJP calls upon the Rajiv Government to adopt the same positive approach in respect of Ayodhya that the Nehru Government did with regard to Somnath. The sentiments of the people must be respected, and Rama Janmasthan handed over to the Hindus — if possible through a negotiated settlement, or else, by legislation. Litigation certainly is no answer."

Thus, from the day one the BJP regarded the Ayodhya sentiments as a continuation of the Somnath spirit — and clearly and unequivocally declared that the Temple issue was incapable of judicial determination.

4.55. **From 17 to 22nd September, 1989,** Indraprastha Dharma Yatra took place and 1850 Sants participated. The Sants started from Delhi, and travelled 20 to 25 kms. a day, to various places to spread the message of Ramajanmabhoomi.

4.56. **On 22nd September, 1989,** in a meeting at the Boat Club in New Delhi, the leading Sants of the nation gave a warning that they would launch a bitter struggle if impediments were placed on the Shilanyas programme.

All non-BJP parties oppose the Shilanyas

4.57. **On 13th October, 1989,** a resolution was passed in the Lok Sabha with the unanimous consent of all non-BJP parties, that the Government would not permit the Shilanyas and that Vishwa Hindu Parishad be asked to cancel the programme.

The Supreme Court refuses to stop Shilapooja Yatras

4.58. **On 15th October, 1989,** Shri V.M. Tarkunde submitted a Writ Petition before the Supreme Court praying that the Shila Poojan, wherever organised by the VHP, should be banned.

4.59. **On 17th October, 1989,** the representatives of the VHP met Home Minister Buta Singh, and confirmed that there would not be any postponement of the Shilanyas programme.

4.60. **On 27th October, 1989,** the Supreme Court held on Shri V.M. Tarakunde's petition, that taking out religious processions was a fundamental right, and hence the bringing of the idol of Rama and Ramashilas to Ayodhya, could not be stopped.

Government and Court fail to thwart the Shilanyas — a Harijan lays the first brick for Rama Temple

The leaders of the Ayodhya movement successfully conducted and performed the Shilanyas on 10th November, 1989.

4.61. **On 2nd November, 1989,** the place for performance of Shilanyas was chosen. On that evening a flag was hoisted at the site.

4.62. **From 5th November, 1989** onwards, Sants, priests and raths bearing idols of Rama started in thousands for Ayodhya.

4.63. **On 6th November, 1989,** the Congress leaders met Pujya Devaraha Baba and requested for the change of the place of Shilanyas, but the Baba turned down the request.

4.64. Despite the Allahabad High Court ruling on 14th August, 1989, and 7th November, 1989, declaring status quo on the disputed site, the Uttar Pradesh Government and the Central Government caved in under mass pressure and could not stop the Shilanyas. **At the appointed time on 10th November, 1989, a Harijan, Kameshwar Chopal of Bihar, placed the first brick in the midst of the sound of conches, and other musical instruments for the foundation of the Rama Temple.** Later, the Shilanyas programme was completed by the Sants and the devotees placing 200 bricks.

4.65. At a meeting on the same day, the Margadarshak Mandal of the VHP decided that the natural culmination of the Shilanyas programme was the construction of the Temple, and for that purpose Sants would go for Kar Seva on 11th November, 1989. It was also decided that if the Kar Seva was stopped, the Sants would not resist, in view of the forthcoming elections in the country.

4.66. **On 11th November, 1989** over 7000 Sants and devotees went from the banks of Sarayu for Kar Seva. But they were stopped by the order of the District Magistrate and the Sants decided not to resist in view of the impending general elections.

4.67. The Sants and the VHP decided to oppose those parties who opposed the construction of the Rama Temple.

4.68. In the general elections to the Lok Sabha held in November, 1989, the Congress Party was defeated, and the Janata Dal supported by the BJP and the Left parties came to power in December, 1989.

Sants decide to resume Kar Seva in February, 1990

4.69. At a conference of the Sants at Prayag held on 27-28th January, 1990, it was decided to commence Temple construction work on 14th February, 1990; but doors were kept open for talks till 6th February, 1990.

V.P. Singh, the new Prime Minister, asks for time

4.70. **On 6th February, 1990** Prime Minister V.P. Singh called the leaders of the Ayodhya

Movement for talks, and after the talks, he asked for some time to discuss the matter with his colleagues.

4.71. **On 8th February, 1990,** on the invitation of the Prime Minister, the leaders of the Ayodhya movement present in Delhi met him. He expressed the confidence that the problem would be solved in four months and asked for that much time.

4.72. **On 9th February, 1990,** in a meeting of the Ayodhya movement leaders held in Delhi, the appeal of the Prime Minister for 4 months time was accepted.

4.73. **In March, April and May, 1990,** leaders of the Ayodhya movement went to the Prime Minister's residence to remind him about the lapse of time.

4.74. **On 5th April, 1990,** a Committee of Ministers consisting of S/Shri Madhu Dandavate, George Fernandes and Muktyar Anis called on the leaders of the Temple movement. When asked what had been done by the Government during the two out of the four months time given to the Government, the Ministers were silent.

As the Prime Minister does nothing for four months, the leaders of the movement set October 30, 1990 as the date for Kar Seva

4.75. **On 23-24th June, 1990,** the Sants having waited for four months to no purpose, met at Haridwar and decided that Kar Seva for construction of the Temple would start from Devotthan Ekadasi Day on 30th October, 1990. It was also decided that the date and the plan of construction would remain unchanged.

Advani warns of the "greatest mass movement of the country"

4.76. On 28th June, 1990, in an interview carried in *Panchajanya,* a Hindi fortnightly, the BJP President, Shri L.K. Advani, openly committed his party's full support to the VHP's decision to start construction of Sri Rama's Temple at Ayodhya on October 30, 1990. He said that the BJP would participate in strength in any agitation for the purpose. He also cautioned the V.P. Singh Government that any attempt to scuttle the VHP's plan would snowball into "the greatest mass movement" the country had ever witnessed.

4.77. **On 1st August, 1990** the Sants pledged to devote their *tana, mana* and *dhana* (body, mind and wealth) to overcome the challenges to the construction of the Temple.

4.78. **From 1st August to 31st August, 1990,** for mobilising Karsevaks at Ayodhya from all over the country, Sri Rama Kar Seva Samitis were constituted.

Advani's offer to persuade the VHP to drop Mathura and Varanasi if Ayodhya is voluntarily given, evokes no response from Muslim leaders

4.79. On 13th August, 1990, while releasing a book on Ayodhya by a Belgian author, Shri L.K. Advani made an offer to the Muslim leaders that he would intercede with the VHP to drop their plans for construction of temples on the sacred sites in Mathura and Varanasi if

the Muslim leaders voluntarily withdrew their claims over the Ramajanmabhoomi and allowed the construction of the Temple. The offer was rejected outright by Muslim leaders.

4.80. **On 15th August, 1990,** saffron flags were hoisted and conches were sounded all over the country.

4.81. **From 21st August, 1990 to 15th September, 1990,** various Dharma Yatras were conducted all over the country, and Rama Sankeertana Samitis were constituted.

On 31st August, 1990, stone-carving for construction of Sri Rama Mandir was commenced at Ayodhya.

On 1st September, 1990, Sri Rama Jyoti was lit by the sacred Arni Manthan.

Shri Advani's Rathyatra — Shri V.P. Singh issues Ordinance after efforts to isolate the VHP/BJP fail

4.82. Shri V.P. Singh began the devious game of splitting the Ayodhya movement, and worked for a Sant-Moulvi solution, minus the VHP and BJP. As explained in Chapter IV, this move did not take off.

4.83. **On 12th September, 1990,** Shri L.K. Advani announced his plan for a 10,000 km. Rathyatra from Somnath to Ayodhya starting on September 25, 1990, and reaching Ayodhya on October 30, to join the Kar Seva. This announcement was consistent with his warning on 28th June, 1990, that if the V.P. Singh Government tried to scuttle the plans for Rama Temple, the country would witness the greatest mass movement of the century. And **on 25th September, 1990** Shri L.K. Advani started on the Rathyatra from Somnath to Ayodhya to participate in the Kar Seva on October 30, 1990. The Rathyatra received tumultuous response everywhere and completely turned the national debate on the scope and content of secularism that had been practised since independence.

4.84. On Vijayadasami Day, **28th September, 1990,** Sants went on Yatras in different parts of the country.

4.85. **From 28th September to 10th October, 1990,** devotional hymns were sung in front of the Sri Rama Jyotis installed in the temples, in lakhs of villages.

4.86. On Deepavali day, **18th October, 1990,** lamps were lit from the Sri Rama Jyotis in houses all over the country.

4.87. **On 19th October, 1990,** the President issued an Ordinance to acquire the disputed structure and land at Ayodhya. This was the result of Shri V.P. Singh's failure to split the Ayodhya movement and to isolate the VHP/BJP, and so failing, he had resorted to political negotiations through persons connected with the RSS/VHP. The Ordinance was the outcome of this political move.

The confrontation with the movement — the Karsevaks overcome the challenge of V.P. Singh and Mulayam Singh

4.88. Within two days of its issue, the Central Government decided to withdraw the take-

over Ordinance. The circumstances leading to the issue of the Ordinance, and its withdrawal are discussed separately in Chapter IV.

4.89. **On 23rd October, 1990,** Shri L.K. Advani was arrested in Samastipur, and the Rath-yatra was stopped. The whole country reacted with spontaneous bandhs on two days and indignation swept across the nation. The BJP withdrew its support to the Janata Dal Government led by Shri V.P. Singh. Many leaders of the Ayodhya movement were arrested. They included Prof. Rajendra Singh, V.H. Dalmia, Gumanmal Lodha, Mahant Avaidyanath and Swami Chinmayanand. Shri A.B. Vajpayee who was leading Karsevaks to Ayodhya was also arrested.

4.90. **On 28th October, 1990,** the Secretary General of VHP, Shri Ashok Singhal, reached Ayodhya, in spite of the heaviest security arrangement to prevent even "a bird from flying into Ayodhya" as Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav the U.P. Chief Minister had pledged and similarly, thousands of Karsevaks managed to reach Ayodhya.

4.91. **On 30th October, 1990,** the Karsevaks who had assembled in lakhs, ascended the domes of the disputed structure, and hoisted saffron flags.

4.92. **On 2nd November, 1990,** the peaceful unarmed Karsevaks, who were approaching the Ramajanmabhoomi, were subjected to ruthless firing in which over 50 Karsevaks died and hundreds were injured. The entire nation reacted with unprecedented indignation.

Shri V.P. Singh goes; efforts of Shri Chandrashekhar, the new Prime Minister, to solve the problem; Karsevaks on satyagraha

Meanwhile, the Janata Dal government led by Shri V.P. Singh was voted out in Parliament and Shri Chandrashekhar became the Prime Minister.

4.93. **On 1st December, 1990,** the Chandrashekhar Government arranged meetings between the VHP and the Babri Masjid groups, to evolve an agreed solution to the problem.

4.94. **On 6th December, 1990,** Karsevaks started satyagraha at Ayodhya, and lakhs of them took part in the satyagraha which lasted till 14th January 1991.

4.95. **On 23rd December, 1990,** the VHP and the AIBMAC produced evidence for the debate initiated by the Government.

4.96. It was decided that Government will make documents of each side available to the other by 26 December, and that each side will submit its rejoinder by 6 January, 1991. The documents were duly exchanged. The VHP filed its rejoinder. The AIBMAC filed no rejoinder; instead it furnished another pile of miscellaneous papers.

4.97. **On 10th January, 1991,** a meeting was held in Gujarat Bhavan of the two sides with Government representatives and some experts. It was decided that each side will nominate experts and that they will meet on 24 and 25 January to assess the evidence.

4.98. **On 24th January, 1991,** the experts of both sides met. The discussion was to continue on the 25th, but on that day the experts nominated by the Masjid groups failed to

turn up at the meeting. The VHP experts waited along with the Government officials for over three hours and then came away.

On 6th February took place what was to turn out to be the last meeting. It was decided that the Government would have the documents presented by each side authenticated at the earliest. If some explanation was deemed necessary after authentication, the Government would obtain it from each side, and each side will furnish comprehensive and final statement of its case as early as possible.

On 24 February, 1991, the VHP presented a statement of its case. The AIBMAC did not do so.

Fall of the Chandrashekhar Government, elections, and the new Government under Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao in office at New Delhi

The Chandrashekhar Government fell in March 1991, and fresh elections to Lok Sabha were announced.

4.99. **On 31st March and 1st April, 1991,** the meeting of the Kendriya Margadarshak Mandal of the VHP was held in New Delhi.

4.100. **On 2nd and 3rd April, 1991,** the Dharma Sansad met in Delhi. On 4th April, 1991 lakhs of devotees of Rama, from various part of the country, participated in a Vishal Hindu Sammelan in Delhi at the Boat Club. The rally received unprecedented response and was the biggest ever held in Delhi.

4.101. In its election Manifesto, the BJP committed itself to building a Temple for Sri Rama at the Ramajanmabhoomi in Ayodhya, after relocating the mosque, and to the concept of Rama Rajya.

4.102. During the period from April to July 1991, far-reaching changes took place in the country. Shri Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated . The general elections which were halfway through were deferred and held in June. The BJP captured power in UP, and Shri Kalyan Singh became the Chief Minister. The Congress Party formed a minority Government with Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister.

The efforts to overcome the obstacles to Temple construction

4.103. **On 28-29th September, 1991,** a meeting of the Sants was held in Rishikesh. In the meeting, it was decided to commence the temple construction work on a date to be specified later.

4.104. **On 7th and 10th October, 1991,** the U.P. Government acquired 2.77 acres of land adjoining the structure for temple construction. The Government had devised a construction plan delinked from the long term issue of the disputed structure, and the acquisition was intended for that purpose. But the acquisition became the subject matter of legal disputes, and the High Court and Supreme Court ordered status quo on the acquired land, and prohibited any permanent construction.

4.105. **On 30th October, 1991,** Martyrs Memorial Day was observed by the VHP and the Sants.

4.106. **In January, 1992,** the leaders of the Ayodhya movement met, and decided to have a meeting with the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Kalyan Singh, and discuss the matter of Temple construction. The first meeting of the Sants with the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister was held in January, 1992. Their second meeting was held at Tirupati.

4.107. **On 20th March, 1992,** the U.P. Government handed over 48 acres of land to Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas.

4.108. **On 4th April, 1992,** the Sants, who had gathered at Haridwar, expressed their profound anguish to the team of MPs, who were sent to investigate the actions taken by the BJP Government in UP to remove the impediments in the construction of the Temple. Earlier Shri S.B. Chavan, the Union Home Minister, had threatened to invoke Article 356 against the Uttar Pradesh Government.

4.109. **On 6th April, 1992,** the Central Government decided to send a team of Members of Parliament, and Members of the National Integration Council to inspect the reported digging and construction work in Ayodhya. The members of the team worshipped Ramalala at the disputed structure, and got prasad. Later, the BJP also sent separately a team of its parliamentary members.

The Sants decide on Kar Seva in July, 1992, and seek a meeting with the Prime Minister

4.110. At a meeting of the Sants held in Ujjain in the first week of May 1992, it was decided to resume the Kar Seva on July 9, 1992. **On 9th May, 1992,** Swami Vamadev, Paramahans Ramchandradas, Mahant Avaidyanath, Yugpurush Paramanand and Swami Chinmayananda sought a meeting, and met the Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, regarding the construction of the Temple and informed him about the proposed Kar Seva in July 1992.

The Prime Minister does nothing and Kar Seva starts on 9th July, 1992

4.111. **On the 6th, 7th and 8th July, 1992,** a meeting of the Margadarshak Mandal was held in Ayodhya in which Sants expressed their disappointment towards the Government, and decided to re-start the Kar Seva on 9th July 1992.

4.112. **On 9th July, 1992,** rituals were performed in the premises of Ramajanmabhoomi. After performing the pooja, the Karsevaks re-commenced Kar Seva for the construction of the Temple. There was widespread agitation, and there was commotion in the Lok Sabha during the next few days.

The Prime Minister calls the Sants and asks for 4 months time — Kar Seva suspended

4.113. **On 23rd July, 1992,** Prime Minister called the Sants to Delhi to discuss the matter. He said that he expected the problem to be solved within four months. On the assurance

given by the Prime Minister, the Sants decided to stop the Kar Seva for three months.

4.114. **On 26th July, 1992,** the Karsevaks were asked to stop the Kar Seva with great reluctance, and after great persuasion by the leaders. The VHP General Secretary told the Karsevaks that the Kar Seva would be resumed in November 1992, and the Karsevaks discontinued the work.

The circumstances leading to the Kar Seva in July, and its suspension are explained in Chapter V.

4.115. **On 20th September, 1992,** some Muslim organisations proposed that the Babri Masjid should be moved 10 km. away from the place where it was situated.

The Prime Minister does nothing from July to September 1992

4.116. **On 23rd September, 1992,** the leaders of the RSS met the Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, and expressed their view that the action taken to solve the Ayodhya issue was very slow.

4.117. **On 24th September, 1992,** the VHP decided that the period of three months given to the Prime Minister would not be extended further.

4.118. **On 3rd October, 1992,** the VHP had direct talks with Muslim leaders spearheading the Babri movement.

4.119. **On 16th October, 1992,** the VHP and the Masjid groups agreed to continue the talks, but the talks had become purposeless.

The stage set for confrontation — the Government tucks under Courts and abdicates

4.120. At the VHP/Masjid group meeting on **29th October, 1992,** the talks virtually collapsed, but S/Shri Sharad Pawar, and Bhairon Singh Shekhawat decided not to announce the failure and proposed another meeting again on 8th November 1992.

4.121. **On 29th and 30th October, 1992,** it was decided in the 5th Dharma Sansad organised at Delhi that the Kar Seva should be started again from 6th December, 1992. This decision followed the collapse of the VHP/Masjid group talks on 29th October 1992.

4.122. **On 8th November, 1992,** talks between the VHP/Masjid groups formally collapsed.

By this time the Narasimha Rao Government had launched a virulent anti-Temple campaign in the Press and on the Doordarshan. The Government had a contingency plan to confront the Karsevaks, although it was overtly carrying on talks with the leaders of the movement. It began to use the Courts as a shield for itself and as a weapon against the movement. The details of how the Government behaved from July 1992 onwards, is explained in Chapter VI.

4.123. **On 23rd November, 1992,** a meeting on the Ayodhya issues was held by the National Integration Council. It was decided to support any action to stop Kar Seva, and the Prime Minister was authorised to take such actions as needed to stop the Kar Seva.

4.124. **By 26th November, 1992,** the Central Government had sent 135 companies of central security forces to Ayodhya and Faizabad, in spite of the Uttar Pradesh Government's protests.

4.125. **On 27th November, 1992,** the Supreme Court ordered the Uttar Pradesh Government to give an undertaking regarding Kar Seva in compliance with court orders.

4.126. **On 28th November, 1992,** the Supreme Court gave permission for symbolic Kar Seva, on the assurance given by the Uttar Pradesh Government, and the letter sent by Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia and Swami Chimayananda stating that the Kar Seva would be symbolic. A judicial observer was also appointed by the Supreme Court in Ayodhya.

4.127. **On 29th November, 1992,** Shri L.K. Advani and Dr. Murali Manohar Joshi declared that they would respectively proceed from Varanasi and Mathura to Ayodhya, to mobilise Karsevaks and participate in the Kar Seva.

4.128. **By 3rd December, 1992,** over 25,000 armed policemen were stationed in Ayodhya and over 1,25,000 Karsevaks had assembled.

4.129. **On 4th December, 1992,** the Rama Temple Restoration Programme Committee of the Ayodhya movement consented to whatever decision is taken on the nature of Kar Seva by the Dharma Sansad.

4.130. **On 5th December, 1992,** the Margadarshak Mandal of the VHP expressed its consent to Kar Seva, as decided by the Dharma Sansad. The Dharma Sansad decided to have symbolic Kar Seva from December 6 to December 10, and possibly to commence construction from December 11, after the High Court judgement was delivered.

4.131. **On 6th December, 1992,** in a sudden development the disputed structure was demolished by the Karsevaks, and Ramalala was re-installed in the very place where it had been originally installed. Shri Kalyan Singh, owning moral responsibility for the demolition, resigned at 5 p.m. A few hours later, the Uttar Pradesh Government was dismissed by the Central Government, and the assembly dissolved. There was tension all over the country. The Prime Minister announced over Doordarshan that "the mosque" at Ayodhya had been demolished.

The post-demolition period — arrest of the Ayodhya movement leaders, ban on RSS, VHP and Bajrang Dal — the Ayodhya movement takes a multi-dimensional shape

4.132. **On 7th December, 1992,** the Central Government decided to ban communal organisations and the Prime Minister announced the decision to re-establish the demolished structure. In Ayodhya, the Rama Temple construction work started. Five feet high walls were raised on all four sides of the Temple. In Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, Indian embassies, and Hindu and Sikh places of worship were attacked. Riots began in different parts of India too. All this happened because the Prime Minister himself said, contrary to admitted facts, that a mosque had been demolished. Later, the Government of India told the

Parliament that as many as **248** Hindu temples and cultural centres were damaged or demolished in Pakistan, **350** in Bangladesh, **4** in Afghanistan and **18** in the United Kingdom. And yet not a single party other than the BJP condemned these wanton acts of destruction.

4.133. **On 8th December, 1992,** the Central Reserve Police took charge of the Ramajanmabhoomi area, and evicted the Karsevaks in a pre-dawn operation. On the same day Shri L.K. Advani, Dr. Murali Manohar Joshi, Shri Ashok Singhal, Shri Vishnu Hari Dalmia, Shri Vinay Katiyar and Sadhvi Uma Shri Bharati were arrested.

4.134. **On 9th December, 1992,** the Ramajanmabhoomi was encircled on all sides by barbed wire fences, and 26 injured Karsevaks were arrested in the hospital.

4.135. **On 10th December, 1992,** the Supreme Court refused to approve of the plea for direction of reconstruction of the domes.

4.136. **On 11th December, 1992,** the Allahabad High Court finally gave its decision, holding that the acquisition of 2.77 acres of land by the State Government was unlawful.

4.137. **On 13th December, 1992,** the investigation into the happenings in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, was handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

4.138. **On 15th December, 1992,** the BJP Governments in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh were dismissed, and President's Rule was imposed.

4.139. **On 24th December, 1992,** it was decided in the BJP National Executive meeting, that the Rama Temple would be constructed at the Garbhagriha, and a massive public contact, and signature campaign in support of the construction was launched.

4.140. **On 25th December, 1992,** the Jail Bharo Movement for Darshan of Ramalala was started by the Sants.

4.141. **On 28th December, 1992,** the Central Government expressed its intention to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court, relating to the acquisition of the entire disputed area.

4.142. **On 31st December, 1992,** the march of some Muslim organisations for offering Namaz at Ramajanmabhoomi was prevented.

4.143. **On 1st January, 1993,** the Allahabad High Court permitted the Darshan of Ramalala.

4.144. **On 5th January, 1993,** all injured Karsevaks, arrested from Hospitals, were released on bail with the finding that there was no case made out against anyone of them under Section 153-A of IPC and also that a raising of slogan 'Jai Sri Rama' did not amount to an offence by the special Judicial Magistrate of CBI.

4.145. **On the 6th January, 1993,** fresh archaeological evidence, including an *amalaka,* was found by the PWD as it was laying the barricades around the Ramajanmabhhoomi.

4.146. **On 8th January, 1993,** the Central Government issued an Ordinance, and acquired 67.7. acres of the land in and around the disputed area.

4.147. **On 10th January, 1993,** the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Lalitpur, ordered that Sarva Shri L.K. Advani, M.M. Joshi, Ashok Singhal, V.H. Dalmia, Vinay Katiyar and Sadhvi Uma Shri Bharati be set free "honourably and unconditionally."

4.148. By the post-demolition developments the Ayodhya movement has taken a multi-dimensional turn; with the decision of the BJP to organise a massive rally at Boat Club in New Delhi, and to help the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas undertake an unprecedented signature campaign throughout the country in support of the construction of the Rama Temple. The decision of the BJP to have a massive rally at the Boat Club, was interfered with by the Government, which banned the rally that was to be held on 25th February, 1992. Lakhs of BJP workers were arrested all over the country, train movements were stopped, buses were prevented from plying to Delhi, and the entire border of Delhi with adjacent states was sealed. Over one lakh of policemen were marshalled to foil the BJP rally, in a manner unknown even during wartime and emergency. Unprecedented and harsh measures were taken against the rallyists, which resulted in serious injuries to many leaders including Dr. Murali Manohar Joshi, Dr. J.K. Jain, Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Dr. Naunihal Singh and others. Shri Gopinath Munde, leader of opposition in Maharashtra, and scores of others were badly injured. Some of them lost their eyes fingers and other organs of body. The BJP responded by boycotting the annual Presidential Address to Parliament, and also the Railway Budget and the Union Budget presented on 26th February, 1992. Thus, the mass movement for the Temple is escalating into an even larger battle with the Government, and with all political parties which oppose the Ayodhya movement.

4.149. The Ayodhya struggle now has spilled beyond the demand for construction of Rama Temple at Ayodhya, and encompasses a wide area of national politics — the constitutionality of the dismissal of the BJP Governments, the delay in holding elections, the ban on the organisations supporting and sponsoring the Ayodhya movement, democratic polity, civil liberties, vindictive arrests, and curtailment of the rights of those who oppose the present Government. The struggle has also extended to the areas of the economic policy of the present Government, which has mortgaged national interest to the IMF and World Bank for short term gains. Thus, the struggle for Ayodhya has become a multi-dimensional ideological clash between the Congress party and its allies on the one hand, and the BJP and the Sangh Parivar on the other.

CHAPTER III
THE EVIDENCE AND DIALOGUE ON RAMAJANMABHOOMI

1.1. Besides the position of the Ayodhya movement that the Rama Temple at Ayodhya is a matter of faith, the case of the Temple is strengthened by massive and documented evidence of a pre-existing Hindu structure which was disposed of, and again provenly, a mosque was constructed.

The initiative taken by Shri Chandrashekhar

1.2. The Chandrashekhar Government took the far-reaching step of getting the two sides, the VHP and the AIBMAC, to begin talking to each other and to reduce the dispute to a simple question — was the structure built by demolishing a Hindu temple or structure?

The core of the dialogue on evidence

1.3. The core of the dialogue on the Ramajanmabhoomi centred around whether the erstwhile Babri structure stood on the site on which a Hindu structure stood originally.

Syed Shahabuddin's authoritative commitment to demolish the mosque if evidence showed a pre-existing temple

1.4. This question is important as it had been authoritatively stated on behalf of the Muslims by Syed Shahabuddin that "if it is proved that the Babri Masjid had been built after demolishing Ramajanmabhoomi Mandir on its place, then a mosque on such a usurped land deserves to be destroyed. No theologian or Alim can give Fatwa to hold namaz on it." What Syed Shahabuddin said was wholly consistent with the classical expositions of Islamic law — the Fatwa-e-Alamgiri, which categorically stated:

> "It is not permissible to build a mosque on unlawfully acquired land. There may be many forms of unlawful acquisition. For instance, if some people forcibly take some body's house (or land) and build a mosque or even a Jama Masjid on it, then the namaz in such a mosque will be against the Shariat."

1.5. In consultation with both sides, Shri Chandrashekhar made the issue specific and each side agreed to submit evidence on this specific issue.

The evidence from VHP and AIBMAC analysed

2.1. In response to the Government's request, voluminous documentary evidence had been marshalled by the VHP from Hindu literary sources, Muslim history books, archival materials, European accounts, Government Gazetteers, and revenue records, besides art-historical and archeological evidence. This being in January 1991, the subsequent archeological and epigraphic evidence that came up in the year 1992 and at the time of the demolition, could not form part of the VHP presentation. The AIBMHC did not rebut even a

single piece of evidence tendered by the VHP — in fact, it offered no comments at all on the evidence of VHP, sought time, evaded the dialogue, and finally absented itself. Instead, the AIBMAC gave a large pile of papers labelling them as evidence, but not a single sheet of that compilation would qualify as an acceptable piece of evidence.

2.2. The compilation submitted by both sides being voluminous, it is difficult to deal with the merits of each item of evidence in detail. But the evidence is in the records of the Government and is available for scrutiny; it has also been published in the form of books and booklets. All that is required is to study and analyse the massive evidence on record. Among the few who studied the voluminous evidence at the time was Shri Arun Shourie. He analysed the relative merits of the evidence tendered by the VHP and the AIBMAC in his syndicated article dated 27-1-91 published in various newspapers. Not a word in this article was rebutted or disputed by anyone.

The AIBMAC evidence appalling, and supports in fact the VHP case

2.3. This is what Shri Shourie says on the evidence submitted by the AIBMAC:

"I was appalled when I saw what the AIBMAC had furnished. It was just a pile of papers. You were expected to wade through them and discover the relevance they had or the inference which flowed from them. I read them dutifully, and was soon convinced that the leaders of the All India Babri Masjid Committee and the intellectuals who had been guiding them had themselves not read them.

"It wasn't just that so much of it was the stuff of cranks: pages from the book of some chap to the effect that Rama was actually a Pharaoh of Egypt; an article by someone based he says on what he had learnt from one dancer in Sri Lanka, and setting out a folk story, knowledge of which he himself says is confined to a small part of a small district in that country, to the effect that Sita was Rama's sister whom he married, etc.,

"It was not just that so much of the rest was as tertiary as can be — articles after articles by sundry journalists which set out no evidence.

"It was that the overwhelming bulk of it was just a pile of court papers — selective court judgements, a decree without the judgement underlying it, some merely the plaints, i.e. the assertions of the parties that happen at the moment to be convenient— and it was that document after document in this lot buttressed the case not of the All India Babri Masjid Committee but of the VHP!

"They show that the mosque had not been in use since 1936.

"They show that it had been in utter neglect: the relevant authority testifying at one point to the person-in-charge being an opium-addict, to his being thoroughly unfit to look after even the structure.

"They show different groups or sects of Muslims fighting each other for acquiring the property, with the descendants of Mir Baqi, the Commander who built the structure, maintaining that the lands etc., which were given to them by the British were given not so that they may maintain the structure through the proceeds but so that they may maintain themselves, and that they were given these for the services — political and military — they had rendered to the British.

"It was evident too that it would be difficult to sustain the claim that the structure was a waqf, as was being maintained now, it was not even listed in the lists of either the Shia or Sunni Waqf Boards, as the law required all waqf properties to be.

"While the Babri Masjid Committee has striven now to rule out of court British gazetteers — as these, after meticulous examination of written and other evidence, record unambiguously that the mosque was built after demolishing the Ramajanmabhoomi temple — the rulings and judgements filed by the AIBMAC rely on, reproduce at length and accept the gazetteers on the very point at issue. Indeed, they explicitly decree that the gazetteers are admissible as evidence!

"They show the Hindus waging an unremitting struggle to regain this place held, the documents say, "most sacred" by them; they show them continuing to worship the ground inspite of the mosque having been super-imposed on it; they show them constructing structures and temples on the peripheral spots when they are debarred from the main one.

"They show the current suit being filed well, well past the time limit allowed by our laws...

"On reading the papers the AIBMAC had filed as "evidence", I could only conclude, therefore, that either its leaders had not read the papers themselves, or that they had no case and had just tried to over-awe or confuse the government etc., by dumping a huge miscellaneous heap."

The VHP evidence is complete and establishes the demolition of a Hindu temple to put up the mosque

2.4. And this is what Shri Shourie says on the evidence marshalled by the VHP:

"In complete contrast the VHP documents are pertinent to the point, and have not as yet been shown to be deficient in any way.

"They contain the unambiguous statements of Islamic historians, of Muslim narrators — from the grand-daughter of Aurangazeb — to the effect that the mosque was built by demolishing the Rama temple.

"They contain accounts of European travellers as well as official publications of the British period — gazetteers of 1854, of 1877, of 1881, of 1892, of 1905; the Settlement Report of 1880; the Surveyor's Report of 1838; the Archaeological Survey Reports of 1891, of 1934 — all of them reaffirming what the Muslim historians had stated; **that the mosque was built by destroying the temple,** that portions of the temple — e.g., the pillars — are in the mosque still, that the Hindus continue to revere the spot and struggle unremittingly to reacquire it.

"They contain revenue records of a hundred years and more which list the site as 'Janmasthan' and specify it to be the property of the mahants. **They also show how attempts have been made to erase things from these records** and superimpose convenient nomenclatures on them — crude and unsuccessful attempts, for while the forgers have been able to get at the records in some offices they have not been able to get at them in all the offices!

"Most important of all, they contain accounts of the archaeological excavations which were conducted at the site from 1975 to 1980. These are conclusive: the pillar-bases, the pillars, the door jamb, the periods of the different layers, the alignment of the bases and the pillars, the stone of which the pillars are made... Everything coheres. And everything answers the issue the government and the two sides had specified in the affirmative, and unambiguously so."

When meetings were called by the government, and the experts and other representatives of the AIBMAC tried to hedge and dodge the discussion on the merits of the evidence on record, was clearly indicative of which side was sure of its facts and its case, and which side was frightened to face the debate.

The Marxist experts nominated by AIBMAC fail to turn up at the meeting

2.5. Shri Arun Shourie has also commented on the conduct of the Marxist experts who had been nominated by the AIBMAC to assist the latter in debating the evidence at the meeting of VHP and AIBMAC:

> "For a year and a half you keep issuing statements to the press, and writing ostensibly scholarly articles, and holding forth in interviews that the Babri Mosque was not, most definitely not built by demolishing or even on the site of a temple. Documents of the other side are sent to you. You are nominated by the All India Babri Mosque Action Committee as an expert who will give his assessment of them. A meeting is scheduled. Before that you meet the then Director General of Archaeology who had supervised the excavations at the site. The day the meeting is to begin the newspapers carry yet another categorical statement from 'intellectuals', again asserting the line convenient to the AIBMAC. You of course are among them.
>
> **"The meeting commences. On point after point, on document after document your response is that you have not studied the evidence, that therefore you require time, that you have never seen the site, that therefore you require time to visit it.**
>
> "You are not a field archaeologist you say, and will therefore nominate another person, and he too will naturally require time.... The person happens to be present. You are informed that the person has not only studied the evidence, he has met and discussed the matter with the Director General of Archaeology, and also with the previous Director General, Dr. B.B. Lal, under whose supervision the excavations had been conducted in 1975-80. Others too who are named whom he has met for the purpose. But that was in another capacity, you say, now he will need time....
>
> "On behalf of the Government the officer present says that the records of the excavation — maps, four types of narrative accounts, photographs — are available, that Dr. Lal has agreed so that they can be inspected the very next day, No... we will need time...
>
> **"You are on to a new tack. But why had Dr. Lal not stated a definite conclusion? In fact it turns out that he has; a video-cassette of the interview he gave to the BBC is produced. Can't see it now as there is no VCP... Will need time....**
>
> **"The next day you don't even turn up for the meeting.** An expert of the AIBMAC. A Marxist. An intellectual whose name appears invariably in the statement propagandising the AIBMAC point of view. I summarise, but the account applies more or less to the four professional 'experts' who appeared as the AIBMAC's nominees in the meeting on January 24.
>
> **"The other 'experts'** of the AIBMAC were just its own office-bearers. They **went one better. They 'denied' the contents, indeed it seemed the very existence of books written not just by Islamic historians and authors** — the photocopies of the relevant pages from which had all been supplied weeks earlier — **they 'denied' the knowledge of even standard works like the Encyclopaedia Brittanica!**
>
> **"That done, the next day they did not turn up either."**

Thus, undisputable evidence tendered was not discussed, and the discussion attempted was hedged, ducked and dodged. Finally, the AIBMAC and its experts sought more time to face the evidence, and at last kept away from the debate.

Shifting stand of AIBMAC and its Marxist consultants

3.1. While this was happening in the forum inside, outside the representative of AIBMAC, and particularly Syed Shahabuddin were shifting their stand on what would constitute an ac-

ceptable evidence and proof of the existence of a Hindu structure on the site where the disputed structure stood till December 6, 1992.

3.2. First, the AIBMAC and Marxist historians asked the VHP to show any documentary evidence of a Hindu structure having been demolished and the mosque erected on the spot.

The VHP marshalled the Gazeteers and revenue records of the British government of the 19th century which proved that a temple existed originally and the mosque was constructed by Babar/Mir Baqi after demolishing the temple.

The Marxist historians and AIBMAC dodged this irrefutable evidence and characterised it as part of the British conspiracy to divide Hindus and Muslims and rule India. The Marxist historians said:

> "All historical evidence amassed by the VHP comes from British sources. Indeed historians are unanimous in maintaining that not a single record had been found dating from pre-British times which makes any mention of this dispute" (*The Week* dated 25-2-90).

3.3. Syed Shahabuddin confidently stated that he would demolish the Babri Masjid with his own hands if VHP could come up with one original non-British source confirming that a temple was demolished to pave way for a mosque.

The challenge of Syed Shahabuddin for an original non-British source was taken up and met by Dr. Harsh Narain

3.4. Koenraad Elst says in his *Ram Janmabhoomi vs Babri Masjid: a case study in Hindu Muslim conflict*

> "The challenge was taken up by Dr. Harsh Narain (formerly a philosophy faculty member of both Banaras Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University), in an article titled 'Ram Janmabhoomi; Muslim Testimony.' He rejects Shahabuddin's pious declaration that it is un-Islamic and against the Shariat to forcibly convert a pagan temple into a mosque: 'It is common knowledge that most of the mosques built by the Muslim invaders stand on land grabbed or extorted from the Kafirs. There are a great many well-attested examples of mosques forcibly replacing temples, in India as well as elsewhere, such as the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi,... Is Shahabuddin prepared to keep his words in the case of such mosques?'
>
> "Dr. Harsh Narain argues that the theologico-juristic rulings to the effect that no mosque can be built on land grabbed or illegitimately acquired, apply to land owned by Muslims, and not to that owned by the infidels. The prophet has made it clear that all land belongs to God and, via His prophet, to the Muslims. Ibn Taymiyyah, the 14th century theologian and jurist, stated that jihad simply restores lands to the Muslims, to whom they rightly belong. The poet Iqbal put the following words into the mouth of Tariq, conqueror of Spain: 'All land belongs to the Muslims, because it belongs to their God'. A Muslim ruler wanting to replace temples with mosques, can easily find scriptural justification, and does not have to break the letter nor the spirit of Islamic law.
>
> "Coming to the specific Babri Masjid issue, Dr. Narain presents four independent Muslim sources, outside the sphere of British influence, that confirm the story of the demolition of a Ram temple to make way for the Babri Masjid. All the four documents are from the 19th century, but at least two of them claim to be based on old records. All four describe as a well known fact that the Masjid is often called Janmasthan (birthplace) Masjid or Sita Ki Rasoi

(Ram's wife Sita's kitchen) Masjid, and that the Hindus have for centuries offered puja in the garden of the Masjid; which they would not reasonably have done except in continuation of a pre-Masjid temple cult" (pp. 5-6).

From non-British evidence to pre-British testimony

3.5. This again made Syed Shahabuddin and the Marxist team shift their stand Koenraad Elst says:

> "Both Syed Shahabuddin and the JNU history team have replied that these documents don't count because they are from the 19th century, hurriedly replacing their earlier demand for non-British testimony by a demand for pre-19th century testimony" (Ibid., p. 6).

Thus from non-British testimony, now it is pre-19th century testimony.

Attempts to suppress the Muslim testimony from public, even while demanding non-British original sources

4.1. Even as the AIBMAC and Marxists were busy asking for non-British testimony the authorities of Islam in India began to hide the evidence testifying to the demolition of the temple to erect the mosque. Dealing with how there were concerted attempts to hide the evidence, Koenraad Elst says:

> **'It is noteworthy that one of Dr. Narain's sources narrowly escaped oblivion. It is a chapter of the *Muraqqahi-Khusrawi* by Shaikh Azamat Ali Kakorawi Nami (1811-93), written in 1869, and till recently existing only in manuscript form.** The passage relevant to the Babri Masjid issue appears in a chapter on the struggle between the Muslims, led by Amir Ali Amethawi, and a Hindu order of martial sadhus, over the possession of another hilltop temple at Ayodhya, the Hanuman Garhi, in 1855-56. Only one manuscript of it is extant... A press copy of it was prepared by Dr. Zaki Kakorawi for publication with the financial assistance of the Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Memorial Committee, Lucknow. **The committee vetoed the publication of its chapter dealing with the jihad led by Amir Ali Amethawi for recapture of Hanuman Garhi from the Bairagis ('renunciates'), from its funds, on the ground that its publication would not be opportune in view of the prevailing political situation, with the result that Dr. Kakorawi had to publish the book minus that chapter in 1986... he published the chapter separately and independently of any financial or other assistance from the Committee in 1987...** It is a pity that, thanks to our thoughtless 'secularism' and waning sense of history, such primary sources of medieval Indian history are presently in danger of suppression...'
>
> **"This is not the only instance of interest groups trying to hide documents relevant to the Ram Janmabhoomi/Babri Masjid dispute. Arun Shourie, in his article *Hideaway Communalism* relates another case. A book about India in Arabic, by Maulana Hakim Sayyid Abdul Hai (died 1923), rector of the famed Islamic academy *Nadwatul-Ulama* in Lucknow, has been translated and published by that institute in Urdu in 1973, in English in 1977. The foreword is contributed by the author's son, Maulana Abul-Hasan Ali Nadwi,** better known as Ali Mian, rector of the same institute since 1961.
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> **"The Urdu version contains a 17-page chapter on *Hindustan ki Masjidein*, the mosques of Hindustan. Of seven mosques, the author relates how they had replaced Hindu temples, either by redesigning or by demolition and reconstruction (largely using the same stones). One of these is the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya.** Translated into English, it reads like this: 'This mosque was constructed by Babar at Ayodhya which Hindus call the birthplace of Ramchandarji. There is a famous story about his wife Sita. It is said that Sita

had a temple here in which she lived and cooked for her husband. On that very site Babar constructed his mosque in H. 963...' This is really rather harmless to the Babri Masjid cause. The writer doesn't claim any other foundation for his story than 'It is said'. He merely reports what was believed in the beginning of this century. Yet, now that the Babri Masjid has become a hot item, **Arun Shourie found he had some difficulty in getting a copy of the book. In the libraries of some famous Islamic institutes (Shourie names six of them) where it certainly should have been, it had disappeared:** 'Many of the persons whom one would normally have expected to be knowledgeable about such publications were suddenly reluctant to recall this book. I was told, in fact, that copies of the book had been removed, for instance, form the Aligarh Muslim University Library. Some even suggested that a determined effort had been made three or four years ago to get back each and every copy of the book." However, the fundamentalist front is neither solid nor omnipresent, and a few libraries did have copies of the book available.

"In the English version, the one most likely to be read by unbelievers, the tell-tale passages about mosques replacing temples have been censored out. Or substituted; while the Urdu version says that the mosque of Kanauj 'was built on the foundation of some Hindu temple', the English version tells you that it was built on 'the place earlier occupied by an old and decayed fort'.

"It may be of interest that the editor of these translations is not only rector of a famed Islamic college, but also chairman of the Muslim Personal Law Board and founding member of the *Raabta Alam-e-Islami* (Arabic; *Rabita al-Alam al-Islam*, 'World Council of Islam'), a pan-Islamic body with headquarters in Mecca, involved in financing Muslim organizations all over the world.

"To my knowledge, these attempts to conceal inconvenient testimony have not been publicly denied by the people concerned, nor by Syed Shahabuddin (in his numerous replies to the relevant articles in *Indian Express* and other papers) or other Muslim campaigners" (Ibid., pp. 7-9).

4.2. Thus while the leaders of the Babri Masjid movement were asking for evidence of pre-existing Hindu temple as a "theological necessity" to enable them to decide whether the mosque was fit for worship or not, and not as a matter of gesture, there were efforts to suppress the very evidence of which they were in possession.

How the change of demand from "non-British" to "pre-19th century" evidence too was met

4.3. Thus having shifted the position from "show us documentary evidence", to a "non-British testimony", the AIBMAC and their Marxist colleagues changed their demand to "pre-19th Century testimony."

4.4. What happened later and how this demand too was met, is again stated by Konraad Elst:

"Even the joint challenge by fundamentalist Muslims and secularist historians that their opponents produce some pre-19th century evidence has not been able to save them. For, such evidence exists. Mr. A.K. Chatterjee presents in full detail the report by a European traveller, Tieffenthaler, who visited Ayodhya in 1767: He wrote about the Hindu worship regularly conducted on the Masjid premises and mentioned the tradition of a temple having been destroyed to make way for the existing mosque. Syed Shahabuddin has sent in a reply criticising Chatterjee's conclusions, and has at once raised his demands: now, even pre-19th century accounts will not suffice, only pre-1528 accounts are accepted" (Ibid., p. 9).

Thus all demands of the Masjid groups — the new and changing ones — were met by independent scholars. And yet the Masjid groups were unrelenting.

Evidence establishes that the Masjid was built after demolishing a temple, that the Hindus possessed it from 1528 to 1850s, and that after 1857 the British gave it to the Muslims

4.5. Summing up the evidence on whether a temple at Ramajanmasthan was replaced by a mosque, Koenraad Elst says:

> "From these four documents, Dr. Harsh Narain derives the following conclusions: 1) In their zeal to hit Hinduism and spread Islam, the Muslim rulers had the knack of desecrating or demolishing Hindu temples and erecting mosques etc., in their place. 2) There did exist a temple called Ram Janmasthan in Ayodhya, where Ram was believed to have incarnated, and of which the Janmasthan Sita Rasoi may have been a part. 3) In the footsteps of the Muslim rulers who desecrated Mathura, Vrindavan, Varanasi, Nalanda etc., Babar chose Ayodhya for the spread of Islam and the replacement of temples by mosques, because of its importance as a holy place for Hindus, and had the Babri Masjid erected in 1528 in replacement of the Janmabhoomi temple. 4) The Babri mosque was also called `masjid-i Janmasthan' or `masjid-i Sita ki Rasoi' from long before 1855. 5) The Hindus had been carrying on worship at the Ram Janmabhoomi even after the replacement of the temple by the mosque. 6) These facts are yielded by authentic Muslim records and have not been fabricated by the much-maligned British to 'divide and rule'.
>
> "Dr. Narain admits: It is true that no old enough Hindu record of the Rama temple demolition has come to light so far. But that would only be an important fact if the Hindus normally did record such events. The fact is that they didn't. More than 90% of the Muslim atrocities and acts of destruction are known to us through Muslim sources. So Dr. Narain continues: 'But this is no ground for rejection of the temple demolition story. There is no old Hindu record of the invasion of Alexander the Great. Does it mean that his invasion did not take place?' To tell the truth, the Hindus of old were bad at history...
>
> "One of the JNU historians, K.S. Chaudhry, has also condescended to send in a short reply. He contends that Dr. Narain's evidence actually reinforces the JNU historians' claim that there are no texts from before the 19th century stating that the Babri Masjid was built on a Hindu place of worship. Well, if he chooses to ignore what Dr. Narain has stressed, viz. that these 19th century texts explicitly claim older texts as their source, it will be no use for me to repeat that observation. Let us rather take a look at an undisputedly older textual testimony. **Abhas Kumar Chatterjee has presented some paragraphs from a travelogue by Joseph Tieffenthaler, an Austrian Jesuit who toured the Awadh region extensively between 1766 and 1771. His Latin account was published in French translation in 1786,** as *Description Historique et Geographique de l'Inde*. This account is totally independent of British sources and much older than the first British account of the Janmabhoomi by Montgomery Martin in 1838.
>
> **"Some excerpts: 'The emperor Aurangazeb destroyed the fortress called Ramkot, and built at the same place a Mohammedan temple with three domes. Others say that it has been built by Babar...** On the left one can see a square box elevated five inches above the ground level covered with limestone... **The Hindus call it Bedi which means a crib. This is because here existed a house in which Vishnu was born in the form of Rama.... Subsequently Aurangzeb, or according to some other people Babar, destroyed the place in order to prevent the heathens from practising their superstition. But they have**

continued to practise their religious ceremonies in both places, knowing this to have been the birthplace of Rama, by going around it three times and prostrating on the ground ... On the 24th of the month of Chait (i.e. the Ram Navami festival), a great gathering of people takes place here to celebrate the birthday of Rama and this fair is famous all over India.'

"This is incontrovertibly a pre-British record claiming the Babri Masjid to have been built on the Ramajanmabhoomi, and testifying that the Hindus conducted worship there in the 18th century. What is more, just like the novelist Surur quoted by Dr. Narain, Tieffenthaler has written that the Hindus practised puja **'in both places', in the courtyard and in the Masjid itself.**

"Mr. A.K. Chatterjee concludes: **'The position we come to is this. The holy Ramjanmabhoomi temple, which once stood in Ramkot, disappears. Pillars of a destroyed Hindu temple are used to construct a mosque under Babar's orders in Ramkot at a spot surrounded by scores of other shrines associated with Ram. Hindus claim all along that this was the site of the temple. In spite of the efforts of Moghul rulers to keep them out, they reoccupy the site and continue to offer worship there. Great gatherings of people continue to be held here to celebrate Ram Navami.** They defend the shrine against Muslim attacks in violent clashes as in 1853, when 70 Muslims making a bid to recapture the temple, are killed and are buried in the nearby 'ganj-i-shahidan'.'

"This position takes the discussion an important step further. Now, the claim is not just that the Babri Masjid has replaced a Hindu place of worship in 1528. After an interruption starting in 1528, it was again a Hindu place of worship until the 1850's. The religious policy of the Nawabs, who ruled Awadh from 1722 till 1856 (when Awadh was annexed by the British East India Company), was rather tolerant and apparently does not exclude such a course of events. It was the British who, imposing their government after annexing Awadh in 1856 and defeating the uprising of 1857, gave the Babri Masjid to the Muslims" (Ibid., pp. 72-75).

Shri Arun Shourie on the shifting stand of the Masjid groups

4.6. In his summary of how the AIBMAC and their Marxist consultants shifted their stand on evidence, Shri Arun Shourie says:

"But where in all this is the contemporary account of the temple being destroyed?

"At first it was, 'Show us any document.' When the gazetteers were produced, it was, 'But the British wrote only to divide and rule (why then do you keep producing judgements of British Magistrates, pray?). **Show us some non-British document, some pre-British document.' Now that these too are at hand, the demand is for a contemporary account.** This when it is well-known that in the contemporary account of the period — Babar's own memoir — the pages from the time he reaches Ayodhya, 2 April 1528, to 18 September 1528, are missing — lost it is hypothesised by the historian in a storm or in the vicissitudes which Humayun's library suffered during his exile.

"It is not just that this latest demand is an afterthought. It is that in the face of what exists at the site to this day — the pillars etc., — and in the face of the archaeological findings, and what has been the universal practice as well as the fundamental faith of Islamic evangelists and conquerors such accounts are not necessary.

"But there is an even more conclusive consideration. **Today a contemporary account is being demanded in the case of the Babri Mosque. Are those who make this demand prepared to accept this as the criterion — that if a contemporary account exists of the destruction of a temple for constructing a mosque the case is made?**

'This is what the entry for 2 September, 1669 for instance is in as contemporary an account as any one can ask for: 'News came to Court that in accordance with the Emperor's command his officers had demolished the temple of Vishwanath at Banaras...' The entry for January 1670 sets out the facts for the great temple at Mathura: 'In this month of Ramzan, the religious-minded Emperor ordered the demolition of the temple at Mathura... In a short time by the great exertions of his officers the destruction of this strong centre of infidelity was accomplished... A grand mosque was built on its site at a vast expenditure... The idols, large and small, set with costly jewels which had been set up in the temple were brought to Agra and buried under the steps of the Mosque of the Begum Sahib in order to be continually trodden upon. The name of Mathura was changed to Islamabad...'

"The entry for 1 January 1705 says: 'The Emperor, summoning Muhammed Khalid and Khidmat Rai, the Darogha of Hatchetmen...ordered them to demolish the temple at Pandharpur, and to take the butchers of the camp there and slaughter cows in the temple... It was done.'

"If the fact that a contemporary account of the temple at Ayodhya is not available leaves the matter unsettled, does the fact that contemporary accounts are available for the temples at Kashi, Mathura, Pandharpur and a host of other places settle the matter?

"One has only to ask the question to know that the 'experts' and 'intellectuals' will immediately ask for something else"

This is how the debate on evidence drifted. The idea was not to find or promote a solution, but how to delay and thwart one.

Case lost in debate on evidence — judicial verdict as the escape route

4.7. The debate on evidence (albeit drifting) having irreversibly gone against the protoganists of Babri Masjid, they began to insist that only by a judicial verdict the issue could be solved, and that they would accept the verdict of the judiciary.

This is how Shri Shahabuddin slipped from his commitment to demolish the mosque to judicial reference:

"In a letter dated 29th November 1990, written by Shri Syed Shahabuddin to the Prime Minister, it has been stated in reference to the Babri Masjid that no existing place of worship can be demolished on the ground that it had been built after demolishing an earlier place of worship. However, he has added that in the Shariat of Islam, a mosque can only be built on a lawfully acquired site. Conversely, the structure built on an unlawfully acquired site cannot be built as a mosque. He has added that as a one time exception, in the larger interests of social harmony and communal peace, the BMMCC would be prepared to consider a reference to the Supreme Court on the question of the fact whether a standing Ram Mandir was demolished in 1528 AD to build Babri Masjid subject to the conditions that : a Central Law is enacted to protect the status of all places of worship as on 15th August 1947, the VHP and associated bodies agree to suspend their agitation, and both sides agree to abide by the opinion of the Supreme Court. However, the title suits pending in the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court should be expedited and the final verdict should be binding on both sides subject only to the opinion of the Supreme Court."

This extract is from the summary of the Home Ministry presented to the Special Cell set up by Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1992 under Shri Naresh Chandra. This is not a

concession or gesture by the leaders of the Babri Movement, but a position into which they had been cornered after having lost their case on evidence and their Marxist consultants leading them up the garden path. However, the acceptance of judicial verdict is not a theological necessity, nor a judicially determinable issue. **It is again a play to gain time — more the delay, more the pressure on the leaders of the Ayodya movement from the masses.** Again, the trust reposed in the judiciary is to be viewed from the fact that from 1949 to 1991 and even today the Ramajanmabhoomi case has stood precisely where it was when it was filed.

The new archeological and epigraphic evidence settle the issue:

5.1. The fresh excavations at the Ramajanmabhoomi site made in June/July 1992 and the artefacts and epigraphic references found in the debris recovered after the demolition of the Babri structure irrefutably established the fact that a pre-existing Hindu structure was brought down to raise the mosque.

The evidence from June-July 1992 excavations — proof of 11th century temple under and inside the Babri structure

5.2. The evidence obtained in the fresh excavations in June and July 1992 as analysed and reported by Historians' Forum is as under:

> "On the 18th of June 1992, when the ground near the Ramajanma Bhumi was being levelled, a most startling archaeological discovery was made at Ayodhya. At a depth of about 12 feet from the ground level near the Ramajanma Bhumi temple, towards the south and beyond the fencing, a big hoard of beautifully carved buff sandstone pieces was located in a large pit, dug down below the old top level.
>
> "A careful study by a group of eight eminent archaeologists and historians found that all these objects are architectural members of a Hindu temple complex of the 11th century A.D. The group comprised Dr. Y.D. Sharma, former Deputy Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Dr. K.M. Srivastava, former Director, Archaeological Survey of India, Dr. S.P. Gupta, former Director, Allahabad Museum, Prof. K.P. Nautiyal, Vice-Chancellor, Avadh University and former Head of the Ancient History and Archaeology Department, Garhwal University, Prof. B.R. Grover, former Director, Indian Council of Historical Research, Shri Devendra Swarup Agrawal and Dr. Sardindu Mukherji of the Delhi University and Dr. (Mrs) Sudha Malayya of Bhopal.
>
> **"The Temple:** The experts, who visited the site on behalf of the academic organisation, 'The Historians' Forum', on the 2nd and 3rd of July 1992, are unanimously of the view that the temple, to which these fragments belong, is of the developed Nagara style of ancient temple architecture which was current in northern India during the later part of the early medieval period i.e. the period after 900 A.D. and before 1200 A.D. The temples of this style are characterised by a distinctly imposing shikhara, which is a tall and tapering spire over the garbha-griha or sanctum sanctorum, which houses the main deity.
>
> **"Huge Brick Walls:** On the 22nd and 23rd of July Dr. K.M. Srivastava and Dr. S.P. Gupta went to Ayodhya and scraped the section facing east and also dug at least two feet still deeper in a small area along this section. They discovered a huge burnt-brick wall of more than a dozen courses running along the section and beyond it. Below this, after a little break, the

remains of another brick-wall have been found. At two different pre-Islamic levels, there are the remains of brick-laid floors.

"Mass Destruction: There are clear-cut marks of massive destruction of the huge wall mentioned above since brick-debris and large pits have been located here. Further, there are two hard rammed floors of chunam and kankar, laid one above the other with a significant break in between but over the level of the brick-wall.

"There is, therefore, enough new archaeological material which conclusively proves what Prof. B.B. Lal, the previous excavator of this site, has been repeatedly saying that here at the Ramajanma Bhumi there was an impressive structure of 11th-12th century built on pillars standing on a series of parallel burnt-brick bases which was destroyed in the early 16th century; in all likelihood the bases carried on them the same temple-pillars which are fixed in the 'mosque'

"These new archaeological findings also confirm the views expressed earlier in 1990 by Dr. S.P. Gupta that the 16 black stone pillars and one piece of door-jamb with carvings of gods and goddesses existing in the so-called 'Babri Mosque' structure and also the adjoining areas, belong to a 11th century Hindu temple, possibly Vaishnavite."

Demolition provides the ultimate proof — the debris of the Babri structure reveals unimpeachable archaeological and epigraphic evidence that a pre-11th century temple — a Vaishnavite temple — existed at the site

5.3. Ironically only by demolition of the disputed structure the most unimpeachable pieces of evidence which remained buried inside the disputed structure could be recovered from the debris of the demolished structure. Not merely artefacts testifying to the existence of the temple were recovered, but epigraphic references which settled beyond doubt the fact that the temple was dedicated to Sri Rama were also recovered. The reports to this effect appeared in all newspapers, and those which appeared in *The Hindu* are reproduced below.

Report in "The Hindu" dated 14th December, 1992

"Archaeological objects recovered from the debris of the demolished Babri structure here are likely to be the new focal point of propaganda by organisations in the thick of the Ram temple movement to claim that Mirbaqi, the commander of Babar's Army, had constructed a mosque after demolishing an eleventh century temple. The objects are claimed to be of pre-Babar period and the Delhi based Historians Forum in a letter written to the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, yesterday demanded that these be protected suitably as they would throw new light on the temple-mosque controversy.

"Dr. S.P. Gupta, a member of the forum, and a former Director of the Allahabad Museum, today visited Ayodhya to have a first look at the objects, including stone inscriptions, some idols and pieces of pillars and carvings. He said the remains were of tremendous historical value and would help experts to arrive at the conclusion as to who had constructed the old temple ultimately demolished by Mirbaqi.

"Prime reliance to prove the claim has been placed on two stone inscriptions found on one of the walls of the Babri structure. The style of the script, according to Dr. Gupta, proved that it was Nagri script prevalent in this part of North India during the 11th century. The language is Sanskrit. The letters are so prominent that experts would be able to decipher them completely, though it would need special effort to read everything correctly.

"In Chandrawati village near Varanasi had been found some inscriptions of the 11th century, according to which King Chandradeo of the Gaharwal dynasty had come to the

confluence of Sarayu and Ghaghra and constructed three temples. One of these, Chandrahari temple, had been founded at the birth place of Lord Ram. The two inscriptions found now, supplement the earlier inscriptions and showed that the temples destroyed by Mirbaqi might have been constructed by King Chandradeo. The bigger of the two inscriptions on sandstone is about four feet long and has 20 lines on it, some of which are incomplete. The inscription starts with prayers to Lakshmi and Vishnu and gives the genealogy of the king who put it to commemorate the foundation of a temple. The second inscription has 10 lines in two parts and begins with a prayer to Mahalakshmi.

"Another important object recovered is an idol of Ram which is of some later age but earlier than 16th century when the Babri mosque had been built."

Report in "The Hindu" dated 25th December 1992:

"The demolition of the disputed structure at Ayodhya has resulted in the discovery of some unimpeachable archaeological evidence from the site pointing to the existence of a Vaishnava temple dating back to the 11th century. Dr. Ajay Mitra Shastri, professor and head of the department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, told newsmen here on Thursday.

"He and his colleague, Dr. K. Ismail, said they had received pictures of some inscrpitions, architectural fragments, sculptures and a huge gold plated bell found in the debris.

"Dr. Shastri, convener of the inscriptions committee of the Indian Council of Historical Research and recepient of the highest honour this year from the Epigraphical Society of India, however, would not disclose who sent him the photographs. He also denied that he was in any way connected with the banned RSS, VHP and allied organisations.

"Dr. Shastri said the most important piece of evidence was a 20-line inscription in Sanskrit engraved on sandstone. Though the entire text was yet to be finally deciphered, line 15 mentioned that a temple of Vishnuhari with a golden spire and of unparalleled beauty, was built there. Lines 7 and 11 mentioned about a powerful king, Sallakshana, who could be king Sallakshana Verma of the Chandella Dynasty already known to history. He ruled at the end of 11th and the beginning of 12th century. But he could also be another king hitherto unknown to history.

"Dr. Shastri urged the Union Government to let the Archaeological Survey of India do further excavation at the site — PTI."

Existence of Rama Temple established

5.4. Shri T.P. Verma of Banaras Hindu University also issued a press statement in respect of the archaeological and epigraphic evidences found in the debris of the demolished structure at Ayodhya

THE GAHADAVALA INSCRIPTION FROM AYODHYA

"The antiquities found during the demolition of the disputed structure at Ayodhya on 6th December 1992 have got wide publicity. Beside an idol of Kodanda Rama, about 3 feet long, carved in white marble and painted in black by oil colour, one sculpture of Ganesh and a head of Bhairava are worth mention. **But the most important antiquity found there were three Sanskrit inscriptions written in Nagari script of 11th-12th century A.D.** Among these two were engraved on stone pillar; one in 8 lines and the other in 2 lines. But unfortunately the pillar had cracked vertically; consequently some portions in the beginning and the end of every line have been lost. And, therefore, it is not possible to make out any sense from the

extant portions. The eight line pillar inscription preserves the names of three persons. The name of one Karnaditya occurs twice. Beside this the names of Ratnapala and his younger brother Tejapala also occur. We are not sure who these persons were. The two line inscription at the lower portion of the pillar gives no sense at all.

"But the largest inscription is neatly engraved on a stone tablet of 4.25 ft. long and 2.25 ft. wide. It was injured and broken at the right corner obliquely influencing almost all the lines. Behind this the lower middle portion of the stone has been chipped off effacing the middle of the last two lines. It is written in 20 lines out of which only a few letters of the first line are preserved. It is still being deciphered but whatever I have been able to read gives revealing informations. In this work, my student Dr. A.K. Singh of Gwalior University has been of much help to me.

"My studies reveal that this is a Gahadavala inscription. The Gahadavalas ruled over Kashi, Kanyakubja, Uttara Koshala (Ayodhya) and Indrasthanika (Delhi) area during 11th and 12th centuries. The inscription contains the name of Govindachandra, the Gahadavala king, in the 13th line. In the 19th and 29th lines he has been compared with Vishnu who, in Vamana avatara humbled Baliraja and in Rama avatara killed the wicked Ravana. Showing the valour of his arms he repelled the danger coming from the West (the Muslim invasions) more than ten times. The Sarnath inscription of his queen Kumara Devi says that 'Hari, who had been commissioned by Hara in order to protect Varanasi from the wicked Turushka warrior, as the only one able to protect the earth, was again born from him, his name being renowned as Govindachandra'. Thus in the Ayodhya and the Sarnath, both the inscriptions Govindachandra has been equated with 'Hari or Vishnu', and in the former it is said that he repelled the Muslim invasions more than ten times. He ruled from 1114 to 1154 as a king and more than ten years before it as a crown prince. During this period also he had to fight the Muslim armies because, perhaps his father was kept as a hostage by the Muslims. During his yuvaraja period he had protected Kirtivarman, the Chandella king, and the father of Sallakshanavarman. This Ayodhya inscription contains the name of Sallakshana at least twice. On this account Prof. Ajaya Mitra Shastri of Nagpur University has surmised that this Ayodhya inscription may be a Chandella inscription. But now, with the decipherment of the name of Govindachandra, the above theory stands cancelled. There are at least two reasons for this. Firstly, the Chandellas had no sway over Ayodhya at any time of the known history. Secondly, the palaeography of this inscription is entirely different from those of the Chandella inscriptions.

"This inscription in the 4th line speaks of **Janmabhoomi** and a **devakula** (temple). The fifteenth line tells us that this great temple of Vishnu-Hari was built with stones like a high mountain, and it was so wonderful that no earlier king could build such a temple before. Line 17 informs us that it was built in Ayodhya, which is full with high and lofty temples, situated in the district (mandala) of Saketa.

"This inscription sets at rest the debate whether there was a temple at the Rama Janmabhoomi site before the construction of the mosque by Mir Baqi in 1528. This is the foundation stone with a Prashasti, eulogy, of the king who built this temple."

This study establishes beyond any doubt that a temple of Sri Rama existed at the site in Ayodhya known as Janmabhoomi. This inscription is today available as a standing testimony to the belief of the Hindus.

5.5. Thus, the demolition has settled once and for all the basic issue whether an existing temple was brought down to erect the mosque. The truth that has tumbled out of the demolition is that, as in the case of Varanasi and Mathura where positive and unimpeachable proof

of demolition of Hindu structures raising of the present mosques exists, the Ayodhya mosque was also raised on the debris of a temple that was brought down by Babar. Such a mosque as the one that stands on a destroyed temple cannot be a sacred place for Muslims and, in the words of Syed Shahabuddin, under Islamic theological principles too, such a mosque does not deserve to exist.

The Narasimha Rao Government had all the evidence in its possession and yet refused to act on it

6.1. By the efforts of the Special Cell headed by Shri Naresh Chandra, the Government of India had collected from July 1992 to November 1992 all the evidence that was available save that which resulted from demolition. Thus the Government was aware that the mosque had been constructed on the debris of a temple. Again the committee had also collected the precedents of shifting of mosques in different Islamic countries. And yet the Prime Minister and his Government kept on saying that the Temple should be constructed without disturbing the mosque. This has been discussed in detail in Chapter VI on the circumstances leading to the events on December 6, 1992 as a result of the design of the Government to prolong the issue by talks instead of solving it on the basis of evidence.

The summary of the VHP/AIBMAC dialogue in the year 1990-91 as made by the Government itself

6.2. The record of the proceedings of the dialogue between the VHP and the Masjid groups in the year 1990-91 as summarised by the Special Cell and made available to the Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, and which in fact formed the background paper to the dialogue in October 1992, brings out many interesting facts. To the extent relevant, the summary of the minutes and notes of the Government is extracted and reproduced below.

6.3. **Minutes of the meeting of VHP/Masjid groups held on December 4, 1990**

An extract from the minutes reads:

> "At this stage Shri Sharad Pawar asked whether there was any mention in the official gazette or not (about the demolition of the temple and the building of the mosque) **Mr. Jilani admitted that in British official Gazettes it has been mentioned.** Shri Shekhawat suggested that official Gazettes were based on facts. But Shri Azam Khan claimed that this problem was the creation of the Britishers to divide the country.
>
> "Then Shri Shekhawat asked when it was mentioned in the official gazettes that the mosque was constructed after demolishing a temple at the very site where Lord Rama was born; **did anyone dispute the assertion of the British records. It was replied in the negative."**

6.4. The minutes then proceed to set the schedule for furnishing evidence and its examination:

> "Then Shri Shekhawat suggested that the evidences of both sides should be exchanged and examined by experts. But Mr. Jilani was of the opinion that first the members of both committees should first examine the evidences and then the experts' help should be taken.

"Mr. Pingale suggested that all these should be done within a time-frame.

"Shri Sharad Pawar suggested that a definite date should be fixed for the submission of the evidences and their exchange.

"Mr. Kaushal Kishore told that historical and archaeological evidences were ready but it would take a fortnight to prepare legal documents. So with the consultation of all including the three Chief Ministers and the Minister of State for Home affairs, the following decisions were taken:

a. Both sides should furnish evidences to the minister of State for Home Affairs by 22.12.90
b. The MOS(H) will make photocopies of evidences to all concerned by 25.12.1990 and
c. After reviewing the evidences both parties will meet in the Maharashtra Sadan on 10.1.1991 at 10.00 AM."

Masjid groups could not dispute the fact of demolition recorded by Aurangazeb's grand daughter, or the finding that Babur's will (which says he was secular) was a forged document

6.5. The minutes of the meeting of 1st January, 1991, contains the presentation made by Prof. B.R. Grover. The points made by Prof. Grover which were not rebutted at the meeting by anyone are summarised below:

"It is very unscientific and unjust to label this belief of Ram Janmabhoomi as of recent origin. A vast mass of historical and archaeological evidences is there to prove that the Hindus have regarded it as the birth-place of Lord Ram for centuries. It is a different matter whether these writings have been labelled either imperial or partisan.

"Whether Ram was a historical figure or a myth is not a relevant question. The moot question is whether there was a temple at the disputed site prior to the construction of the mosque or not.

"I have examined relevant revenue records for two months and found that there has been a tampering with the revenue records. He gave some instances. He claimed that even the tamperings can be detected by proper scrutiny.

"We have classified evidences into four categories (a) historical (b) archaeological (c) revenue and (d) legal. Then he went on citing documentary evidences from the evidences submitted earlier. He told that the earliest reference is in Abul Fazl's book, *Ain-e-Akbari*. He called Abul Fazl a secular scholar.

"Oudh is the name of both province and the town. The first reference of Babri Masjid is that of 1855. In 1861, Ayodhya was outside Ram Kot.

"Babar went to Ayodhya twice. There is one direct reference when he says that he visited Oudh and was to go for Shikar. But immediately therefter the pages are missing since the time of Babar. Another visit is inferred from the reference of Buxar.

"I don't claim that Babar went to Ayodhya to demolish the temple. But certainly he had dialogue with local people.

"I have examined and found that the place is called Ram Janmabhoomi after 1949. Earlier it was called Janmasthan; prior to that it was known Sita Ki Rasoi the temple which was demolished and the mosque was constructed.

"Then he gave the testimony of Aurangzeb's grand daughter. She was scholarly. She was the daughter of Bahadur Shah I. Bahadur Shah was 62 years old when Aurangzeb died. So the age of Bahadur Shah's daughter can be well assessed. She made it clear the offering of the namaz in the recently converted mosques including those at Mathura, Kashi and Ayodhya was sacred. She writes this temple [was] Sita Ki Rasoi temple. This was known by the name at the time.

"Then he read some other testimonies from the evidences already submitted. He cited the Imam's accounts. How Muhammad Asghar, Muazzan of the Babri Masjid filed a representation in 1858 in which he alleged that the Hindus had temporarily occupied the mosque and how they have been struggling for occupying the Janmasthan which was having a mosque built over it. Then he cited the Kazi's verdict, his peshkar's version and Wazid Ali Shah's decision. Then he cited Muslim writers testimonies and made it clear that they are based on numerous writings of earlier period and hence they are to be relied upon.

"Then he narrated how there has been a deliberate attempt to suppress the testimonies of Muslim writers. Four such instances have been given in the main evidence submitted earlier. Many more can be added. Then he gave the account of Joseph Tieffenthaler which makes it abundantly clear that the Ram Janmasthan temple was different from the birth place of Lord Ram. It was the place where the mosque was constructed and the Hindus had not forgotten this site. He further said that there was no road before the 20th century separating the present structure from the present Janmasthan temple. The entire area was one complex known as Ram Kot.

"The architectural style of the mosque is Jaunpuri. There is no minar in the mosque.

"In 1934 Bairagis threw [away] the main plaque during the riot. This plaque was earlier in the mimbar; but now it is not fixed at the old place. In the riot of 1855 also, the Hindus tried to capture the mosque. He suggested that Babar Kalandar was different from Babar, the Mughal Emperor. He further said that the **so-called Babar's will has been found to be a forged document.**

"Then he dealt with revenue records at length. He said that when khasra, khata, khatauni records are scrutinized and maps of all the four bandobasts are examined, it is clear the proprietory rights are in the names of the Bairagis and their disciples. Though many of these records have already been tampered, no further tampering should take place. The question of this land belonging to the waqf arose from 1935 onwards. Earlier it was not the waqf property. The grant had been given to an individual by the Britishers for helping them. The testimony of Md. Asraf proves this point."

No one disputed the points presented by Prof. Grover, except that in regard to tampering which also was not denied.

The minutes admits that the Masjid groups' experts did not turn up for dialogue on 24/25th January, 1991

6.6. The minutes of the next meetings 24.1.91 and 25.1.91 shows that two sub-committees were set up. The conduct of the Masjid group at the sub-committee is relevant. The extract of the minutes in this regard is given below:

Sub-committee of Historians and Archaeologists

Historians and archaeologists formed one group to discuss the historical and archaeological evidences. This sub-group consisted of the following experts:

i. Prof. R.S. Sharma
ii. Prof. Athar Ali
iii. Prof. Suraj Bhan
iv. Prof. D.N. Jha
v. Shri Jawed Habeeb
vi. Prof. B.P. Sinha
vii. Shri S.P. Gupta
viii. Shri Harsh Narain

ix. Prof. K.S. Lal
x. Prof. Devendra Swaroop
xi. Shri B.R. Grover

Prof. B.P. Sinha left for Patna in the middle of the session because of the death of his mother.

This sub-group discussed the matter in a very cordial manner. But on the question of the time-frame there was a difference of opinion between the two groups of historians. The historians representing the A.I.B.M.A.C. gave it in writing that they required at least six weeks time to examine the evidences and visit Ayodhya. Prof. M. Athar Ali, Prof. D.N. Jha, Prof. R.S. Sharma and Shri Jawed Habeed submitted a note. The group representing the V.H.P observed in a written note— **"The experts nominated by the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee expressed their inability to give their opinion because they had not come prepared for it and had not examined the evidence earlier.** We are ready for further discussion, while they want considerable time, which may lead to inordinate delay in the submission of the Report."

It was further agreed upon that Prof. Suraj Bhan and Shri S.P. Gupta would meet on the next day i.e. Friday 25-01-1991 in Gujarat Bhawan and then would visit Archaeological Survey of India and see the documents on the dispute, if arrangements are made for the same.

Shri S.P. Gupta turned up in Gujarat Bhawan but Prof. Suraj Bhan did not come. So the meeting could not take place. There is no information why Shri Suraj Bhan did not come — he might have some urgent work or might have talked to the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India and then changed his programme. **But he did not inform.**

Sub Committee on Legal matters

Another sub-group consisting of the following experts discussed the revenue records and legal documents:

i. Justice Ghuman Mal Lodha
ii. Justice Deowki Nandan Aggrawal
iii. Justice D.V. Sehgal
iv. Shri V.K.S. Chaudhary
v. Shri Zafaryab Jilani
vi. Shri M.A. Siddiqui
vii. Shri S.A. Syed
viii. Shri Zafar Ali Siddiqui

They tried to find points of agreements and disagreements in the entire evidence submitted by both parties. **But on the A Group of evidences submitted by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, it took the stand that they are beyond the purview of discussion because many contained derogatory remarks against Lord Ram. Ultimately it was agreed upon that Shri Z.A. Siddiqui would read all the evidences belonging to A group and if he felt that any set of writing was derogatory or irrelevant, he would withdraw that.** Both parties were to talk to each other at night on the same day.

But on account of some communication gap, they could not exchange their views. On 25-01-1991 the following experts representing the Vishwa Hindu Parishad came to Gujarat Bhawan to attend the meeting:

i. Justice G. Lodha
ii. Justice Deowki Nandan Aggrawal
iii. Shri V.K.S. Chaudhary
iv. Shri B.R. Grover
v. Shri Devendra Swaroop
vi. Prof. Harsh Narain
vii. Dr. S.P. Gupta

Shri Z.A. Siddiqui reported on telephone that All India Babri Masjid Action Committee would not withdraw any evidence of Group A. When it was communicated to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad experts whether they would like to continue discussion, **they replied that they had come for discussion and would welcome the Babri Masjid Action Committee experts, if they came. This was communicated to Shri Z.A. Siddiqui who informed that some members had gone out. However, he assured that he would try his best to bring them by 12-00 hrs. The experts of Vishwa Hindu Parishad waited till 12-30 hrs and then dictated a note and left at 1-00 P.M.**

At 2.30 P.M. Mr.Z. Jilani, the convener of All India Babri Masjid Action Committee informed on telephone that since the Vishwa Hindu Parishad did not contact on the previous night, the A.I.B.M.A.C. experts did not turn up. He thereafter sent a letter to the Minister narrating the circumstances leading to the deadlock in the dialogue with the following observation — "It would therefore be in the fitness of things that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad leaders be asked to clarify their stand on the aforesaid point at the earliest so that further continuance of the talks may not be hampered. We hope that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad leaders and its nominees would mend their ways and will participate in further talks without any reservations for which the A.I.B.M.A.C. nominees will remain available at any reasonable time, they are called for."

Here it is to be decided whether the Government is supposed to take such clarification from the V.H.P. or not, particularly in view of the fact that it is a bipartite talk and the Government is playing the role of a co-ordinator only.

Similarly the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, too, has sent a letter narrating the details of the non-participation of the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee experts and seeking some clarification. Despite these letters both V.H.P. and A.I.B.M.A.C. have confirmed on telephone that they would be participating in the meeting scheduled on 5-2-1991. However, both parties have got certain internal problems, apart from the stands taken by them in their letters. **It is reliably learnt that there was a difference of opinion amongst the members of the A.I.B.M.A.C. over the question of continuing the dialogue, despite the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's unilateral declaration of its future programmes and intransigent postures. Shri Ahmed Bukhari, Naib-Imam of Jama Masjid and Shri Afzal, M.P. were against any dialogue in future. So the A.I.B.M.A.C. is trying to find excuses to discontinue the dialogue.** Similarly, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad is under tremendous pressure from its hardliners to put an end to the negotiation after February 5, 1991. However, the leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad are meeting at Udaipur from 25th January to 27th January, 1991 to discuss the situation and decide the future course of action.

6.7. The Narasimha Rao Government's summary of the evidence presented by VHP and AIBMAC

The summary of the evidence prepared by the officials of the Government is extremely relevant because it clinches the case in favour of the VHP. The relevant extracts of the summary are given below:

The summary of the VHP case ran as under:

A summary of the evidence (of VHP) is now presented. The relevant paras of the main note and the annexures have been suitably referred. For example (P.3.5, A-VI) indicates reference para 3.5 of the Main Note and Annexure VI.

Muslim Testimony:

Extract from *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazal (late 16th century) has been given (P 3.1 ; A-I) to show that Awadh was associated with the residential place of Sri Ram Chandra of Treta age. **The Holiness of Ayodhya and the celebration of Ram Navmi festival in a big way**

are also supported by the writings of Abul Fazal.

Excerpts from *Safiha Chahal Nasaih Bahadur Shahi*, written by the daughter of Bahadur Shah Ibn Alamgir during the 17th / 18th Century have been given (A-II) to show that **"the place of the birth of Kanhaiya, the place of Rasoi Sita, the place of Hanuman.....were all demolished on the strength of Islam, and at all these places mosques have been constructed."**

The following excerpt has been quoted from *Hadiqa-i-Shahada* by Mirza Jan (1856): **"...the temple of Janmasthan was the original birth place of Ram,** adjacent to which is Sita Ki Rasoi, Sita being the name of his wife. **Hence at this site, a lofty mosque has been built by Babar** Badshah under the guidance of Mir Ashikan....." (P 3.4 ; A-III)

Several other references dating from early nineteenth century have also been quoted to support the same point, i.e., the Babri Mosque was constructed after demolishing the existing temple/private apartments of Raja Ram Chander/Sita Ki Rasoi in paras 3.5 to 3.11 of the main note and Annexures V to X.

A petition from one Muhammad Asghar (1858), Muazzin of Babri Masjid, against Hindu Bairagis who had occupied the mosque, constructed an earthen mound therein and started puja has also been mentioned. The petition mentions that Hindus had been worshipping a Jammasthan lying desolate in the outer space of the constructed Babri Masjid for hundreds of years (P 3.4; A-IV). Mention of Bairagis offering worship in Babri Mosque and their struggle to recapture the places of worship including Babri mosque, is found in other documents also (P 3.5, 3.7 ; A-V).

The summary, particularly the emphasised lines, contain the appreciation of VHP's evidence by the Narasimha Rao Government officials.

European Accounts:

William Finch, a European traveller who visited Ayodhya in 1608-11 has confirmed the existence of the ruins of Ramkot, the castle of Ram. (P 4.1; A-XI). A more detailed account is, however, found in 'History and Geography of India' by Joseph Tieffenthaler, an Austrian Jesuit priest, who stayed in Ayodhya in 1766-71. **The following extracts are particularly relevant (P.4.2 ; A-XII):**

"The Emperor Aurangzeb destroyed the fortress called Ramkot and built at the same place a Mohammedan temple with three domes. Others say it has been built by Babar. One can see 14 columns made of black stones 5 spans in height which occupy the site of the fortress. 12 of these columns now support the inside arcade of the mosque.

"The reason is that here existed formerly a house in which Beschan (Vishnu) took birth in the form of Rama and where it is said his three brothers were also born. Subsequently Aurangzeb and some say Babar destroyed the place in order to prevent the heathens from practicing their ceremonies. However, they have continued to practice their religious ceremonies in both the places knowing this to have been the birth place of Rama by going around it three times and prostrating on the ground."

The following documents also support that the Babri Masjid was believed to have been constructed after demolition of apartments of Ram or a Ram temple and that the Hindus had continued to offer worship there:

i. Report by Montgomery Martin, British Surveyor (1838) (P.4.3 ; A-XIII).
ii. East India Company Gazetteer, by Edmond Thornton (1854) (P.4.4 ; A-XIV). In this an explicit mention of Ram Chabootra is found.
iii. Encyclopaedia of India by Surgeon General Edward Balfour (1858) (P. 4.5 ; A-XV).
iv. Historical Sketch of Faizabad by P. Carnegy (1870) (P.4.6 ; A-XVI).

v. Gazetteer of the Province Oudh (1877) (P.4.7) ; A-XVII).
vi. Faizabad settlement report (1880) (P 4.8).
vii. Imperial Gazetteer of Faizabad (1881) (P 4.9 ; A-XVIII).
viii. Archaeological Survey of India (1891) (P 4.11 ; A XX).
ix. Barabanki District Gazetteer (1902) (P 4.12.; A-XXI).
x. Faizabad District Gazetteer (1905) (P 4.13 ; A-XXII).

The main note of VHP also mentions a court verdict by Col. F.E.A. Chamier, District Judge, Faizabad (1886) in which he has observed: "It is most unfortunate that a Masjid should have been built on land specially held sacred by Hindus, but as that event occurred 356 years ago, it is too late now to remedy the grievance." A copy of the judgement has been attached. (P 4.10, A-XIX).

Some of the recent documents that have been mentioned by VHP in support of its case are:

i. Babar Nama in English by Annette Beveridge (1920) (P 4.14 ; A-XXIII).
ii. Archaeological Survey of India (1934) (P 4.15).
iii. Revised Faizabad District Gazetteer (1960) (P 4.16 ; A-XXIV).
iv. Encyclopaedia Brittanica (1978) (P 4.17 ; A-XXV).

VHP then quotes two books by foreign scholars viz. "Ayodhya" by Hans Bakker (1984) and "Ram Janmabhoomi Vs. Babri Masjid" by Koenraad Elst (1990), **both of whom have come to the conclusion, after examining the evidence, that the Babri Mosque has been built after demolishing a Hindu temple.** (Paras 4.18 and 4.19 of the main note of VHP).

Evidence from Revenue Records

The revenue records show that Kot Ram Chandra was a separate village (mauza) from the time of the earliest settlement in 1861 A.D. **The term Janmasthan has been used for a large complex situated in Kot Ram Chandra of which Sita Ki Rasoi forms a part.**

Archaeological Evidence

The Babri Masjid structure contains 14 pillars of black stone (Kasauti) on which Hindu motifs are carved. **Art historical evidence identifies these pillars as belonging to a Hindu temple structure dating back to 11th century A.D.** Excavations conducted by **Archaeological Survey of India** from 1975 to 1980 **have revealed the existence of a series of burnt brick pillar-bases at regular intervals in** the vicinity of the RJB-BM site. These are found arranged in the directional alignment of the black stone pillars used on the RJB-BM structure (P 1.3: A-XXVIII & A-XXIX).

Two pillars of black stone, similar to the ones found in the RJB-BM structure are found buried up-side down by the side of the grave of one Muslim saint, **Fazal Abbas alias Musa Ashikan who has been mentioned in the documents (some of them referred above) as having motivated the destruction of the temple and construction of the mosque.**

Other archaeological evidence, as mentioned in the report of Dr. S.P. Gupta, (A-XXVIII) **establishes that Ayodhya was inhabited at least as far back as 7th Century B.C and there had been continuous habitation upto 3rd century A.D. The pillar bases mentioned above also date back to 11th century A.D.**

Here too the emphasised part of the extract constitute the way the Narasimha Rao Government has appreciated the value of the evidence of VHP.

Dealing with objections

The VHP's main note discusses the alternative hypothesis that a temple known as Janmasthan to the north of the Babri structure is itself the original Janmasthan shrine and declares it to be untenable because this is a new structure which is not more than 250 years old.

Historical evidence is stated to be available to show that it was started in 1704 A.D. by a sadhu called Ram Dasji. **Moreover if this were the original shrine, one would be at a loss to explain why a controversy has continued about the Babri structure for hundreds of years** (P. 7.1).

The VHP note lists various attempts made by Hindus to claim back the shrine (P. 7.2) **to show that the Hindus never reconciled themselves to the loss of their shrine.** The note gives instances where Muslim testimony, some of which has been mentioned above, has been suppressed in susequent editions. **For example the reference to demolition of the temple has been suppressed in the second edition of Gumgashte Halat-i-Ayodhya Awadh** (P 7.3).

The objection that Babar's memoirs do not mention this mosque has been answered by pointing out (P.1.2) that the relevant pages of Babar's diary are missing.

Another objection that the entire controversy was created by the British as another instance of their divide and rule policy has been addressed by VHP in the concluding part of Para 7.4 of its main note. **The following extract is relevant:**

"A simple test whether the anti-Mandir hypothesis deserves any consideration at all, is the element for which the evidence should be the most easy to find: the British concoction hypothesis. In the plentiful and well kept archives which the British have left us, it should not be too difficult for genuine historians to find some piece of evidence. But, so far, no proof whatsoever has been given either for such an actual course of events or even for similar British tactics at another time and place. If the anti-Mandir polemists cannot even come up with that, their whole hypothesis stands exposed as a highly implausible and purely theoretical construction."

Rejoinder of VHP to evidence given by BMAC

VHP has dismissed the material given by BMAC by saying that it does not contain evidence on the germane issues. A lot of documents have been given by BMAC to show that Ram was not a historical but mythical character. But this, according to VHP, is not the issue. The newspaper articles given by BMAC to challenge the archaeological and historical evidence of VHP contain nothing but vituperative personal attacks without going into the issues or presenting alternate evidence. The court documents prove nothing but continuous possession of Muslims which, again, is not in dispute.

The lines in emphasis again indicate how the VHP's evidence has been appreciated and evaluated by the Special Group headed by Shri Naresh Chandra.

6.8. The summary of the case of VHP as made by the Government from the evidence given was as under:

It is proved by scriptural and inscriptional evidence that worship of Shri Ram is an ancient tradition.

It is also proved, particularly by Ayodhya Mahatmya, that Ayodhya was identified as a holy city and birth place of Shri Ram as far back as 12 century A.D.

The *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazal established that the identification of Ayodhya, the legendary birth place of Shri Ram, as the present day Ayodhya, a part of Awadh province, is at least as old as late 16th century.

The accounts of Tieffenthaler and contemporary Muslim authors prove that the belief of Babri Masjid having been built after demolition of Hindu structures associated with Shri Ram is at least as old as 1771 (Tieffenthaler stayed in Ayodhya from 1766 to 1771). Tieffanthaler's account also proves that Hindus continued to venerate this site despite the presence of the mosque.

Subsequent writings of Muslims and Europeans alike confirm the continuity of the belief about demolition of a Hindu Temple to construct Babri Masjid and the continued attachment of Hindus to this site.

It is not possible to explain why the Hindus should have continued to be drawn to this site, thereby incurring the wrath of Muslim rulers, except on account of a deep and abiding faith.

The fourteen black stone pillars used in Babri Masjid are proved to be from a Hindu temple constructed in 11th Century A.D. The most plausible explanation is that this temple stood on this very site. Two such pillars are also buried by the side of the grave of Musa Ashikan, who according to Muslim historians, was instrumental in motivating the destruction of the temple and the construction of the mosque.

Archaeological excavations conducted in 1975-80 reveal a series of pillar bases, also dating back to 11th century A.D., that are in the same directional alignment as the pillars used in the mosque.

The VHP evidence, thus, presents a coherent and self-consistent picture. The burden of proving any alternate hypothesis is on the other side. The BMAC evidence, on the other hand, does not address the specific issues and is nothing but a disjointed collection of wild hypothesis, conjectures and personal attacks without any solid evidence.

6.9. The summary of the Muslim case as made by the Government shows that their case is not clear

The summary of the Government on Muslim case reads as under:

No consolidated presentation of the Muslim case is available in the records. A comprehensive collection of documents had been submitted by the AIBMAC during the negotiations held in December 1990-February 1992. These documents also are not accompanied by a resume of the Muslim case, although in the case of some documents there are annotations indicating the relevance of the documents to the Muslim case. Therefore, in the case of most documents, it is possible only to draw an inference regarding support for the Muslim case. These documents had been submitted in two stages, and the corresponding lists are at Appendices I & II. In addition, four historians (who had at one stage participated in the above negotiations as part of the AIBMAC team) had also submitted a report. Further, there is a letter dated 6 October 1988 written by Shri Syed Shahabuddin to the Home Minister giving his response to a set of 13 documents sent to him by the Home Ministry. **From all the documents** mentioned above, as well as other sources where a definite stand on the Muslim side had come to notice, **an attempt has been made to cull out the Muslim case in respect of the RJB-BM dispute.**

Very briefly, **the Muslim case seems to be that the Ramayana is a mythological epic and not a historical account of events; the present day Ayodhya is not the Ayodhya of the Ramayana** because of discrepancies in the age and geographical location of Rama's Ayodhya; **the Babri Masjid was never built by destroying any temple** or other construction and, in fact, **there is no evidence of a Ram Temple having existed at that site;** and **the Muslims have been in continuous possession of the Babri Masjid** right until 1949 when the idols were placed.

The lines in emphasis shows the way the evidence of AIBMAC has been evaluated by the Narasimha Rao Government officials led by Shri Naresh Chandra. The contrast is obvious — while the VHP evidence is complete to support its case, in the case of AIBMAC, difficult to understand as to what its case is.

6.10. **Negotiating position taken by the Muslim side as summarised by the Rao Government shows that the Muslims would be ready for shifting or demolition, if temple had existed whether demolished or not**

The summary states:

It is understood that **at the start of the negotiations in December 1990 — February 1991, the AIBMAC had taken the position that if it was proved that a temple had been destroyed for the construction of the Babri Masjid, the Muslims would agree to its demolition/shifting. Subsequently, however, this was modified to state that only if a Ram Temple had been destroyed, would they so agree.**

On the other hand, the Shahi Imam had expressed himself against any reference to the Supreme Court on the ground that such questions should be decided amicably through negotiations in the interest of long term harmony between the communities.

The Muslim side had also objected to the Land Acquisition Ordinance promulgated by the Centre in October, 1990 on the grounds, inter alia, that this had extinguished the Court cases in which the Muslims had sought to establish their rights. They had also reiterated the stand of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board that mosques, places of worship and mausolea should be kept outside the purview of the acquisition law. The English translation of the memorandum submitted by the Muslim religious leaders on 21.10.1990 is at Appendix-III.

In the last few days, there have been reports that a section of the Ulema is of the view that if any temple had existed at the site (whether or not it had been demolished for the construction of the Babri Masjid) the Muslim side would be prepared for the demolition/shifting of the Masjid. There are further reports that a section of the Muslims might accept the position that since Hindu worship has been going on in the disputed structure, it may not be regarded as a Masjid at all (thereby facilitating Muslim consent for the demolition/shifting of the Masjid).

The summary of the Special Cell also sets out the Government's view that the Muslims might consent to the demolition/shifting of the mosque.

The Special Cell held the VHP evidence overwhelming and also had irrefutable evidence that under Islamic practices mosques can be shifted and are being shifted in other countries

6.11. This compilation and summary by the Government was made at the re-start of the negotiations in October, 1992. Further evidence that came to light as the result of new excavations in June and July 1992 does not form part of this compilation and summary. However, the Special Cell headed by Shri Naresh Chandra did not limit its investigation to the facts and evidence presented by VHP and AIBMAC. It extended its search further to collect evidence on the Islamic practices regarding demolition and removal of mosques. But the assessment of the core group about the relative worth of the evidence of VHP and AIBMAC and the material collected by them about Islamic practices on removal of mosques, have been held back from the public by the Government. The situation would have been entirely different if the Government had been candid enough to confront the AIBMAC with their assessment of evidence and material collected on Islamic practices on shifting of

mosques, or if the Government had chosen to take the public into confidence. The Government did neither. But it is not that no one was aware of the inside story. The Special Cell had come to three conclusions.

- First, the evidence regarding the existence of the temple was "overwhelming".
- Second, the abandonment, demolition and removal of mosques was in accordance with several schools of the Shariat.
- Third, the abandonment, demolition and removal of mosques was a frequent occurence in several Islamic countries.

The Special Cell had expressed these views to many eminent persons who had met the officials.

The officials stop talking, even in private

6.2. A report in the *Indian Express,* from Delhi published on 3.10.1992 indicated that the AIBMAC had taken note of the statements made by the Special Cell and protested. The report reads:

> "In their meeting with the Prime Minister, the AIBMAC also expressed misgivings about the statements made by some officials of the cell set up by the Prime Minister."

The AIBMAC had given sufficient indication as to what the Government was not to do — it asked the Government not to disclose its view in the matter. And the Government did not disclose it, not even in private.

Thus, evidence that could solve the issue which was collected and which was available for decision making, was not used, as the Narasimha Rao Government lacked the will to govern by truth, and instead pursued the line of appeasement and electoral designs in dealing with the Ayodhya issue.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONDUCT OF DIFFERENT GOVERNMENTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, LEADERS AND PRIME MINISTERS

1.1. Save the BJP, which was the only national political party to take a clear and firm stand on the issue of Ramajanmabhoomi Temple — and this the BJP did, as early as June 1989, when it came out in support of the Ayodhya movement — no other political party took any firm stand on Ramajanmabhoomi. Every government, leader and political party was calculating, and competing with each other for Muslim votes.

The Congress Government under Rajiv Gandhi in 1986 and 1989

2.1. The Rajiv Gandhi Government which was the first one to deal with the Ayodhya movement, responded only where there was a deadline.

2.2. When a deadline was set by the Ayodhya movement leaders for opening the locks by March 8, 1986, someone moved the Munsif Court first, and thereafter the District Court in appeal — all in a matter of just 12 days — and got a judicial order, directing the doors to be unlocked. This happened when the Government confessed to the court that if the locks were opened there would be no law and order problem. This was precisely the reason why for 36 years the court had had to keep the deity under lock and key.

2.3. The decision of the Court was implemented within hours, under the gaze of TV cameras of the Doordarshan staff.

2.4. Again, when the movement had set the Shilanyas date as 10th November, 1989, the Rajiv Government declared on 8th November, 1989, that the Shilanyas site was undisputed, although only a day earlier the Allahabad High Court had held the Shilanyas site as within the disputed site. Thus, the Shilanyas was held within and as per the deadline set by the Ayodhya movement leaders.

2.5. Immediately thereafter, on 11th November, 1989, the Rajiv Government ordered the construction to stop, and prevented the Kar Seva. The Government's decision with regard to Ayodhya had nothing to do with the merit of the issue; it was only prompted by electoral expediency. Thus, the political strategy of the Rajiv Government was to permit the Shilanyas, for the Hindus, and to prevent the Kar Seva, for the Muslims. The Rajiv Government could see the Ayodhya movement only as an electoral issue.

2.6. Finally, Shri. Rajiv Gandhi started the election campaign for the 1989 Parliamentary elections from Ayodhya, promising to establish Rama Rajya — again an electoral theatre.

So much for the party which ceaselessly charges that the BJP is politicising Rama and Ramajanmabhoomi.

Shri V.P. Singh, his Janata Dal, and his Government during 1989-1990

3.1. During the period from May 1989 to November 1989, talks were held between the Janata Dal and the BJP at different levels, for the purpose of working out seat adjustments between the two parties. In the initial stages, Shri V.P. Singh was averse to seat adjustments with the BJP in UP and Bihar on the ground that, in those States, if the Janata Dal was to have seat adjustment with the BJP, the Muslims might move away from JD, and over to the Congress. Shri Singh had no ideological objection, nor did he consider the BJP unacceptable. He wanted the BJP support, as well as Muslim votes. The BJP made it very clear, that it would have adjustments everywhere, or nowhere at all.

3.2. To break the deadlock, an important meeting was arranged at the Express Towers in Bombay. The participants in the meeting included Shri R.N. Goenka, Chairman, *Indian Express*, Shri Bhaurao Deoras, and Prof. Rajendra Singh from RSS, Shri Nanaji Deshmukh, Shri Prabhash Joshi, journalist, and Shri S. Gurumurthy who was a close advisor of late Shri R.N. Goenka. It was in that meeting, that Shri V.P. Singh said: *Are Bhai, Masjid hai Kahan? Yeh to abhi mandir hai* (Where is the mosque in Ayodhya; it is already a temple). Pooja is going on. It is so dilapidated that if you give a push, it will fall. Why does one have to demolish it?" This was the meeting to which Shri Arun Shourie referred in an article which was published in October 1990.

3.3. During the discussions, Shri V.P. Singh wanted only two assurances from the Sangh Parivar — one, the Shilanyas should be symbolic, and two, there would be no joint campaigning by the BJP and the Janata Dal. So much for the secular stand — seat adjustment, yes; joint campaign, no.

3.4. After the Janata Dal-led National Front Government assumed office at the Centre, Shri V.P.Singh secured four months time from the Ayodhya movement leaders, promising to solve the problem in that period. During this period, the Mulayam Singh Government assumed office in Uttar Pradesh. The two governments began working at cross purposes. Shri V.P. Singh and Shri Mulayam Singh were competing for the same constituency — the Muslim votes, with the result that even as V.P.Singh was working for a compromise on the issue, Mulayam Singh began a vicious campaign against the Ramajanmabhoomi movement.

Shri V.P. Singh involves selected Sants and Moulvis to exclude the BJP

3.5. Shri V.P. Singh first unsuccessfully tried to outdo the VHP, and the BJP, by attempting to involve some Hindu and Muslim religious leaders, and by evolving a compromise formula. The emissary to deal with the Hindu Sants was Shri Krishna Kant, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh. Shri Krishna Kant tried to involve Shri Jayendra Saraswati of Kanchi Kamakoti Math to head a Trust to which the disputed structure and the site would be handed over, on the condition that the Temple would be built by the Trust without disturbing the existing structure. Shri Ali Mian, the influential Muslim theologian from Uttar Pradesh, came

down to Kanchipuram along with Shri Krishna Kant, to meet the Paramacharya of Kanchi, but the latter did not meet him. Therefore, Shri Ali Mian met Shri Jayendra Saraswati and in the meeting, it was suggested on behalf of the Government that political elements should be kept out, and religious leaders on both sides should come together to resolve the issue. Pursuing this line, Shri Jayendra Saraswati issued a press statement, and addressed a press conference in Kanchipuram, stating that political elements should be kept out of the Ayodhya issue, and the Government should call a meeting of religious leaders of both sides to find a durable and peaceful solution. This Jayendra Saraswati/Ali Mian effort was, in fact, lauded by the National Integration Council meeting later.

3.6. The move through Shri Ali Mian/Jayendra Saraswati is corroborated by the testimony of Pujya Shri Vishvesha Teertha Swamiji of Pejawar Math, Udipi, on how during the time of Shri V.P. Singh as Prime Minister he was involved in the negotiations.

a. The following persons contacted/met Pujya Swamiji of Pejawar:

i. Shri Kishore Kunal, an Officer on Special Duty, visited Swamiji and invited him for a probable meeting in Delhi.

ii. Shri Ramakrishna Hegde and Shri S.R. Bommai spoke to Swamiji and said that Shri Krishna Kant, Governor of Andra Pradesh, wanted to meet Swamiji.

iii. Later, Shri Krishna Kant visited Udipi and placed the following suggestions before Swamiji:

- Creation of a Trust under the leadership of Pujya Shri Kanchi Sankaracharya Jayendra Saraswatiji and handing over the disputed area to the Trust.
- Construction of the Temple leaving the disputed structure 'as it is'.
- Building a wall between the temple and the disputed structure.

In response the Swamiji said that he would have to consult others and then only a decision could be taken.

b. Afterwards Shri Krishna Kant came to the Vidyapeetha in Bangalore and took Swamiji by a special aircraft to Delhi.

c. Before going to the meeting at Delhi, Swamiji met Shri Ashok Singhal and others belonging to the VHP.

d. At the meeting, Swamiji suggested that

i. the disputed area be handed over to the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas and no new trust be created.

ii. minor corrections be made in the reconstruction plan

- retaining the disputed structure 'as it is'; and
- constructing a temple on pillars erected around the structure.

Shri V.P. Singh accepted the suggestion, and desired that Swamiji should convince the VHP.

e. Later S/Shri Krishna Kant, Subodh Kant Sahay, Union Minister and Yunus Saleem, Governor of Bihar, convened a meeting of Hindu Sants and Muslim Ulemas and discussed the issue in two sittings.

i. The Hindu Sants said that the Muslims should voluntarily and in the interest of harmony withdraw their claim on Ramajanmasthan, and that the Temple could be constructed

without demolishing the existing structure. In such a situation, there can be no victor or vanquished.

ii. In response the Muslims desired that a place be given to them for prayers which demand the Hindu Sants accepted.

iii. The Muslims then asked for some time to examine the proposal, but, wanted the Kar Seva stopped.

iv. The Hindu Saints said that Kar Seva could not be stopped, but could be done at another place leaving the disputed structure as it was.

v. This was not acceptable to the Muslims who asked for some time to think it over.

With this ended Pujya Pejawar Swamiji's involvement. Obviously, Swamiji was unaware of the subsequent developments as also of the circumstances leading to the issue of the ordinance to acquire the Ramjanmabhoomi and its withdrawal, because, the ordinance move was negotiated through another channel, which has been explained hereinafter.

Shri V.P. Singh resorts to political efforts

3.7. The all Sant–Moulvi move could not go very far, on account of Muslim opposition to the Sants' proposals and because Pujya Shri Jayendra Saraswati nominated Mahant Avaidyanath, an important leader of the Ayodhya movement, as his representative to pursue the proposal with the Government. Shocked by the new development, the Government hurriedly abandoned the move to eliminate the politicians and involve the religious leaders. While this was the inside story, to the outside world the propaganda was that the BJP was involving the Sants.

3.8. Even as Shri V.P.Singh was trying for a compromise, his competitor, Mulayam Singh, was organising the Muslims and holding highly provocative rallies in UP, and threatening that not even a bird would be allowed to fly over the disputed structure. It was under these circumstances that Shri L.K. Advani undertook the Somnath–Ayodhya Rathyatra. The Rathyatra drew unprecedented response.

Political efforts leading to the issue of the take-over Ordinance:

3.9. It was then that Shri V.P.Singh called Shri S. Gurumurthy, on 15th October, 1990, a Monday. The two sat in four sessions for over 4 hours from the evening to well past midnight. Shri Gurumurthy suggested that the Government should acquire the entire disputed area, and hand it over to the VHP Trust but retain the disputed structure with a 30 ft. area around it under its title and possession, and refer the issue whether there was a pre-existing Hindu structure for judicial opinion to the Supreme Court under Article 143 of the Constitution. Shri V.P.Singh readily accepted the suggestion. When Shri Gurumurthy asked him whether this could be communicated to the RSS–VHP as the decision — and a final one — of the Government, V.P.Singh said that he was saying so as the Prime Minister. He also said that the movement of the Karsevaks to Ayodhya should stop or be slowed down. Shri Gurumurthy communicated this to the RSS–VHP and relayed back their acceptance to the Prime Minister.

On 18th October, two sets of meetings took place, and definite steps were taken. The then Railway Minister, Shri George Fernandes and the then Information Minister, Shri P. Upendra met Shri Ashok Singhal at the RSS headquarters, Keshavkunj in New Delhi. The Ministers said that the Govrnment proposed to bring forth an Ordinance on the issue. By this the government would hand over to the Sri Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas the entire land except the Garbha Griha — that is, the disputed structure. Shri Ashok Singhal maintained that no agreement could be reached till the Government handed over the entire land to the Hindus.

The same day Shri V.P. Singh invited Shri Govindacharya, Shri Arun Jaitley, the then Additional Solicitor General, and a journalist to discuss the Ayodhya issue. They urged that the Government acquire the entire disputed area, retain the disputed structure as well as land of 30 feet around it, hand over the rest to the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas, and request the Supreme Court under Article 143 to determine whether there was a pre-existing Hindu structure. After the discussion an Additional Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office was called around midnight and asked to initiate steps to implement the proposal.

Accordingly a three point proposal and draft Ordinance was prepared at night. At 5 a.m. a committee of service officials met at the Cabinet Secretary's residence and finalised the draft. At 10 a.m. the Cabinet met at the Prime Minister's residence and approved the Ordinace and the three point solution. Since the Ordinance had to undergo whetting from several angles it was not released immediately.

3.10. On Thursday, 18th October, 1990, Shri V.P. Singh called Shri Gurumurthy, who was then in Madras, to go over to Delhi and, accordingly, he reached Delhi on the morning of Friday, 19th October, 1990. On the forenoon of Friday, there was a meeting at the Sundar Nagar Guest House of the *Indian Express* in which Shri L.K. Advani who was to proceed to Dhanbad to continue his Rathyatra, was present. Also present were S/Shri R.N.Goenka, S. Gurumurthy, and some other friends of the newspaper. Shri Advani explicitly said that it was not his intention that the Government must fall, but that, if the Ordinance proposal went through, and the land around the disputed structure was handed over, with or without the VHP nominee as the Receiver of the disputed structure, he would support it. When S/Shri S. Gurumurthy and Arun Jaitley met Shri Advani at his residence even as he was preparing to go to the railway station, he reiterated the same stand, saying that the Ordinance was a small but welcome step, and added that even if the Government appointed a neutral receiver for the structure, he would not mind it.

3.11. In the afternoon, Shri S. Gurumurthy spoke to the Prime Minister. By then a visible change had taken place. He said that not just the disputed structure, but the disputed land also would be in the possession of the Government, and would not be handed over to the Ayodhya movement. When Shri Gurumurthy said that that was not the understanding, the Prime Minister asked him to meet him in the evening at his residence. Shri V.P. Singh told Shri Gurumurthy that Shri L.K. Advani should defer the Rathyatra by a day, so that a

solution was arrived at. And after that, Shri V.P. Singh said, "he would go along with Shri Advani to Ayodhya for Kar Seva". When this was communicated to Shri Advani, he said that his presence was not required, and if the Ordinance proposal as originally understood was given effect to, that would be agreeable to him.

3.12. In the evening, there was again a marathon session at Shri V.P. Singh's residence extending to well beyond 9 p.m. Shri V.P. Singh told Shri S. Gurumurthy that he should discuss the matter with his colleagues, and that he had briefed Shri George Fernandes. S/Shri Arun Nehru, George Fernandes, Ajit Singh and Dinesh Goswamy, all Ministers, were present throughout the discussion, and besides Shri S Gurumurthy, Shri Arun Jaitley and a leading journalist were also present. Shri V.P. Singh was in and out of the meeting, obviously meeting several persons in different rooms, at the same time. The Law Minister, Dinesh Goswami, said that because of the multiplicity of the suits and hundreds of issues involved, it was not possible to issue the Ordinance; in fact, it was impossible to legislate on the subject because of pending cases. It was explained to him by S/Shri Arun Jaitley and S. Gurumurthy that the hundreds of issues fell under just three heads — one, whether Rama was born at the site; two, whom did the different lands belong to; and three, whether there was a pre-existing Hindu structure. It was explained to him that the first aspect was not capable of judicial or even legislative determination, the second aspect was capable of legislative action under the undisputed power of compulsory acquisition, and the third aspect was capable of judicial opinion or judicial verdict. Shri Arun Nehru said that, if the explanation was correct, the Ordinance should be issued. The Ordinance and the scheme were issued to the press late at night.

The decision to withdraw the Ordinance, even before the people of India knew about its issue

3.13. Even before the public of India could read the news of the Ordinance next morning, Shri V.P. Singh had virtually decided to withdraw the measure following, as was widely believed, a threat from Mulayam Singh that he would not allow the Ordinance to be implemented. The BJP had cautiously welcomed the move, in the absence of any specific scheme, and the RSS–VHP had accepted the solution of the disputed land being handed over to the VHP, and the issue of disputed structure being referred to the Supreme Court for legal opinion. The movement of Karsevaks had been slowed down. Now they felt completely let down.

3.14. The subsequent developments — the withdrawal of the Ordinance on 21st October, 1990, the arrest of Shri L.K. Advani in Bihar on Tuesday, 23rd October morning, and the historic events at Ayodhya on 30th October, which made the unprecedented security at Ayodhya irrelevant — are a matter of public knowledge.

3.15. When his government was voted out, Shri V.P. Singh proclaimed that it was because he stood for social justice, backward classes and the minorities. But the truth was that his

efforts to solve the Ayodhya issue had been sabotaged by his own partymen, and V.P. Singh had himself capitulated to the pressure of the lobby of the Imams. There was no talk of backward classes or the minorities when he was making the compromise efforts.

The Chandrashekhar Government

4.1. The Chandrashekhar Government brought the leaders of the Ayodhya movement and the leaders of the Babri Action groups, face to face, and specified the issue — whether a mosque was built after demolishing a Hindu structure — for determination by evidence and debate. The VHP as well as the Masjid groups produced evidence, but the subsequent meetings failed, because the Masjid representatives first sought to defer the debate and, later, their Marxist consultants failed to turn up at the next meeting, thus virtually conceding their inability to face the debate. But when the minority Government, dependent on the support of the Congress was finally toppled by its very creator, the Congress, on the charge of two constables spying on Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the initiative taken by Shri Chandrashekhar could not be pursued.

The present Congress Government under Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao

5.1. Not many people know that for the present Prime Minister, the Ayodhya issue is a familiar one as he was the Chairman of a sub-committee of the cabinet (Group of Ministers), constituted by the Rajiv Gandhi Government, to work for a solution to the Ayodhya issue. This was as far back as 1988. So, the intricacies of the Ayodhya issue should have been known to the present Prime Minister. And yet, despite the fact that he assumed office in June 1991, and even though, in the general elections, the Ayodhya issue had become central, and the BJP had made a commitment in its election Manifesto to construct the temple at Ayodhya, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao did nothing for over a year after assuming office. Nothing happened for 12 months upto May 1992 when the Sants met him, and even upto July 1992 he did precious little, although he had promised that he would proceed from where the previous Prime Minister Shri Chandrashekhar had left.

5.2. When the acquisition of the adjacent land made by the Kalyan Singh Government was questioned in a Writ in the Allahabad High Court, and the Allahabad High Court which was expected to give the judgment by December 1991, delayed the decision month after month, the Dharma Sansad met and decided to resume the Kar Seva from 9th July, 1992. It was thereafter that the Prime Minister, at the suggestion of Shri L.K. Advani and Shri A.B. Vajpayee, called the Sants and secured from them three months time to resolve the issue. The Prime Minister constituted a Special Cell under Shri Naresh Chandra to collect the evidence on the Temple and to monitor the situation. How the Prime Minister handled the situation and how he tried the same devices as Shri V.P. Singh, to divide the movement, to eliminate the VHP, and to force a confrontation by holding the Courts as a shield and also as a weapon,

even while apparently angling for a solution through discussions, but in effect only prolonging the debate *ad infinitum*, are discussed separately as devlopments and circumstances leading to the suspended Kar Seva in July 1992 (Chapter V) and the Kar Seva and demolition of the disputed structure on December 6, 1992 (Chapter VI).

What do the records prepared by the present Government show about the conduct of the earlier governments?

6.1. The notes on the compilation of evidence and on the dialogue made by the officials of the Government of India during the VHP–AIBMAC interaction between December 1990 and February 1991, and the background note prepared by the core group for the VHP–AIBMAC dialogue in October 1992 brought out some significant aspects.

The records on the efforts of the different governments from July 1988 onwards

6.2. The summary of the efforts of the different governments fell in the following categories:

a. The efforts of the Rajiv Gandhi Government between July 1988 and November 1989.
b. The efforts of the V.P. Singh Government during July–October 1990.
c. The efforts of the Chandrashekhar Government from December 1990 to February 1991.

The summary is purely the government version and yet it is being presented for fuller understanding of the issues involved and the efforts of the government to resolve them. As would be evident, the Rajiv Gandhi Government had kept some record of the discussions which were mostly confidential, while the V.P. Singh Government kept virtually no record of the confidential discussions it had had with different persons. In contrast to both, the Chandrashekhar Government had maintained minutes of the meetings with different groups which were open and formal meetings. The official summary was prepared as a background to the VHP–AIBMAC talks. The preparation and existence of this summary is also confirmed in the White Paper on Ayodhya issued by the Narasimha Rao Government.

The official summary of the record of the Ayodhya affair under the Rajiv Gandhi Government from July 1988 to November 1989

6.3. The secret background note prepared in 1992 summarised the discussions held from July 1988 to November 1989 as under:

> A detailed note prepared by the Ministry of Home Affairs on the above subject is attached.
>
> "In brief, the urgency of holding negotiations was felt around July 1988 keeping in view the accentuation of the controversy and the rival calls of a 'mini march' proposed by the Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC) to Ayodhya and a 'Rath Yatra' by the RJB (Ramjanmabhoomi) protagonists to Ayodhya. **The Home Minister held discussions on 30.7.1988 with the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and S/Shri Syed Shahabuddin and Sulaiman Sait, MPs.** Shri Shahabuddin and Shri Sait were persuaded to call off the proposed mini march.

Later, however, another call of a long march to Ayodhya on 14.10.1988 was given. In August and September, 1988 the Home Minister held meetings with Muslim MPs of Congress (I), leaders of the Babri Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) and BMAC as well as with the representatives of the RJB Mukti Yagya Samiti (RJBMYS). While both the sides said that they would not be averse to a negotiated settlement, the positions taken by them appeared to be difficult to reconcile.

On 12.10.1988, the Home Minister held a meeting with the BMMCC led by Shri Syed Shahabuddin. After this meeting the BMMCC agreed to postpone the proposed long march to Ayodhya on 14.10.1988 on an assurance from the Government that it would expedite the hearing of the title suits in the event of a negotiated settlement not coming through.

Further discussions were held in February and March 1989 including discussions with leaders of opposition parties in Parliament. While continuing the efforts to seek a mutually acceptable solution of the problem through discussion, the Government of Uttar Pradesh was also advised to take measures for expediting the legal process.

Tension started rising over the RJB-BM dispute in September 1989 due to the plan of the VHP to carry consecrated bricks (Ram Shilas) from all over the country to Ayodhya and lay the foundation of the temple on 9.11.1989. The Home Minister reviewed the situation with the Chief Minister of UP on 10.9.89 and on 27.9.89 visited Lucknow for another similar review. Discussions were held with the VHP to persuade them to carry out their programme of Ram Shila Processions and the Shilanyas in a manner that would not disturb the peace and would respect the orders of the Court given on 14.8.1989 regarding maintenance of the status quo.

The office bearers of the VHP issued a signed statement on 27.9.89 giving such assurances (Annex-III of MHA note).

The Shilanyas ceremony took place at the selected site on 9.11.89. Advocate General of Uttar Pradesh opined that this site did not fall within the disputed land covered by injunction of the High Court issued on 14.8.89, as elaborated by a clarificatory order dated 7.11.89.

The highlights of the detailed note of the Home Ministry referred to in the summary are as under:

a. On 30th July, 1988 the Home Minister held a review meeting with the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister over the tension building on the Ayodhya issue. Surprisingly, the review meeting of the Government is attended by two Muslim MPs belonging to opposition parties, S/Shri Syed Shahabuddin and Sulaiman Sait.

The Home Ministry records:

On 30th July 1988, **the Home Minister held a review meeting with the Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh** to discuss the communal tension building over the issue; **it was also attended by Shri Syed Shahabuddin and Shri Sulaiman Sait, MPs.** While conveying Government's concern over the proposed mini march of the BMAC, Home Minister and Chief Minister, UP impressed upon the two MPs to withdraw the march. The two MPs pointed out that the decision to hold the mini-march was taken to highlight the strong feelings of the Muslims over the undue delay in the resolution of this issue and the failure of the authorities to take any initiative in the matter. It was explained to the MPs that some delay was inevitable in such a sensitive and delicate matter. After discussion, an agreed press release (Annex-I) was given... **From the tone of the further notes it appears that instead of the mini-march, BMAC decided to hold a long march later, i.e., on 14th October 1988.**

So the result of the review meeting was a long march instead of a mini-march. Again surprisingly "the agreed press release" referred to in the Home Ministry note

is not the press release to which the two Muslim MPs are parties. It is government's press release. The press release read as under:

> A review meeting was held between the CM UP and Home Minister on 30.7.1988, to discuss the tension building up over the issue of Ram Janama Bhoomi and Babri Masjid. After the meeting Home Minister issued the following statement:
>
> > The Government is determined to take necessary steps to find an acceptable solution through negotiations and urges upon all concerned to respond positively to the process of negotiations. The Government offers its good offices to the interested parties in this respect. In the unlikely event of negotiated settlement not coming through, the Government will take steps to expedite the legal process through the High Court to get the final decision in the matter. I therefore earnestly appeal to all concerned to give up agitational approach and cooperate with the Government in finding an acceptable solution.

Thus what the press release terms as the review meeting of the Union Home Ministry and the UP Chief Minister is really a meeting of the two with **two Muslim MPs.**

b. On 17th August, 1988 the Home Minister held a meeting with **Muslim Congress (I) MPs,** where the following points were discussed:

- expedition of judicial process through a special bench to hear the matter.
- early action to fix a cut-off date in regard to the ownership of the religious places to avoid future controversies.

It is public knowledge that these points of the Muslim Congress (I) MPs were implemented.

c. The next meeting of the Union Home Minister and UP Chief Minister was with the Babri Masjid Movement Coordination Committee and Babri Masjid Action Committee. The Home Ministry note on this meeting is significant.

> The BMMCC representatives demanded that the idols should be taken out of the mosque. Some of them stated that a negotiated settlement was not possible as the Hindu hardliners would not budge from their known stand. They held out that if the issue is not resolved peacefully, Government should expedite the legal process and some visible action should be taken, otherwise the long march on 14 October 1988 would not be withdrawn. They also expressed a preference for referring the title suits to a three-Member Bench of any court in South India and the Judges constituting the bench should preferably not belong to either the Hindu or the Muslim community. They did not seem to favour any solution which would mean the continued use of the structure for idol worship and giving up the Muslim claim over the mosque. They, however, did not seem averse to a negotiated settlement.

d. The first meeting of the Home Minister with the Ramjanmabhoomi Mukti Yagna Samiti was on 1st September, 1988. The Home Minister's impression of the meeting is as under:

> The Home Minister's impression after the meeting was that the RJBMYS representatives wanted to convey their strong feelings regarding the RJB-BM issue as also the Varanasi and Mathura issues and was quite resolute not to yield ground on the RJB issue. They also held the view that a legal solution of this problem would not be effective as it was related to centuries old faith of the Hindus. They were, however, not averse to holding talks with the Masjid protagonists provided they withdrew their call for the march. Subsequently, on 12 October 1988, Home Minister held a meeting with the BMMCC members led by Shri Syed

Shahabuddin. An assurance was given to them that Government will expedite the hearing of the title suits in the event of a negotiated settlement not coming through. Thereupon, the BMMCC agreed to postpone the march proposed on 14 October 1988. A press note was released.

e. The Home Ministry note says: "There are no notes relating to any development that might have taken place between 14 October 1988 and 31 January 1989."

f. The next meeting of the Home Minister is again with Shri Syed Shahabuddin on 1 February 1989 — this time as desired by the Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The Home Ministry note on the meeting is also very significant.

> **On 1 February 1989, as desired by Prime Minister, Home Minister held a meeting with Shri Syed Shahabuddin and others. Home Minister clarified that the Government had not gone back on its assurance to expedite the judicial process** in the event of the negotiated settlement not coming through, **and drew his attention to the advice given to the Government of Uttar Pradesh on 25 January 1989 to take steps for expediting the legal process.** Home Minister denied that Government had shown any vacillation or had adopted dilatory tactics. **Home Minister drew Shri Shahabuddin's attention to the following points made in his representation to the Prime Minister:**
>
> a. **Enactment of a law to protect the status of all places of worship as on 15th August 1947.**
> b. **Release of those arrested/detained in connection with the Babri Masjid agitation.**
> c. Issue of a public statement by the Home Minister or by Chief Minister, UP, on the threat of VHP to demolish the Babri Masjid and to construct a Temple on its site, and
> d. Action against inflammatory, provocative and defamatory statements, publications, slogans, speeches, posters etc. directed against any community.
>
> **Home Minister made it clear that no commitment had ever been given to Shri Shahabuddin on the above issues; however, he pointed out the action taken/being taken by Government in regard to these issues.** After the meeting, Home Minister seems to have felt that the settlement of the dispute through the judicial process was perhaps the only alternative available since the discussions with the concerned parties had not led to the emergence of common ground. Accordingly, he informally advised the Chief Minister, UP that he may like to approach the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court on the question of the constitution of a Special Bench of three judges for hearing the title suits.

So whatever Shri Syed Shahabuddin wanted was being or had been done although "no commitment was given to him".

The Home Minister's view recorded as early as February 1989 makes it evident that judicial process was the only way out as there was no common ground for negotiated settlement. So the UP Chief Minister was to approach the Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court to constitute a Special Bench.

g. The next meeting of the Home Minister was with the Leaders of Opposition parties in Parliament on 29th March, 1989. The Home Minstry note reads:

> On 29th March 1989, a meeting with the leaders of Opposition parties in Parliament was held to discuss the RJB-BM issue. Besides the Home Minister, S/Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, K.C. Pant, H.K.L. Bhagat, Dr. Rajendra Kumari Bajpai and two Ministers of State in the Home Ministry were present. No representative of the BJP attended even though a request had been sent to Shri L.K. Advani. Home Minister's note dated 29th March 1989 to Prime Minister

indicates that "At the outset, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao set the tone for the meeting by stating that the problem was above political party and political persuasion and should be viewed in national perspective. Regretting that the issue could not be settled at the local level by the exercise of local initiative, he observed that a way out had to be found for defusing the situation."

The Home Minister briefly explained the various aspects of the issue and the efforts made by the Central Government in cooperation with the Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh to seek a mutually acceptable solution of the problem through discussions. It was further pointed out that since the discussions had not led to the emergence of any common ground, the Government of Uttar Pradesh have been advised to expedite the legal process. He further referred to the grave situation created by the threat to demolish the Babri Masjid and start construction of the Temple.

Here again the consensus was to expedite the legal process and the UP Government was advised accordingly. This again as early as March 1989.

h. The Home Ministry Note says **"No notes are available relating to the period between March 1989 and September 1989".**

i. The developments from September 1989 to November 1989 have been summarised by the Home Ministry as under:

Around September 1989, tensions again started rising over the RJB-BM dispute due to the plans of the VHP to carry "Ram Shilas" from all over the country to Ayodhya and lay the foundation stone of the Temple on 9th November 1989. The Home Minister held a meeting on 10th September 1989 with the Chief Minister to review the situation. It was felt that the best course would be to impress upon the VHP not to force the issue as the matter was pending before the Allahabad High Court. Simultaneously, the State Administration should take measures in relation to the law and order situation. On 27th September 1989, Home Minister visited Lucknow and reviewed the law and order situation in the context of the VHP plan. **The Chief Minister was apprehensive about using force for maintenance of law and order and indicated his preference for a smooth observance of the VHP programme by reaching an understanding with prominent Muslim and Hindu leaders.** Home Minister indicated that there may not be any objection to the VHP programme provided the Court's order regarding status quo was not violated and the VHP cooperated with the authorities and agreed to certain changes, particularly in regard to the routes of the Ram Shila processions and the location of the foundation-laying ceremony. Home Minister's impression was that the State Government were not yet clear regarding the approach to be adopted for dealing with the situation. However, now that they knew that the Central Government would not be averse to permit the Shilanyas in a controlled manner, the State Government would review their strategy and action plan. Home Minister also held a meeting with important Hindu leaders where Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh was also present. After detailed discussion, an understanding was reached with the VHP, a copy of which is at Annex III. It would be seen that the VHP had given an undertaking to abide by the directive of the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court given on 14th August 1989 regarding the maintenance of the status quo.

Home Minister again visited Lucknow on 8th November 1989 and reviewed the law and order situation in the context of the VHP's Shilanyas programme with the Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh and State officers. During the visit, a meeting was also held with senior VHP leaders. The VHP leaders gave an assurance that they stand by their earlier commitment of cooperating with the authorities and abiding by the High Court's order of 14 August 1989, and further they would also comply with the High Court's order of 7 November 1989 in

which the High Court had clarified that the order of 14 August 1989 applied to the entire property in dispute in the suit in so far as it was included within the boundary of EFGH in the site plan attached to the plaint. The Advocate General of Uttar Pradesh explained the implications of the clarificatory order of the High Court and observed that the Shilanyas site was outside the limits of EFGH. The VHP leaders also maintained that the Shilanyas site was not within the purview of the High Court's order. The State Government authorities intimated that the site was at a distance of about 100 ft. from the boundary injuncted by the Court. After the meeting, Shri Syed Shahabuddin called on Home Minister and apprised him of the result of the meeting. He seemed satisfied with this development. A press note was issued.

As is known, subsequently, the Shilanyas ceremony took place at the selected site.

The Press Note referred to in the Home Ministry's note is significant, particularly the following extract:

The clarificatory order of the High Court had said that their order of injunction dated 14.8.89 "was in respect of the entire property mentioned in the suit, including plot No.586, in so far included within the boundary described by letters E,F,G,H, in the site plan." The said site plan is part of the court record in the plaint of the Suit 12 of 1961 filed by the Sunni Central Board of Waqfs U.P. and others. The site of Shilanyas is clearly outside the limits of E F G H in the site plan. This position was explained by the Advocate General of U.P., in the meeting.

Shri Shahabuddin met the Home Minister at Lucknow immediately after the meeting to apprise himself of the result of the meeting.

It is evident from the above that the UP government was against use of force even during 1989 Shilanyas and in the decision to permit Shilanyas even Shri Shahabuddin was involved.

The role of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1987 — held back in the 1992 summary of events

6.4. Significantly the summary of the efforts of the different Governments, particularly the one relating to the Rajiv Gandhi period, holds back a vital truth, namely that, Shri Rajiv Gandhi Cabinet had appointed a Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao as early as 27th April, 1987 to find a solution. The information to the extent available indicates that the GoM met at least twice — on 21st May, 1987 and 8th October, 1987 — and resolved to solve the problem through local initiatives and to prepare the local opinion for judicial verdict by insulating it from the impact of the controversies. Why was this withheld in the 1992 summary? Was it because, the disclosure would have brought out the fact that Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao was not, like Shri V.P. Singh or Shri Chandrashekhar, new to the problem and to the management of it and was therefore better placed than those two Prime Ministers? However, the Home Minister's Note of 29th March, 1989 to the then Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi contains the admission of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao about his failure to localise the problem without of course saying that it was his own failure. To quote Shri Rao in the words of Shri Buta Singh:

"Regretting that the issue could not be settled at the local level by the exercise of local initiative he (Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao) observed that a way out has to be found for defusing the situation."

Except to make it appear that the present Prime Minister was not involved in the past, save in a meeting with the opposition leaders on 29th March, 1989, there is no reason why his role as the Chairman of the Group of Ministers to deal with and solve the Ayodhya problem should have been suppressed from the summary made in 1992 about efforts in the past by different Governments to solve the problem.

The official summary of the Government records during Shri V.P. Singh's tenure from July 1990 to October 1990

6.5. The summary made by the core group on the negotiations relating to the Ayodhya issue under Shri V.P. Singh's Government (referred to by the ministry as the First Phase of the negotiations) is as under:

> **The available records of the Home Ministry contain very little material relating to the first phase of the negotiations.** The available material indicates that a series of meetings were held by Shri Subodh Kant Sahay, the then MOS (Home) in July 1990. The list of people who were invited for discussions with Shri Sahay is at Annex-I. **No official record is available on what transpired at these meetings.**
>
> Informally, some officers who were involved in the discussions at that time, have informed that the leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), All India Babri Masjid Action Comittee (AIBMAC) and Babri Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) were called for separate meetings with Shri Subodh Kant Sahay to know their views. The leaders suggested various solutions ranging from shifting of the disputed shrine (Hindu position) to the removal of the idols from the disputed building (Muslim position). However, no tangible progress is said to have been achieved in these meetings. **Reportedly, efforts were then made to contact important religious leaders individually in order to find a negotiated settlement. These religious leaders included Shri Syed Abdulla Bukhari, Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid and Swami Jayendra Saraswati, Shankaracharya of Kanchi Peeth, both of whom also issued appeals on Doordarshan.**
>
> **The RJB-BM issue was discussed at length in the National Integration Council, at its meeting held at Madras on 22 September 1990 and a resolution was passed a copy of which is at Annex-II. This resolution, inter alia welcomed the initiative taken by the Shankaracharya of Kanchi and Janab Ali Mian of Nadwa. It is reported that the Shahi Imam was not pleased with the mention of Ali Mian's name and the omission of his own name. In any case, this meeting of the NIC suffered in prestige and effectiveness because of its boycott by the BJP.**
>
> **Reportedly, during this phase of the negotiations, two proposals were under active consideration.** One was the maintenance of the status-quo with the implications that there shall be no alteration or damage to the existing structure, but the Hindu worship of the idols placed therein will continue. The second proposal visualised the 'sharing' of the disputed shrine, with the Hindus to be given the Central and Southern portions of the shrine and the Muslims its Northern portion. Both communities could construct their places of worship according to their own plans in their respective area. **In the end, however, an agreed formula did not emerge.**
>
> **At a later stage, two Governors viz., Shri Krishna Kant of Andhra Pradesh and Shri Mohd. Yunus Saleem of Bihar were inducted into the negotiation process. It seems both claimed that they had been working behind the scene and should not have been excluded from the parleys. However, how they went about the negotiations and what progress was achieved is not clear. The Bihar Governor's role also came in for much criticism.**

Reportedly, they held meetings with religious leaders of both sides, but this part of the exercise was not only unproductive, but proved a setback.

During the month of October 1990, meetings were held with Chief Ministers, important religious leaders, political parties and eminent persons, including educationists, historians and other opinion makers. **These were of informal nature, and proper and systematic records of these meetings are not available.** In the All Party meeting held on 17 October 1990, it was, **inter alia,** discussed that nothing should be done to hurt the religious sentiments of Hindus as well as Muslims or to disturb the status-quo, that the Ram Janma Bhoomi dispute should be settled through negotiations failing which through the verdict of the court. In the meeting with eminent persons held on 22 October 90, the speakers expressed various views; the complete record of the various points raised by these people are not available, but they are reported to be reiteration of views expressed earlier in the NIC and other meetings.

In October 1990, the Government issued an Ordinance to provide for the acquisition of the Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid area and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The acquisition Ordinance resulted in a sharp reaction from both Muslims and Hindus despite efforts by Shri Yunus Saleem, then Governor of Bihar. Consequently, the Ordinance was withdrawn on 23 October 1990 and status-quo was restored."

It is evident from the above that Shri V.P. Singh's Government conducted totally informal and unrecorded negotiations in the most secretive manner, and obviously through different channels — ranging from VHP, AIBMAC, BMMCC, Shankaracharya of Kanchi Shri Jayandra Saraswati, the Governors of Andhra and Bihar, Shri Subodh Kant Sahay and Shri Ali Mian. Even the list of persons who were involved is limited to the persons who met Shri Subodh Kant Sahay. Even in respect of their meetings "no official record is available on what transpired at these meetings".

6.6. It is obvious that whom the Prime Minister Shri V.P. Singh met especially in October, 1990 and how the take-over Ordinance came to be issued, are not explainable. The entire negotiation by Shri V.P. Singh was conducted in utmost secrecy and outside the records, in an anonymous and informal manner. The role of certain others in the final negotiations has been detailed earlier in this chapter, based on the oral testimony of important participants.

The official summary of the record of the discussions of the Government under Shri Chandrashekhar from December 1990 to February 1991, shows straight-forward conduct

6.7. The negotiations conducted under Shri Chandrashekhar's initiative show a more open approach. The minority Government of Chandrashekhar did not employ any intermediaries, official or unofficial, and the meetings were open. Everyone was a participant, everyone was present at the discussions and a complete record of the discussions is available. The summary made by the core group in respect of the dialogue from December 1990 to February 1991 is as under:

The second phase of the negotiations was undertaken following a fresh initiative by the Government of Shri Chandrashekhar to find a solution to the RJB-BM dispute. During this phase, apart from Shri Subodh Kant Sahay, Shri Sharad Pawar (then Chief Minister of Maharashtra), Shri B.S. Shekawat (Chief Minister of Rajasthan) and Shri Mulayam Singh

Yadav (then Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh) also participated in the meetings. The list of persons from both sides who were involved in the meetings is at Annex-III. Apparently, the following meetings were held:

i. **Meetings between the VHP and the AIBMAC at Maharashtra Sadan on 1 December 1990.** Though inconclusive, the meeting decided to continue the dialogue. The minutes of the meeting are at Annex-IV.

ii. **On 4 December 1990, the two sides met again in the Maharashtra Sadan and agreed to exchange documents on 22 December 1990** in support of their respective claim. Minutes of the meeting are at Annex-V.

iii. **After the exchange of documents, the third meeting was held on 10 January 1991** where the documents were discussed. The minutes of the meeting are at Annex-VI. It was agreed that the documents submitted by the VHP and the AIBMAC may be divided into four groups as follows:

   a. Historical;
   b. Archaeological;
   c. Revenue; and
   d. Legal.

It was also resolved that these documents should be examined by experts on the subject whose names would be submitted by both parties by 17 January 1991 and **the meeting of the experts would start work from 24 January 1991.**

iv. **The nominated experts met on 24th January 1991.** There was disagreement on many points; however, it was resolved to request Government to authenticate the documents produced by both sides. A report on this meeting is at Annex-VII. **Thereafter, the fourth meeting was held on 6 February 1991** and a resolution was adopted, copy of which is at Annex-VIII. It was resolved that the Government would compare the documents, as presented by both the parties, with the originals and attest their genuineness. It was further resolved that both the parties would submit their view-points and an analysis by the experts of the views of the opposite party. However, it appears that neither of the parties submitted its view-points and expert analysis to the Government in writing.

At a much later date, i.e., 13 May 1991, a group of four historians submitted a report to the Government. These four historians were the ones who had participated in the earlier negotiations as nominees of the BMAC. The gist of the conclusions arrived at by these historians is at Annex-IX.

For the authentication of the archaeological and historical documents, letters had been written to the National Archives of India, Archaeological Survey of India and the Indian Council of Historical Research. **The National Archives and the Archaeological Survey of India returned the documents after due authentication. The Indian Council of Historical Research authenticated the documents pertaining to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, but have so far not authenticated the documents relating to the BMAC. As regards the revenue and legal documents, the process to authenticate these could not be completed since there was a sudden change in the political situation consequent on the announcement for elections to the Lok Sabha."**

The dialogue had failed as the AIBMAC virtually absented itself—and subsequently, after the Chandrashekhar Government collapsed, no effort was made to revive the talks.

The shifting stand of the Masjid groups nailed by demolition

6.8. While Syed Shahabuddin had said originally that if it was proved that a temple ex-

isted, and was demolished to build the mosque, the Muslims themselves would bring down the structure, later he began to set the standards of proof for complying with his commitment. Thus, though the stand was reasonable, the demand for proof was totally unreasonable, even impossible.

- **First,** he demanded "any documentary proof" of the demolition of the temple to erect the mosque.
- **Second,** when unimpeachable records of the British Government were tendered to prove the Hindu case, he said that only "pre-British evidence would be acceptable".
- **Third,** when the writings of Muslim historians and scholars (which were actually being secreted and suppressed) were unearthed, and produced to prove that what the British had said was true, he said that these scholars were also following only the British version, and that their views were, therefore, not acceptable.
- **Fourth,** when pre-British evidence was produced to substantiate the Hindu claim, he said that even that would not suffice, and demanded that "contemporaneous and pre-1528 evidence alone would be accepted".

6.9. Now, the demolition, which alone could produce what Shri Shahabuddin stipulated has brought out not just contemporaneous, not just pre-1528 evidence, but evidence anterior to Babur, establishing that a Temple — and a Vaishnavite one — existed. When this was brought to his notice, Syed Shahabuddin promptly disowned his previous commitment to bring down the mosque if proof of the pre-existing temple was given, and declared that such commitment was no more valid in view of the demolition!

6.10. Thus, what appeared to be a reasonable stand, was based on conditions which became unreasonable, because each time the VHP tried to fulfil the standards of proof set by Syed Shahabuddin, he set fresh standards of proof. Now it is clear that Syed Shahabuddin took that stand only to make it impossible to provide the proof he set.

Syed Shahabuddin never intended that the matter should be resolved peacefully, and shot down the only possible solution offered by the Shia leader

7.1. All the demands — and increasingly stringent and impossible demands — for proof had only one aim: to thwart the reasonable demand of the Hindus to the site where they believed Sri Rama was born. When the Sants and the VHP proposed as early as 1986-87, that the Hindus would reverentially shift and relocate the Babri structure, as the site was important to the Hindus and the structure was to the Muslims, Syed Shahabuddin stated that not merely the structure, but also the site was sacred to the Muslims. But this was a patent lie. The site was, and is not important to the Muslims. In fact, not even a structure is sacred to the Muslims. When Shri Anjum Qader, the All India Shia Conference leader, proposed some time in 1987 that the Muslims should accept the solution of shifting of the Babri structure, Syed Shahabuddin wrote back to him on 4.7.1987 stating as follows:

Dear Mr. Anjum Qader,
Your letter of 1st June 1987.
Even if shifting is permissible under some school of Fiqh, there is no reason at all to opt for shift. In fact, one shift would open a Pandora's box. Please do not pursue this line.....

.....

.....

.....

I remain absolutely and totally opposed to the mischievous idea of shift proposed by the RSS,which you appear inclined to accept. Please reconsider.

Yours sincerely,
Syed Shahabuddin.

7.2. Thus, the most reasonable proposal of the VHP, which was acceptable to the Shia community to whom actually the Babri structure belonged, was shot down by Syed Shahabuddin, by invoking the frightful possibility of a Pandora's box being opened up. But what appeared to have really opened up the Pandora's box was not the proposal of shifting, but the demand for proof. The proof given by the VHP in the case of Ramajanmabhoomi was complete for an independent body, but was not conclusive on the standards set by the Masjid groups, till demolition intervened and produced the irrebuttable and conclusive proof. But, as Shri Shahabuddin knows, and as even the so-called independent but Marxist, historians sponsored by the Babri groups cannot deny, the irrefutable proof that Hindu temples were desecrated and demolished to raise the mosques at Mathura and Varanasi does exist. This calls for no debate or dialogue. If tendering proof is the proper way to justify the claim to the sites on which the mosques stand, then, Varanasi and Mathura should have have been restored to the Hindus long back and even now, purely on evidence, they cannot be prevented from laying claim to them. But being tolerant, the Hindus wanted the Ramajanmabhoomi first and in preference to Mathura and Varanasi, not because of considerations of evidence, but on considerations of the religious sensibilities of Muslims. In Mathura, at least once a year, the mosque is used for worship, that is, on the Id day. In Varanasi it is used for prayers on Fridays. Only in Ayodhya, the so-called mosque was a non-mosque, at least from 1934, and from 1949 it became virtually a temple. Even though they had more conclusive evidence on Mathura and Varanasi than on Ayodhya, the Hindus chose Ayodhya because there was no prayer in the structure, and the construction of the temple where the non-mosque was, could not offend the religious sensibilities of even those Muslims who own the Babri structure. The choice of Ayodhya shows the basic thrust of the Hindu mind not to offend the sensibilities of Muslims, even where it concerned their holiest places. The Babri groups were aware of why the Hindus chose Ayodhya first over Mathura and Varanasi, and yet they kept on insisting for evidence and proof. This alone has the potentiality to open the Pandora's box, and not the shifting of the Babri structure proposed by the VHP.

CHAPTER V

THE CONDUCT OF THE NARASIMHA RAO GOVERNMENT: CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE KAR SEVA IN JULY 1992, AND ITS SUSPENSION

1.1. The contents of the previous chapter (Chapter IV) bring out the distortions and contradictions in Indian politics, particularly that of the ex-Congress and Left parties, because of their lack of ideology and commitment to their professed principles. There is complete divorce between what most of them talk in private and what they declare in public, and also between what they repeatedly declare and what they ultimately do. The greatest casualty has been truth. Nothing exposed this farce more than the Ayodhya issue. But the worst offender in this regard is the present government — particularly the Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao. The previous chapter, which brings out how the Rao Government had all the evidence to take a decision and yet did not, is only a preface to its devious conduct, particularly from May 1992 onwards. How the Narasimha Rao Government — and Shri Narasimha Rao himself — who repeatedly charge the BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh and the BJP leaders with betrayal, actually betrayed everyone — its own Cabinet Ministers who worked to solve the issue, the Sants and the BJP–VHP–RSS leaders who met and trusted the Prime Minister, the leaders of the Muslim organisations, and finally the country itself — will be evident from the irrefutable facts that emerge partly from Chapter IV and fully from Chapter V and Chapter VI. The narration of the circumstances leading to the Kar Seva in July 1992 in the present Chapter and the circumstances leading to the Kar Seva in December 1992, will establish who betrayed whom and who was perfidious — the BJP, its Government in UP, the Sants, and the RSS Parivar, or the Government in Delhi and the Prime Minister himself?

The background to the decision to resume Kar Seva in July 1992

2.1. The barbaric massacre of Karsevaks by the Mulayam Singh Government in October–November 1990 had resulted in unprecedented anger and indignation all over the country. Yet there was no riot anywhere. The anger was only directed against the V.P. Singh Government at the Centre, the Mulayam Singh Government in Uttar Pradesh, and the pseudo-secular parties, and not against any particular community. Not a single Muslim was hurt in any part of the country as a result of the firing on the Karsevaks in Ayodhya.

Installation of a Minority Government to avoid and defer elections because of the Hindu wave

2.2. As there was perceptible anger and indignation against pseudo-secularism and a sweeping Hindu wave in BJP's favour, no party other than the BJP was willing to face

elections. A minority government led by Shri Chandrashekhar was sworn in in November 1990 with the support of the Congress Party which, despite Shri Rajiv Gandhi at the helm, was unwilling to form a Government mainly because of the Ayodhya challenge.

The Ayodhya movement leaders and BJP help to bring down the national temperature

2.3. One of the first acts of the minority Government was to reduce the temperature in national politics — a national task in which, it was the Ayodhya movement leaders and the BJP who helped more than anyone else. Despite the fact that the national atmosphere had swung in favour of the BJP, the BJP and the Ayodhya movement leaders planned for a peaceful Satyagraha at Ayodhya for Kar Seva. Although a more aggressive campaign could have been thought of, the BJP saw that it was not in the over all national interest.

Massive Satyagraha at Ayodhya — not a stone thrown at the structure, no one hurt

2.4. The Kar Seva Satyagraha at Ayodhya was massive — over 2,50,000 Karsevaks were arrested during the period from 6th December 1990. Not a single untoward incident took place, in Ayodhya or elsewhere; no one was hurt, not even a stone was thrown on the disputed structure. The Central Government handled the issue with equal responsibility, and sensing the public mood the Mulayam Singh Government too fell in line.

Kar Seva Satyagraha at Ayodhya, and talks between VHP and AIBMAC at Delhi

2.5. Even as the Kar Seva Satyagraha was on, simultaneously talks were on between the VHP and the Masjid groups. An important participant, in fact, an inspiration and instrument along with Shri Sharad Pawar in the talks, was Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat who was the Chief Minister of Rajasthan and a BJP leader. The Satyagraha did not affect the talks, nor did the talks impede the Satyagraha; both went hand in hand. (This can be easily contrasted with the AIBMAC pulling out of the talks on November 8, 1992 on the ground that the next Kar Seva date had been fixed — a frivolous charge which the Government has upheld as its own view too in its White Paper).

Talks snap formally, with the fall of the Chandrashekhar Government

2.6. The Chandrashekhar Government had specified the only relevant issue — whether a Hindu structure existed at the site before the mosque — for determination and the talks proceeded with highly productive results. But with the fall of the minority Government, the ongoing interaction between the two sides under the aegis of the Government also got suspended. The next meeting of the two sides was scheduled for 24-25 January 1991. But the Masjid groups and their representatives absented themselves on the 25th.

Parliamentary elections, and the mandate to build Rama Temple at Ayodhya

2.7. The General Elections were called in May 1991 and fought by the BJP on the Mandir

issue and all that flowed from it, namely, on the issues of secularism, communalism and nationalism, besides Swadeshi. Halfway through the election process (when nearly half of the country had already gone to polls), the nation faced a great tragedy — Shri Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. This acted as a turning point in the electoral process — the Congress emerged as the single largest party in Parliament with 246 seats and the BJP second with 119 seats. The *Economist* wrote that 'the winner came second'. This was how the Ayodhya issue dominated the electoral scene in 1991. The minority Congress Government under Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao assumed office at Delhi in June 1991 and the BJP Government under Shri Kalyan Singh assumed office at Lucknow. It was the admitted position that the BJP Government in UP had an electoral mandate, in fact, a democratic obligation, to help build the temple at Ayodhya after removing all hurdles to the construction. Thus from being a subject of agitation, the objective of the Ayodhya movement had become the part of the Government's democratic responsibility. This marked a qualitative change in national politics, as compared to the period from 1984 to June 1991 when Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Shri V.P. Singh and Shri Chandrashekhar were successive Prime Ministers.

The present Government's advantage over its predecessors

2.8. Thus, as compared to the previous Prime Ministers, Shri Narasimha Rao had an advantage — the advantage of an electoral verdict and, in fact, an electoral mandate for the Rama Temple at Ayodhya. Although the verdict was secured by the BJP as its mandate, it was nevertheless a people's verdict. In any negotiation to solve the dispute, this mandate would have been a rational argument for a neutral government to help to solve the problem. Thus, the present government was placed in a relatively advantageous position to effect a solution as compared to the earlier Governments. (As would be seen later, far from using this advantage the Narasimha Rao Government worked to defeat it as part of a political strategy to humiliate the BJP and see to it that the BJP does not redeem its electoral commitment.)

BJP works on non-agitational alternatives; Kalyan Singh Government's plan with a vision

2.9. In view of the national problems, particularly on the economic front, the BJP extended the most constructive cooperation to Shri Narasimha Rao and his Government. In fact, this support was at a cost to the BJP itself. Again, considering that there were other alternatives like dialogue between VHP and AIBMAC as the Chandrashekhar Government had initiated, and legislative and acquisition options for solving the Ayodhya problem and commencing the Temple work, the BJP was intent on pursuing such non-agitational options. With this objective, the BJP pursued a line without agitational programme on Ayodhya during the period from July 1991 to June 1992. But being in power only in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP could not pursue both the options. Because the first alternative was not in the hands

of the BJP as being a party to the dispute and a protoganist of the Temple and not being in power in Delhi, it could not have recommenced the dialogue on its own. But with the limited constitutional and legal authority it had for pursuing the second alternative, that is, for acquisition if not legislation, the Kalyan Singh Government in UP chalked out a plan with a vision which, in the short run, reconciled its mandate with the stand of the Masjid groups and all major political parties on the dispute regarding the Ayodhya structure.

The Kalyan Singh Government delinks Kar Seva from the dispute as to the structure, consistent with the stand of all parties

2.10. The Uttar Pradesh Government divided the Ayodhya issue in two parts, more accurately in two phases.

The **first phase** was the commencement of Temple construction on the land adjacent to the disputed structure; and the **second phase** was the resolution of the dispute regarding the Babri structure.

Surveying the official stand of all political parties on the Ayodhya issue, it was evident that no political party in India was opposed to the construction of the Temple at Ayodhya and every party was for construction of the Temple without demolishing the disputed structure. The disagreement was only on how to deal with the structure. The non-BJP parties were for resolution of the fate of the disputed structure by dialogue or by judicial adjudication. There being virtual national consensus on building the Temple without affecting the existing structure, the Uttar Pradesh Government, acting with great wisdom and foresight, decided to delink the immediate issue of construction from the long term issue as to the fate of the structure. This was possible because the architectural plan and engineering charts showed that it would take not less than two to two and half years for the construction on the adjoining site to be completed, and this time lag could be used to decide the fate of the structure by negotiation, and judicial adjudication or opinion, or by legislation. This sensible proposal which hurt no one's interests or sensibilities was conceived after considerable thinking. In fact, the White Paper issued by the Narasimha Rao's Government admits on the very first page that from 1991 the Temple movement aimed at construction leaving the disputed structure intact.

Uttar Pradesh acquires 2.77 acres of land in front of the structure, including 2.04 acres from VHP itself for construction and Kar Seva

2.11. In order to implement the proposal to delink the immediate issue of Kar Seva from the ultimate fate of the disputed structure and to enable the Kar Seva and construction to proceed without any impediment, the Kalyan Singh Government issued two Notifications on 7th and 10th October, 1991 acquiring a total of 2.77 acres in front of the disputed structure. This was for the purpose of promoting tourism and providing for amenities to tourists which

was later explained in court by an affidavit as for construction of the Temple. The objective of the acquisition was to make available the 2.77 acres after acquisition to the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas which was in charge of construction of the Temple. The acquisition was so designed that a substantial area abutting the structure as well as the access to it was left intact. Again, out of the 2.77 acres, 2.04 acres was acquired from the VHP itself which had earlier acquired it by purchase or gift from the previous owners. This 2.04 acres was included in the acquisition Notification with the knowledge and consent of the VHP so as to perfect its title and so that no one could later raise any title dispute about the 2.04 acres. Thus, the land acquisition of the Uttar Pradesh Government was mostly in respect of the land belonging to the VHP and only about 20% of the acquired land could be said to be disputed land out of the total acquisition of 2.77 acres.

The acquisition challenged, and subject to interim injunction that set at naught the object of the acquisition during the pendency of the case

2.12. This politically wise and constitutionally acceptable acquisition order was also challenged in Writs in High Court and Supreme Court. The result was interim injunctions by the High Court, and later by the Supreme Court, allowing the acquisition and possession to take effect, but, preventing its use for purposes of constructing permanent structure and alienation. The Allahabad High Court order dated 25th October, 1991 and the order of the Supreme Court dated 15th November, 1991 virtually set at naught, at least so long as the said orders operated, the very object of the acquisition, namely, to allow the Kar Seva and construction on the land adjoining and in front of the structure and delinking it from the decision as to the structure. Thus, the objective to overcome the immediate problem of construction and to get adequate time for dialogue and discussions, and if that did not yield result, for legislative solution, was thwarted through judicial injunction.

The UP Government, the BJP and the Supreme Court expected the High Court to take up the case for final disposal in December 1991

2.13. The UP Government and the BJP thought that the Writs against the acquisition would be decided expeditiously, considering the narrow issue involved — whether the acquisition offended the religious rights of Muslims and whether it was colourable. They, therefore, decided to await the outcome of the Writs. The Writs were expected to be disposed of by end 1991 itself. This is evident from the order of the Supreme Court dated 15th November 1991. This order was passed by the court when two more Writs challenging the acquisition were filed in the Supreme Court, even though two similar Writs were pending against the acquisition in the Allahabad High Court on which the High Court had passed injunctions against the alienation of and permanent construction on the land. The order of the Supreme Court read:

> We are of the view that when the High Court has already entertained the matter, made an interim order and as stated at the bar, **is staking the case for final disposal sometime in December of this year,** it may not be necessary and justifiable to transfer the writ petition pending before the High Court to this court. On the other hand, appropriate directions regarding interim arrangement may be made and three petitions transferred to the High Court for analogous disposal.

Thus the Supreme Court expected the High Court to take up the acquisition Writs for final disposal in "December of this year" that is December 1991. It is on this ground the Supreme Court rejected the plea for transfer of the Writs pending in the High Court to the Supreme Court, but, instead made the reverse order — transferred the three Writs filed against the acquisition in the Supreme Court to the High Court for " analogous disposal", that is to say, for final disposal in December 1991.

The delay in Allahabad High Court — December 1991 gone, and so also January 1992, February 1992, March 1992 and even April 1992

2.14. Thus the Ayodhya movement leaders and the BJP had every reason to expect that the acquisition case would be finally heard in December 1991 by the Allahabad High Court. It was not heard in December, 1991 not in January 1992, or February, or March, or April, or even May 1992. (In fact, as would be seen later, the hearing by the High Court concluded on November 4, 1992 and the judgement was delivered, as if scheduled, after the Kar Seva on December 6, 1992 which resulted in the demolition.) Thus the Ayodhya movement leaders, the UP Government and the BJP anxiously waited for the High Court to conclude the hearing. The hearings were prolonged day after day, week after week, and month after month, in spite of the fact that a special Bench was exclusively hearing the matter.

The UP Government wants the decision one way or the other, as even an adverse decision could help construction

2.15. The Ayodhya movement leaders and the UP Government wanted the High Court only to hand in the decision one way or the other because even an adverse verdict striking down the acquisition would also hand over the possession of 2.04 acres out of the total acquisition of 2.77 acres back to the VHP. The Kar Seva and the construction could commence on this 2.04 acres and, if it did, the Kar Seva would be automatically delinked from the fate of the structure which could be settled during the time of construction on the 2.04 acres which would take not less than 2 years. But curiously, even an adverse judgement was not forthcoming. All that happened was delay.

2.16. If this was the position in respect of a Writ petition which is a summary remedy, the case of the title suits filed in the years 1959 and 1961 could be well imagined. They had all continued to remain frozen in a state of suspended animation for decades already.

While the BJP and the UP Government battle for peace in Ayodhya, the Prime Minister is in deep slumber from July 1991 to April 1992, doing nothing, virtually nothing

2.17. While the judicial proceedings were going on at snails pace, and gave no hope of reconciling the mass urge on the Ayodhya issue with the judicial pronouncement on the acquisition case, the Narasimha Rao Government had virtually forgotten the Ayodhya issue. From July 1991 to April 1992 the Prime Minister did nothing, virtually nothing. This despite the fact that the BJP was giving constructive cooperation to this Government, at great political cost to itself but, in the national interest. The Prime Minister should have, as he alone could have, pursued the efforts of Shri Chandrashekhar from where they had come to an abrupt end. But he was totally unconcerned about this highly sensitive and emotive national issue despite the fact that the Ayodhya issue had become the agenda-setter in national politics since 1989 and had become the most dominant election issue in 1991.

Sants meet Shri Narasimha Rao in May 1992 to remind him of his responsibility and to announce the decision of Kar Seva in July, and plead with him to restart the VHP — AIBMAC dialogue

2.18. The total inaction of the Prime Minister compelled the Sants (who had decided at their meeting in Ujjain in the first week of May 1992 to start the Kar Seva from July 9, 1992) to seek a meeting with the Prime Minister. The meeting was arranged by Swami Chinmayananda (who is also an MP) through Shri Jitendra Prasad, adviser to the Prime Minister, on May 9, 1992. The Sants who met Shri Narasimha Rao were: Mahant Avaidyanathi, Vamdeoji Maharaj, Paramahans Ramachandradas, Mahant Nrityagopal Das, Swami Paramanandji, Swami Chinmayananda, and Pujya Shri Pejawar Swamiji. The meeting took place at 9.00 p.m. Swami Chinmayananda, Mahant Avaidyanath, Vamdeoji Maharaj, Pujya Shri Pejawar Swamiji and Paramahans Ramachandradas have testified as to what transpired at the meeting. The Sants told the Prime Minister:

i. "Nearly a year has passed after you became the Prime Minister and you have not even called us for a discussion.

ii. That is why we, on our own, sought this meeting with you as it should not appear that we are acting unilaterally.

iii. We have taken a decision to start the Kar Seva from July 9.

iv. We wanted to tell you this so that you will not say later that we did so without telling you.

v. You seem to have no place for Hindus in your mind — all your thinking seems to be centred on minorities.

vi. You have shut our mouth from even talking on Mathura and Varanasi by making a law that penalises anyone who questions the present status of those places with three years imprisonment."

The Prime Minister who remained silent for most part, spoke to the following effect: "I want early solution, and temple construction. But the issue has got mixed up in politics. Politics should be kept away. Dharmic matters should be resolved in dharmic ways. I seek your blessings to resolve it."

To which the Sants responded:

"We can keep politics away and find a solution. Proceed from where Shri Chandrashekharji left by arranging to recommence the dialogue with the Muslims".

The meeting ended with the Prime Minister giving no indication as to what he would do. He did not ask the Sants not to commence the Kar Seva.

The Prime Minister does nothing even after that — even during May and June 1992

2.19. The Prime Minister did nothing even after the Sants had pleaded with him on May 9, to continue from where his predecessor had left. He did nothing throughout the months of May and June, 1992.

Kar Seva commences on July 9, 1992

2.20. It was under these circumstances that the Kar Seva commenced on July 9, 1992. This set off furious activity in Courts and in Parliament. The Kar Seva went on for 17 days, from July 9 to July 26. Nothing untoward happened in Ayodhya or elsewhere. There was no turmoil anywhere except in Courts and in Parliament.

The July 1992 Karseva was not a snap decision, but a culmination of 21 months history of judicial delay, and inaction, and neglect by the Prime Minister

2.21. Thus, the Kar Seva in July 1992 was not a snap decision of the Sants taken in Ujjain in May 1992. It had a background extending back to the earlier Kar Seva in October 1990 — a 21 month run-up. The culmination point of the events from October 1990 was the July Kar Seva, namely,

- the Kar Seva Satyagraha in December 90 – January 91; the efforts of the movement leaders to reduce the national temperature;
- the VHP–AIBMAC talks in December 90 – February 91 and their abrupt end;
- the General Elections and assumption of office by the Narasimha Rao Government;
- the electoral mandate and obligation of the Uttar Pradesh Government to build the Temple, and the constructive cooperation to the Narasimha Rao Government by the BJP;
- the Uttar Pradesh Government's far-sighted strategy to delink the structure from the Kar Seva;
- the acquisition order to implement the delinking;
- the interim orders of the court stifling the very purpose of delinking;

- the Supreme Courts expectation that the High Court would take up the issue for final hearing in December 1991;
- the BJP, the UP Government and the movement leaders anxiously awaiting month after month the High Court decision, and nothing happens till April 1992;
- the Prime Minister, as if impervious to the whole Ayodhya issue, does nothing for a year;
- the Sants' decision in May 1992 to recommence the Kar Seva;
- the Sants' meeting with the Prime Minister in May 1992 to announce the Kar Seva decision and, ask him to restart the VHP-AIBMAC dialogue from where his predecessor had left;
- the total and admitted inaction of the Prime Minister even thereafter, and neglect of an explosive issue.

This is what led to the July 1992 Kar Seva. It was no sudden development or snap decision. It was a culmination of a 21 month history — history of judicial delay, and inaction, and neglect of a highly emotive problem by the Prime Minister himself.

The Prime Minister remains unconcerned till July 23, 1992

2.22. That the Prime Minister took no initiative in the matter till he met the Sants on July 23, 1992 has been implicitly admitted by the Government in its White Paper on Ayodhya. The White Paper in the chronology on Ayodhya first mentions Shri Narasimha Rao's name in the Ayodhya settlement efforts only in July 1992. (See Para 3.10 of the White Paper)

The events from July 9 to 26 — typical response of the courts, political parties and the Government

2.23. The reaction of the Government, the courts, and the non-BJP opposition parties was typical. The chronology of the events is very instructive.

8th July, 1992 Shri S.B. Chavan warns the Uttar Pradesh Government that the Central Government has constitutional obligation to perform.

9th July, 1992 The construction of platform from Singhdwar commences at Ayodhya.

10th July, 1992 Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah vacation judge of the Supreme Court sitting for the first time in his residence, asks the Uttar Pradesh Government for details of the construction.

There is an uproar in Lok Sabha. The house is adjourned.

11th July, 1992 Shri Kalyan Singh and Shri S.B. Chavan meet. Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, sitting at his residence again, warns that any permanent construction is liable to be demolished.

12th July, 1992 **Shri Chavan visits Ayodhya** and says that the Government would await the views of the court. But the newspapers report: **"He went into the**

sanctum sanctorum where he was offered prasad, a garland and a Ramnami dupatta (scarf)."

13th July, 1992 Shri Chavan tells Lok Sabha that the Uttar Pradesh Government has violated court orders but the Government would wait for the judiciary's view.

14th July, 1992 Shri Chavan tells Rajya Sabha that the Babri structure would not be allowed to be touched.

15th July, 1992 The Allahabad High Court bans further construction without prior permission. But the VHP refuses to stop the construction.

The Prime Minister tells the Lok Sabha that **Government will not allow the demolition of the mosque "now or two or three years hence".**

The Prime Minister invites VHP leaders for talks.

The Supreme Court directs the Uttar Pradesh Government to file an affidavit on whether any permanent construction has been made.

The Central Study Team which went to Ayodhya certifies that the mosque is structurally sound but the construction under way is not temporary.

16th July, 1992 The Counsel for Uttar Pradesh Government tells the Supreme Court that the Sadhus have gheraoed the Government officials and prevented them from visiting the site, and so the affidavit could not be filed.

17th July, 1992 Shri Chavan promises to consult the party leaders to make up his mind if the violation of court orders continued.

VHP says: "42 years ago the courts had taken up the responsibility of deciding this issue but could not. Now the Karsevaks will."

18th July, 1992 The talks between Uttar Pradesh Government officials and the Sants to stop the Kar Seva end in deadlock. **A large number of Sikh Karsevaks perform Kar Seva.**

The National Integration Council fails to reach a consensus.

19th July, 1992 **The Faizabad administration rules out use of force to secure compliance with court orders as it will lead to large scale violence and eviction of Karsevaks will be next to impossible.**

AIBMAC threatens to march to Ayodhya if construction does not stop in 10 days.

The Prime Minister sends S/Shri V.N. Gadgil and Vasant Sathe to meet the RSS leaders.

20th July, 1992 The DM of Faizabad opens fresh negotiation with VHP leaders to secure compliance with High Court orders. Faizabad lawyers go on strike to

support the construction. Shri Chavan tells Lok Sabha that "the Government has contingency plan to deal with the situation".

Muslim Karsevaks perform Kar Seva in Ayodhya.

21st July, 1992 **Shri Kalyan Singh** warns against centre sending forces and **says that use of force against Karsevaks will lead to law and order crisis.**

The Supreme Court orders the Uttar Pradesh Government to disclose the nature of the construction.

22nd July, 1992 The **Supreme Court offers to consolidate the cases and refer the issue** whether temple could be constructed on the acquired site **to a larger bench for day to day hearing and decision, if the Uttar Pradesh Government agrees to stop construction.**

The Prime Minister meets the BJP leaders, S/Shri L.K. Advani, A.B. Vajpayee and M.M. Joshi besides Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia. S/Shri Advani and Vajpayee suggest to the Prime Minister to call the Sants and talk to them.

The Prime Minister wants suspension of the Kar Seva.

23rd July, 1992 The Prime Minister meets the Sants. The details of the meeting as testified to by the Sants are described later.

The Supreme Court gives time till 27th July to the Uttar Pradesh Government.

24th July, 1992 **The Prime Minister appeals to the Sants and Mahants to stop the construction work so that the problems of the disputed structure could be solved in a time-bound manner.**

25th July, 1992 **The Prime Minister assures Shri Ashok Singhal** through an intermediary **that he would take personal interest and solve the problem in 3 months after talking to both sides.**

26th July, 1992 VHP stops the construction. But Shri Ashok Singhal hints that the next Kar Seva could be around October or early November.

This chronology brings out the feverish activity when the pressure of the Kar Seva was on. The moment the Kar Seva was stopped, things went back to square one. This was true of the Government as well as the courts. Invariably, the courts got activated only when Kar Seva was announced or under way, and the moment such pressure eased, the court proceedings too returned to their original speed. Again, the courts acted, as it were, only to prevent the Kar Seva and not to expedite the case.

The Sant–PM meeting on 23 July, 1992. The Sants give 3 months time for solution of the dispute as to the structure

2.24. The Sants who met the Prime Minister on 23 July, 1992 have testified about how the

meeting came to be arranged and what transpired at the meeting. The summary of their testimony is as under:

i. The Prime Minister did nothing from May 9, 1992, when the Sants met him last, to July 9, 1992 when the Kar Seva started.

ii. The Prime Minister spoke to the RSS leaders to get the Kar Seva suspended; but the RSS leaders asked the PM to talk to the Sants.

iii. The Sants were brought to Delhi by the UP Government plane on July 23. The PM had sent cars to the Airport. The Sants met the PM late in the evening.

iv. The PM said: "The situtation in the country is tense; the Lok Sabha is not functioning. The opposition is attacking me as a silent spectator of the violation of the High Court orders. The Congress is also opposing me. The Muslims too are turning against me. I request that the Kar Seva be stopped. I will try to solve the problem."

v. The Sants said: "The Babri structure is a symbol of slavery and it must go. In the face of the Shah Bano Case and Cauvery case how could it be said that the Hindus alone are violating court orders."

vi. The PM did not answer.

vii. The PM then said: "I am attacked on all sides. Please give me some time. I will continue where Shri Chandrashekhar had left and solve the problem in four months."

viii. The Sants said: "We have no trust in the Congress or in you, because you have lost the capacity to tell the truth on this issue on account of vote politics. But we are prepared to give three months time as you are honestly and sincerely confessing your difficulties and promising to resolve the issue. However, four months is inauspicious as Shri V.P. Singh took four months time and it ended in violence; therefore, three months."

ix. It was agreed to by the PM that "if we get proof from the evidence submitted by both sides that a temple was demolished to build the mosque, the place would be given to the Hindus; and that things would proceed from where the Chandrashekhar Government had left".

x. The Sants said: "You are calling the disputed structure a mosque which no Prime Minister has done. How could it be a mosque where pooja goes on?"

xi. The PM said: "I do not remember; I will have to check up the Lok Sabha proceedings."

This is how the meeting ended and, as explained later, the Kar Seva was suspended by the Sants.

Kar Seva suspended, things back to square one, the Prime Minister changes track and the Supreme Court drops the idea of transfer of the cases

2.25. The moment the Kar Seva pressure eased, things were back to their frozen state. The

Prime Minister's speech in the Lok Sabha on 27th July, 1992 was at variance with what he had told the Sants on 23rd July, 1992. The Prime Minister told the Lok Sabha: "The Sadhus were coming in the way of stoppage of construction. **The Chief Minister (of UP) said he could not shoot them.** A constitutional hurdle had to be overcome... I called them in the interest of the nation. They alone could be instrumental in stopping the work" (*Indian Express*, Madras Edition, 27th July, 1992). The Prime Minister had not told the Parliament what the Sants had said. The Sants had clearly told the Prime Minister that they were giving three months to start from where Shri Chandrashekhar had left, and to solve the problem by handing over the site to the Hindus if evidence was produced to prove that a temple existed before the mosque was constructed. This is precisely what the Prime Minister withheld from the public and the Parliament.

The Supreme Court too, finally and on August 4, 1992, dropped the offer to transfer the acquisition cases to itself and decide them again because, according to it, the cases in Allahabad High Court were far advanced. Even the Uttar Pradesh Government which had filed the application for transfer felt that way and did not insist on the transfer on the premise that the High Court cases had advanced too far. Instead, the Supreme Court appointed a 3-member Commission to probe the construction and report whether there had been any violation.

And for months thereafter, nothing moved. That inspite of the fact that while concluding its order the Supreme Court had directed: "The High Court will deal with and dispose of the matters most expeditiously."

CHAPTER VI

THE CONDUCT OF THE NARASIMHA RAO GOVERNMENT: CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE KAR SEVA AND DEMOLITIONN ON DECEMBER 6, 1992

1.1. The circumstances that led to the outburst of the Karsevaks who destroyed the Babri Masjid are an important and instructive part of the current history of India. While the implications and consequences of this event are important in the context of the future of India, what led to this event is an equally important area of study for not just historians, but political parties as well. The profane manner in which the Central Government and the Congress Party have explained the event — as an act of betrayal and a violation of the court order — and the equally profane manner in which the other pseudo-secular parties have described the event — as the failure of the Central Government to protect the "mosque" — ignores the history of this country as well as the brooding national mind that had been held in check for too long. What happened at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992 has as its background the highly provocative context in which the Kar Seva took place.

Demolition, not inspite of court orders or the actions of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, but precisely because of them

1.2. The chronology and narration that follow will establish that the demolition took place not despite the court orders or the efforts of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, but precisely because of them. To put it in brief, the Karsevaks were impelled to demolish the structure by the provocative actions of the Central Government, by its taking refuge under an aloof judiciary, which in turn was dealing with the question as if it was an ordinary property dispute which could be handled by the usual adversary procedures of bilateral litigation. The forces of unreason were met with equal anger by the Karsevaks. The Narasimha Rao Government knew well that this emotive issue involved the people at large, and not just a handful of leaders. But the object of the Government was to deal not with the people which it left to the Uttar Pradesh Government to tackle, but to score over the leaders of the Ayodhya movement by holding the Courts against them. The chain of events and circumstances that inexorably led to the demolition, and how the strategy of the Prime Minister to turn the tables on the Ayodhya movement boomeranged on the disputed structure, are explained in this chapter.

The threefold objective of the Narasimha Rao Government's strategy on Ayodhya was:

i. to force a confrontation between the Court and Uttar Pradesh Government and use that to sack the latter;

ii. failing that, to force a symbolic Kar Seva and to discredit the Ayodhya movement; and

iii. either way, to give a clear signal to the Muslim leaders that Shri Narasimha Rao is wholly with them

1.3. The Prime Minister's strategy to deal with the Ayodhya movement, explained in detail in the succeeding paragraphs, was conditioned by and aimed at three specific objectives. This strategy was obviously designed after the Prime Minister came under severe attack from his second in command, Shri Arjun Singh, that the Prime Minister was soft on the BJP. So the Prime Minister had, as of political compulsion, to prove his secular credentials by designing a strategy that would rule out such a charge. The strategy of the Prime Minister had the following three objectives:

- First, to force a confrontation between the Courts and the Uttar Pradesh Government, secure an adverse order from the Courts like contempt or receivership against the Uttar Pradesh Government, and then dismiss it;
- Second, if and when that failed, to force a symbolic Kar Seva again through the Courts and thereby discredit and humiliate the leadership of the Ayodhya movement and the BJP; and
- Third, either way, to give a clear and unambiguous signal to the Muslim leaders that it is the Congress — and the Prime Minister — alone who could help them to maintain their hold over their community.

The overall purpose of this threefold design was to checkmate Shri Arjun Singh who was accusing the Prime Minister of being soft on the BJP. Thus, the entire approach of the Prime Minister to Ayodhya was conditioned by his personal political compulsions, intra-party difficulties, and electoral objectives of attracting the Muslim block votes. That this strategy greatly compromised the Courts and also peace and tranquillity of the country did not appear to matter to the Prime Minister at all.

The Prime Minister foists an impossible task on the Ayodhya movement in order to prevent the construction and to enforce the Court orders

1.4. The Prime Minister chose to act clever when utmost sincerity was demanded of him as a national leader. He forced on the Ayodhya leaders the impossible task of enforcing the Court order banning the Kar Seva, and was enjoying the sadistic pleasure of putting his political adversaries in a tight spot. What the Prime Minister expected from his design was construction in violation of Court orders, which he could easily use for fixing the Uttar Pradesh Government and the BJP, and sacking Shri Kalyan Singh. But neither he, nor anyone else could anticipate the mass fury that consumed the very structure that his party had held out as synonymous with secularism. If anyone did put the structure into danger at the hands of Karsevaks, it was the Prime Minister himself; he accomplished this by devising a plan that

was to politically reward him and his party, and put the Ayodhya movement on the defensive. The disciplined leaders of the movement were willing to swallow the humiliation for the time being as they had done in the past, though not in such acute manner; but not the Karsevaks for whom the cause of the temple and the values that the movement symbolised mattered above everything else.

The Prime Minister changes his tone and tack immediately after the Kar Seva pressure eased

2.1. The moment the Kar Seva pressure on the Central Government eased due to the Sants' decision to stop the Kar Seva on July 26, 1992, the Prime Minister made a statement in the Lok Sabha completely changing his tone and tack.

The dispsuted structure becomes "mosque" again

2.2. In the appeal to the Sants and Mahants which was read to the Karsevaks in Ayodhya on July 24, the Prime Minister had pleaded for the stoppage of the Kar Seva "so that the problem of the **disputed structure** could be resolved in a time-bound manner". In fact, the choice and use of the word "disputed structure" in the appeal was deliberate, as, on the previous day, the Sants had objected to Shri Narasimha Rao referring to the structure as a "mosque", unlike the previous Prime Ministers who had always labelled it as a disputed structure. The Press reports indicated that the Sants were happy with the Prime Minister using the agreed expression "disputed structure" instead of the word "mosque". However, in his statement in the Lok Sabha on July 27, 1992 the Prime Minister having secured the Sants' consent to stop the Kar Seva by accommodating them for a day with the word "disputed structure" went back to the word "mosque". So the disputed structure became a "mosque" again.

"Solution of the disputed structure in three months" becomes "efforts to solve in three months"

2.3. Second, while the Prime Minister had told the Sants that "the problem of disputed structure could be solved in a time-bound manner" in the three months period given by the Sants, his statement to the Lok Sabha was that "the efforts to resolve the dispute could be proceeded within a time-bound manner", thus indicating that there could be no solution in three months.

The Prime Minister's commitment to the Sants to clear the way for Kar Seva held back from the public

2.4. Third, the Prime Minister had told Pujya Shri Pejawar Swamiji that he wanted the Kar Seva suspended to enable him to remove the hurdles in the way of the Kar Seva, which

indicated that he had agreed to delink the Kar Seva from the dispute on structure; but, in his statement to Lok Sabha, there was not a word on removing the impediments in the way of Kar Seva. Pujya Shri Pejawar Swamiji has testified on how he met the Prime Minister and what transpired.

> "Swamiji met Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao at his residence in Delhi at his instance, when Swamiji was proceeding to Badrinath for Chaturmas. **Shri Narasimha Rao desired that Swamiji should presuade the Dharmacharyas to stop the Kar Seva** as ordered by the High Court. **Swamiji said that he would try, provided all impediments in the way of Kar Seva are removed. The Prime Minister said he would try after the Kar Seva is stopped."**

Not a word in the statement to the Lok Sabha that he had given such a commitment on Kar Seva.

2.5. Thus, having got the Sants to agree to what he wanted the Prime Minister obviously changed his track.

VHP refutes Prime Minister's statement immediately

2.6. Shri S.C. Dixit, a VHP leader, while speaking in the Lok Sabha on July 28, the day after the Prime Minister's statement, refuted the Prime Minister's version and said: "There is difference between Prime Minister's understanding and that of the Sadhus on what transpired between them and this should be cleared before any negotiation. The Sadhus and Mahants will give three months time to the Government to solve the problem after which the process of negotiation will no longer be binding on them."

The VHP maintains its position, stated on July 26, 1992, that if the problem is not solved within 3 months, the Kar Seva will commence in November

2.7. The VHP's decision to call off the ongoing Kar Seva on July 26, 1992 was subject to the express announcement that it would be resumed at the end of the three month period. It has consistently maintained this position. The published news reports make the VHP position explicit:

26th July, 1992 — While announcing the suspension of the Kar Seva, Shri Ashok Singhal said: **The next phase of the karseva could be around October** or early **November.** By then **the three months time-frame** that the Prime Minister has sought from the VHP **to find a final solution would be over.**

28th July, 1992 — Shri S.C. Dixit told the Lok Sabha that **after the three months period, the process of negotiation will not bind the VHP.**

21st Sept., 1992 — Shri Ashok Singhal said that the **Temple Renovation Committee would meet on October 30-31 to take a decision on continuing the Kar Seva and** that the VHP was ready to cooperate with the Government while being fully ready for confrontation.

29th Sept., 1992 — 4000-5000 Sants are expected to congregate in Delhi on October 31 to finalise the timing of the **Kar Seva which is likely to take place in November.**

16th Oct., 1992 — The Counsel for the Uttar Pradesh Government told the Supreme Court that "we have assurance that **nothing would be done** on the Government acquired land **till the end of November 1992".**

18th Oct., 1992 — The VHP leaders made an appeal to the Prime Minister to clarify his stand on the disputed Ayodhya shrine to ensure smooth passage of the proposed Dharma Sansad meet on October 31.

20th Oct., 1992 — Shri Ashok Singhal made it clear that no further time limit would be given to the Prime Minister after October 23, and that the temple construction would start very soon. The meeting of Dharma Sansad has been called on October 30 to decide the course of action.

27th Oct., 1992 — The RSS said that the three months period requested by the Prime Minister for thrashing out an amicable solution had lapsed with no perceptible results achieved by the Government.

28th Oct., 1992 — The VHP said that Kar Seva will resume by November end. 'As far as the VHP is concerned, the November 8 round will mark the end of the dialogue. It has been left to the Dharma Sansad to fix the exact date.

2.8. Thus the VHP was never in doubt, and never left anyone in doubt, about what the 3 months period was for and when the Kar Seva would recommence. On 26th July, 1992 when the Kar Seva was suspended, the VHP had made it clear that it would resume Kar Seva in November. Ignoring everyone of these facts, the White Paper of the Government says that the decision to resume the Kar Seva announced on October 30-31 was sudden and inexplicable and was a unilateral course to disrupt the negotiations. This is a false statement. There was nothing sudden or inexplicable about the announcement on October 30-31 about the resumption of Kar Seva. The announcement was totally consistent with the stand taken by the VHP from day one after the July Kar Seva, namely, that it would resume Kar Seva in November.

The hydra-headed strategy of the Prime Minister to deal with the Ayodhya issue and to corner the Ayodhya movement leaders, the BJP and the Uttar Pradesh Government

3.1.1. The multi-pronged strategy of Shri Narasimha Rao to deal with the Ayodhya issue was aimed to achieve the threefold objective (explained in Para 1.3) and to corner and fix the Ayodhya movement leaders, the BJP and the Uttar Pradesh Government for his political

gain over his rivals in his party. He played a petty political game in respect of a major national issue. The hydra-headed strategy of the Prime Minister was:

- **First, to delay and use the delay as a method of passing time; and delay the start of even the dialogue between the VHP and the AIBMAC.**
- **Second, when the delayed dialogue started, to keep it going without breaking and to no solution — so as to mark time.**
- **Third, to use different and independent channels** (as Shri V.P. Singh had done) **and circulate different proposals with no intention to own any, and when any proposal made any headway, to disown it and, in the process, make the open talks a farce.**
- **Fourth, to attempt to divide and wean away some of the Sants so as to divide the Ayodhya movement.**
- **Fifth, to hold back the evidence collected by the Special Cell headed by Shri Naresh Chandra, the public disclosure of which would have settled the issue.**
- **Sixth, to take public positions that made the Government clearly and overtly anti-Temple.**

The unfoldment of the Prime Minister's strategy took him closer to Shri V.P.Singh who had employed most of the very means, and failed, during the year 1990. Even after having known what Shri Chandrashekhar did between December 1990 and February 1991 Shri Narasimha Rao chose the V.P. Singh method of multiple agencies instead of the open dialogue as the only method. Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, thus, appeared to be an anagram for Shri V.P.Singh.

The revival of VHP-AIBMAC dialogue — delay as a method of dealing with the Ayodhya issue

3.2.1 *Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao promised in the Lok Sabha on July 27, 1992 that he would* "revive the efforts in this regard by the previous Government that had remained unfinished".

For Shri Chandrashekar, it took 20 days to start, but for Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, it took 70 days!

3.2.2. The promise to revive the dialogue was made on July 27, 1992 and the actual revival of the dialogue was on October 3, 1992, that is, 70 days thereafter; this was to revive from where it stood suspended and not to start anything afresh like talking to the two sides and make them agree to participate in the dialogue. In contrast, Shri Chandrashekhar was sworn in on November 10, 1992, and the first round of dialogue between the VHP and the AIBMAC had taken place by the 1st of December, 1990, that is, within just 20 days. His Government could get both sides not just talk, but agree on what to talk and also to what end.

3.2.3. Shri Narasimha Rao had no such untreaded area to begin with. The dialogue could have been restrarted from where it was left within a couple of days, if the performance of his predecessor Government was any guidance. And yet the Rao Government took 70 days to recommence from where it stood suspended on 6th February, 1991. This is how Shri Rao lost more than two thirds of the time he had secured from the Sants to solve the issue.

"Record not available" — an absurd alibi for the delay

3.2.4. As to how the Rao Government managed to delay it so long, **Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat,** who participated in the talks in 1990-91 and also in 1992, has **said** in his testimony, that **"even the delayed dialogue commenced only under pressure from Parliament, and not by the volition or initiative of the Government".** He further said that **"the reason given for the delay was that the records of the previous dialogue were not available!** It was a mockery."

Another reason given for delay — 'Getting the documents authenticated' — is false; authentication was mostly over in February 1991

3.2.5. In attempting an explanation of how this delay occured, the Government ended by telling a blatant lie. The White Paper says:

> "As a follow up measure, a special cell set up in the Prime Minister office which started its work of collection, authentication and examination of the record relating to the negotiations started by the previous Government..."

How blatant a lie it is, is demonstrated by the last para of the "Note on the negotiations relating to Ramajanmabhoomi–Babri Masjid dispute during 1990-91" made by the Government itself. It reads as follows:

> "For the authentication of the archaeological and historical documents, letters had been written to the National Archives of India, Archaeological Survey of India and the Indian Council of Historical Research. The National Archives and the Archaeological Survey of India returned the documents after due authentication. The Indian Council of Historical research authenticated the documents pertaining to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, but have so far not authenticated the documents relating to the BMAC. As regards the revenue and legal documents, the process to authenticate these could not be completed since there was a sudden change in the political situation consequent on the announcement for elections to the Lok Sabha."

3.2.6. Thus the authentication of historical and archaeological documents was completed and the legal and revenue documents were in the process of identification even prior to the announcement of 1991 General Elections.

3.2.7. The White Paper writers were obviously unaware that the Note extracted above was also prepared by the very Ministry of Home Affairs which prepared the White Paper.

3.2.8. So, delay as a method of dealing with the Ayodhya issue was one of the methods employed by the Narasimha Rao Government.

To keep the dialogue going without breaking and to no objective or solution, so as to mark time

3.3.1. The purpose of the dialogue initiated by the Narasimha Rao Government was the dialogue itself. Testifying to the difference between the dialogue that took place during December 1990–February 1991 and the dialogue under the present Government, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat who participated in both, and who, in fact, was instrumental in organising the first, testified as follows:

> "When the dialogue was started in December 1991, Shri Chandrashekhar set a very clear objective. The objective was to settle the dispute and for that purpose we have to refer the issue, whether a Hindu structure existed prior to the disputed structure, to the Supreme Court under Article 143. The dialogue is to secure all evidence to make the reference and to reduce the area of difference. He was very clear about what was expected of the dialogue."

"Keep the talk going, shall see later what we want out of it", says Shri Rao

3.3.2. Shri Shekhawat continued: "Shri Narasimha Rao was a contrast. When I asked him what was the objective of the dialogue and what should be its direction, he said: "We shall see that later; for the present, keep the talks going."

3.3.3. It is not that Shri Shekhawat was saying all this after the event. As early as October 18, 1992 the *Indian Express* had reported about the manner in which the dialogue was going on. The report which was never contradicted read:

> "The VHP and BJP leaders have begun to demand clarification from the Prime Minister because they feel that he is simply marking time through the current dialogue. Sources close to Rajasthan Chief Minister Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, the only BJP leader to participate in the dialogue, indicated that he is unhappy with the stance adopted by the Government which he finds in sharp contrast to the straight-forward approach of his friend Mr. Chandrashekhar who had undertaken a similar exercise during his tenure as Prime Minister."

"Sit outside the Room", S/Shri Pawar and Shekhawat are told, and "keep advising"

3.3.4. Shri Shekhawat also revealed a stunning fact about how he was involved in the dialogue of 1992.

> "The idea being to continue from where the dialogue stood suspended, I was requested to involve myself, but not participate, in the dialogue. How was it possible? The suggestion was that Shri Sharad Pawar and myself would be sitting in the room next to the Hall where the dialogue would be on and as and when need arises some one would come out and consult Shri Pawar or me. While I refused to be involved that way, Shri Subodh Kant Sahay strongly protested and said that both myself and Shri Pawar should participate in the dialogue."

Mercifully the two were allowed to participate in the talks.

To use different and independent channels and circulate different proposals, with no intention to own any so that the open talks become a farce

3.4.1. This was a strategy borrowed directly from Shri V.P. Singh. There were at least four Ministers from Shri Narasimha Rao's cabinet who were involved in negotiations, as distinct channels — Shri Sharad Pawar, Shri Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, Shri Kamalnath, and even Shri Balaram Jhakar at some stage. A group of journalists and a top intelligence official were also involved in crucial formula making.

3.4.2. Different persons were approached to moot varying formulae for settlement. This included even very distinguished personalities like Pujya Pejawar Swamiji and the former President, Shri R. Venkatraman.

Efforts through Pujya Shri Pejawar Swamiji and Shri R. Venkatraman

3.4.3. In his testimony Pujya Pejawar Swamiji says as under on his involvement:

i. After Chaturmas, in September 1992, Swamiji had another meeting with the Prime Minister at the latter's instance.

ii. At the meeting, the Prime Minister explained the developments to Swamiji and suggested that the temple could be built 10 feet away from the disputed structure.

iii. In response, Swamiji said that no one would accept the suggestion.

iv. Later, Swamiji met Shri R. Venkatraman, the former President of India, at Madras. Shri Venkatraman suggested that out of the three domes, two domes could be given to the VHP for constructing the Temple and the third would be kept "as it is" as a national monument. Swamiji said that this could be kept as a national monument.

v. Swamiji conveyed to the Secretary to the Prime Minister that the proposal of Shri R. Venkatraman could be considered if permission for Kar Seva was given.

Shri Kamalnath meets Shri Advani and Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, but Prime Minister disowns the emerging solution

3.4.5. Shri L.K. Advani the Leader of the Opposition has testified to the efforts that were made by Shri Kamalnath, the Minister of State for Environment. The summary of Shri Advani's testimony is as under:

a. Shri Kamalnath began meeting Shri Advani in July 1992, and discussed the Ayodhya issue on many occasions — the last such discussion being in the 2nd week of October 1992.

b. This prompted Shri Advani to tell the Prime Minister sometime in July 1992 that Shri Kamalnath had been meeting him on the Ayodhya issue to which the Prime Minister said "okay".

c. Subsequently, Shri Kamalnath met Shri Advani on many occasions in September and October 1992. In the meetings, particularly in September/October 1992

i. Shri Advani told Shri Kamalnath that the Central Government should expedite the acquisition case in Allahabad.

ii. He told the Minister of State that if the judgement was in its favour the VHP could start construction, and even if it went against, as 80% of the acquired land belonged to VHP, construction could start on that part of the 2.77 acres.

iii. Shri Kamalnath said that Shri Advani's perception was not correct.

iv. The next day, he said that that was not possible and it was wrong to express optimism about a favourable judgement.

v. Two or three days later, that is, on 8th or 9th October 1992, the Minister came back and suggested that if the centre acquired the land, "we can bypass the courts".

vi. He also said that Uttar Pradesh Government having acquired the land for tourist purposes and intending to use it for temple, there was a flaw in the case.

vii. Shri Kamalnath then asked: "suppose the Central Government acquires the land for building a temple and gives it to the Ramjanmabhoomi Nyas on the condition that the structure was not touched till there was a judicial verdict, would it be acceptable?"

viii. Shri Kamalnath's suggestion was that the dispute as to the structure could be settled by agreement or judicial verdict.

ix. Shri Advani said that there was nothing wrong with the proposal except that for "judicial verdict", he would suggest "due process of law" as there could be a legislative solution also which Shri Kamalnath found acceptable.

x. The next day or the day after that, at the Prime Minister's instance, Shri Nanaji Deshmukh of the RSS met him. When Nanaji mentioned to him the Kamalnath proposal, the Prime Minister said that "there is no such propsal".

xi. When Shri Kamalnath met Shri Advani the latter referred to the Prime Minister's remark to Nanaji to which Shri Kamalnath's reply was that perhaps the Prime Minister had thought of the proposal as his trump card and its premature revelation had possibly upset him.

xii. At this stage Shri P.R. Kumaramangalam who was also a negotiator, disapproved of the Kamalnath proposal and told Shri Advani that the Prime Minister had not authorised Shri Kamalnath to make any effort on Ayodhya.

xiii. At that stage, Shri Advani washed his hands off all negotiations.

3.4.6. Even as Shri Kamalnath was neogotiating with Shri Advani, he also mentioned the same formula to Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat and the latter also agreed that it was a workable solution.

3.4.7. On November 11, 1992, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat told the *Indian Express* that "too many cooks were spoiling the broth. Shri Advani approved of the Kamalnath package after discussing with VHP and RSS." He also confirmed that "the Prime Minister said that he was not aware of any package".

Efforts through the medium of three journalists and an intelligence official

3.5.1. Three leading journalists came from the National Integration Council meeting on November 23, 1992 to Keshav Kunj, the RSS headquarters at Delhi, and met Professor Rajendra Singh, a top leader of the RSS. They had, after meeting the Prime Minister, brought with them a draft agreement between the Government and the VHP. The draft agreement provided as follows:

a. The Phase I of Temple construction will commence on the 2.77 acres with the construction of Singhdwar for which plans would be submitted.
b. During the Phase I construction, status quo shall be maintained about the disputed structure and the disputed area other than the 2.77 acres.
c. The maintenance of the status quo shall be the joint responsibility of the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas, the Uttar Pradesh Government and the Central Government.
d. An observer appointed by the Supreme Court shall monitor the safety of the disputed structure.
e. While the Phase I construction is in progress the Government of India will try to get the dispute about the structure settled through bilateral negotiations or other means.

3.5.2. An identical proposal was given by a top ranking Intelligence official also. The three journalists and the IB official concerned had direct access to the Prime Minister. Professor Rajendra Singh has testified to this effect. This proposal too fell through as obviously the Prime Minister having first agreed appeared to have retracted later.

3.5.3. So whatever the proposal in circulation, they followed the prescription of delinking the Kar Seva from the structure which is a BJP solution, and the only practical one — to divide the issue between the immediate need and the ultimate issue. But the obituary of every proposal of which the Prime Minister must have been fully aware, whether authorised by him or not authorised, was pronounced by him alone.

This is how different proposals were mooted through different channels, and the Prime Minister finally disowned everyone of them.

Attempts to divide the Ayodhya movement leadership

3.6.1. The Prime Minister also attempted to divide the Ayodhya movement, not just through known operators like Chandra Swami (whose intimacy with the Prime Minister is a matter of public knowledge), but also personally.

Shri Chandra Swami's attempts

3.6.2. As early as August 22, 1992, Shri Ashok Singhal of the VHP charged Chandra Swami with trying to create a rift among the VHP leadership.

Attempts through emissaries

3.6.3. A telling incident of the Prime Minister's attempts to divide the Sants from the VHP and to create a rift in the leadership of the movement has been testified to by Pujya Shri Vamdeoji, Chairman of Ramajanmabhoomi Nirmana Krama Samiti. According to Vamdeoji, he had a meeting with the Prime Minister at the latter's residence on 5th October. He was accompanied by Swami Viyogananda, Ramakrishna Das, and Ramte Yogi. The Prime Minister bluntly told Swamiji that the Temple would be constructed but only outside the

existing structure. This he stressed thrice. Swamiji concluded from this that there was no point in meeting the Prime Minister again. Accordingly, he told the Sant Sammelan on 30-31 October that he personally would not meet the PM even if pressed to do so by the Sammelan.

On 10.11.1992 An emissary of the Prime Minister came to Ayodhya at 6 p.m. and invited him to see the Prime Minister. Vamdeoji refused, in view of what the Prime Minister had already and categorically told him in their meeting on 5th October.

On 12.11.1992 The Home Minister's emissary (Mahesh Pathak) came to Mathura and requested Vamdeoji to see the Prime Minister. He refused again.

On 25.11.1992 Shri Ved Prakash Vaidik, an emissary of the Prime Minister, came to Vrindavan at 2 p.m., and invited him to see the Prime Minister. Vamdeoji refused again.

On 26.11.1992 At 8 p.m. three persons — Shri Rajeev Tyagi an MP and emissary of Shri P.R. Kumaramangalam, Shri Pradeep Mathew, an ex-MLA, and Shri Gokul Chand Sarpanch — came and asked Vamdeoji to meet the Prime Minister. Vamdeoji refused and said that the Kar Seva date would not be changed. He said that if they allow Kar Seva on 2.77 acres, talks about the structure can go on.

On 30.11.1992 Mahant Seva Das of Faridkot met Vamdeoji at Ayodhya and pleaded for change of the date from December 6.

Vamdeoji said, "It is impossible."

The Mahant said, "Sant Mahatma should take over the work in their hands; the VHP should be excluded from construction work."

At this point Shri Giriraj Kishore of the VHP came. He said, "If the Congress declares the site as Ramajanmabhoomi in Parliament, the VHP will withdraw. Then Sants can construct the Temple according to the plan. VHP has no objection at all."

Then Mahant Seva Das said, "I have come after meeting the Prime Minister. The Government would not permit construction on 2.77 acres, nor declare it as Ramjanmabhoomi."

Pujya Vamdeoji closed the discussions thereafter.

Yet another attempt

3.6.4. The most explicit attempt by the Prime Minister to divide the movement — which attempt he made personally — has been testified to by Swami Paramahans Ramachandradas. He has testified:

i. Towards the end of November 1992, he received through emissiaries many invitations from the Prime Minister **to meet him alone.**

ii. Being the head of the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas he could not accept to meet the Prime Minister alone, and so he avoided meeting the Prime Minister.

iii. Then came a letter from the Shankaracharya of Jyotirmath, Shri Shantanandji Maharaj, in which he had said that the Prime Minister wanted Rama Mandir to be built by the Sants, so politicians must be excluded and only Sadhus should be involved.

iv. After seeing the letter of the Shankaracharya who was an elderly Sant, Swami Paramahans felt that perhaps the Prime Minister was seriously thinking of getting the Mandir built only through the Sants.

v. Therefore, Swami Paramahans changed his mind and informed the Maharaja of Ayodhya who said that he would accompany the Swami to meet the Prime Minister.

vi. Swami Paramahans refused to go by the Government plane and informed the Delhi office of the VHP to pick him up from the Airport. He straight away went to the Prime Minister.

vii. The Prime Minister said that without disrespecting the court order, the VHP could have Kar Seva on so much land as was undisputed. He also said that if the political elements were excluded, the Prime Minister would support any initiative to construct the Temple.

viii. Swamiji said: "The Sants gave Prime Minister time not only for 2.77 acres, but to decide the matter regarding the entire complex. But on August 15, the Prime Minister declared the structure as Masjid." To which the Prime Minister said that he had never used the word "Masjid". Then Swamiji reminded him of the letter he had written to him to protest against his declaration, which remained unreplied.

ix. Swamiji said: "I do not say that you are dividing the Sants, but all say that you are following divisive tactics. I am also getting the same doubt now."

x. Swamiji further said: "Please talk to me only that much which I can speak to the press and the public."

xi. He continued: "I have never spoken untruth; we had not given you time to decide the 2.77 acres which was always in our possession for 43 years. We have had Shilanyas in that area. We are going to have Kar Seva there and no one can stop it. You may even shoot me, but we will have Kar Seva." The Prime Minister did not reply.

3.6.5. The *Indian Express* of 26.11.92 reported the news about the unpublished meeting of Swami Paramahans with the Prime Minister and said:

> "Paramahans told the reporters here on Wednesday that the Prime Minister had offered to support any initiative to construct the temple provided political elements are not involved in it. The religious leader who had been flown by a special plane [this is not correct] from Ayodhya told Mr. Rao in his half an hour talk that it was impossible to exclude the VHP from the Temple building efforts."

This report, which directly implicated the Prime Minister in attempts at excluding the VHP, was not contradicted by anyone.

Swami Chinmayananda's public charge against the Prime Minister

3.6.6. It is not that the Prime Minister started playing the divisive game only in late November 1992. Even earlier, as Shri Ashok Singhal had already charged, Chandra Swami was at it in the month of August. A similar position was taken in public by one of the Sants and an important Ayodhya movement leader, Swami Chinmayananda, in early November 1992. Swami Chinmayananda said that "Senior VHP leaders and Sadhus were no longer prepared to negotiate with the Prime Minister, on the Ayodhya dispute" and charged Shri Narasimha Rao with "trying to create divisions among members of the committee of religious leaders set up to negotiate and holding meetings with some of them individually".

No denial by Prime Minister or any one

At no point, either personally or in public, the Prime Minister contradicted the charge or even the impression that he was trying divisive means.

3.6.7. Thus, the Prime Minister tried every trick in his book — from Chandra Swami to Mahant Seva Das to the Shankaracharya Shantanadaji Maharaj — to divide the Ayodhya movement leaders, but drew a complete blank.

Withholding of the evidence collected by the Naresh Chandra Committee, the public disclosure of which could have solved the dispute

3.7.1. As detailed in Chapter IV, the Special Cell led by Shri Naresh Chandra had compiled overwhelming evidence in regard to:

a. the fact that the disputed structure was built by demolishing a temple;
b. the Islamic Shariat permitting the abandonment, demolition, and removal of mosques; and
c. the practice in Islamic countries of such abandonment, demolition and removal.

For reasons best known to it, the Government did not think it fit to make a public disclosure of this evidence.

Taking positions that made the Government stand clearly hostile to the Ayodhya movement

3.8.1. The Prime Minister who was supposed to take a neutral position while undertaking to solve the problem clearly took an anti-Ayodhya movement line.

3.8.2. He repeatedly declared that the disputed structure was a "mosque".

On 15.7.1992 He told the Lok Sabha that the Government will not allow the demolition of the **"Babri Mosque** now, or two or three years hence".

On 10.7.1992 In the National Integration Council meet he referred to the disputed structure as a **mosque.**

On 24.7.1992 After the Sants had protested on the earlier day, he used the word **"disputed structure"** in his appeal to the Sants.

On 27.7.1992 Again, the Prime Minister changed over to referring to the disputed structure as **a mosque** — in his statement in Rajya Sabha. He also reiterated the Congress Party pledge to build temple without disturbing the **mosque.**

On 29.7.1992 In his statement to Lok Sabha also, the Prime Minister used the word **"mosque".**

On 15.8.1992 In his independence day speech, the Prime Minister said: "We want a temple at Ayodhya, but **masjid** must not be broken."

On 10.11.1992 The Prime Minister assured the AIBMAC that the Government will not allow Kar Seva and the law will take its course.

3.8.3. Thus the Prime Minister had consistently taken a blatant pro-masjid approach — an attitude that could hardly create any confidence in the Prime Minister among the leaders of the Ayodhya movement or the Karsevaks.

It was this deliberately conceived strategy of the Prime Minister ultimately led to the disastrous result of preventing the Kar Seva on the disputed land, but ensuring the demolition of the disputed structure.

Sharp deterioration in the relationship between the Prime Minister and the BJP

4.1. The conduct of the Prime Minister at the time of the Kar Seva in July 1992 and from October 1992 onwards showed a contrast. While during the July Kar Seva, he sought and took the advice of the BJP/RSS leaders including S/Shri L.K. Advani, A.B. Vajpayee and Prof. Rajendra Singh, during the months of October and November, particularly towards the later half of November, he showed a perceptible distate for the suggestions and pleadings of the RSS and the BJP leadership.

4.2. There could be political reasons for this.

- First, Shri Arjun Singh had been targetting the Prime Minister — in fact, aiming at Prime Ministership — and accusing him, without naming him, of being soft on the BJP.
- Second, the BJP, which had extended co-operation of an unprecedented kind from a principal opposition party to a ruling party, revised its views on the Prime Minister and began opposing him from October, and particularly from November 1992.

4.3. First, Shri L.K. Advani who had earlier praised Shri Narasimha Rao as the best Prime Minister after Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, revised his opinion after the Stock Scam and the

Solanki-Bofors Scandal, and publicly came out against the Prime Minister on October 18, 1992, accusing him of abetting corruption and saying that Ayodhya and corruption would be the nemesis of the Rao Government.

4.4. Second, the BJP came out with an official statement on November 6, 1992 characterising the Narasimha Rao Government as "a national disaster" and pledging to oust it.

4.5. Thereafter, the things were never the same again. To what extent the relationship deterioriated was evident from the fact that the last time Shri Narasimha Rao met Shri L.K. Advani was on November 18, 1992. During the most critical run up to the Kar Seva on December 6, the Prime Minister had no communication of any kind with Shri Advani.

4.6. Apart from the fact that the Prime Minister no more thought well of the BJP in the context of his own survival, according to Shri Advani, there could be another reason also. The Prime Minister was perhaps advised that since a showdown was inevitable with the Ayodhya movement ultimately (in view of the Congress Party's and the Prime Minister's pledge to preserve "the mosque"), why not have the showdown right now than some time later and nearer the elections? This is yet another reason, according to Shri Advani, why the Prime Minister, who was in regular communication with him, completely snapped his links with him from November 18, 1992 and never met or spoke to him. But even here the Prime Minister, according to Shri Advani, was inscrutable.

4.7. Shri Advani, wanting to be sure that because of any personal angle which could have prompted the Prime Minister to keep away from him, the cause is not affected, suggested to his senior colleague Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee that he meet the Prime Minister. Shri Vajpayee did. But, according to Shri Advani, and as is obvious from subsequent events, nothing came of that meeting too.

4.8. Thus, the irresistible inference from these developments is that the Prime Minister had really decided to confront the Ayodhya movement without seeming to do so. Was it because he thought that from the intra-party and electoral points of view, it was politically wiser to confront than to so conciliate with the BJP? It seems so. The totality of the Prime Minister's hydra-headed strategy was to give the appearance that he was working for conciliation while he had alredy decided on a confrontation.

The circumstances leading to the announcement of Kar Seva on October 30 and 31, 1992

5.1. As already explained, the Kar Seva announcement on October 30/31, 1992 was not a sudden or new development. It was the affirmation and confirmation of a decision that had already been publicly and repeatedly stated by the Ayodhya movement leaders from July to October almost every fortnight. In fact, on the very day the Kar Seva was suspended (26 July 1992) the VHP told the Karsevaks that the Kar Seva would be resumed in November after the three months deadline expired.

5.2. The principal reasons which led to the Kar Seva announcement were:

a. The Prime Minister changing his tone and tack after the meeting with the Sants in July 1992 and disowning and moving away from his assurances.

b. The inexplicable, in fact, intentional delay in the re-commencement of the VHP–AIBMAC negotiations.

c. Negotiations with the object of marking time, and with no attempt to resolve the dispute.

d. The Prime Minister using different channels of private negotiations to float different proposals and ultimately disowning all of them.

e. Direct and indirect attempts by the Prime Minister to divide the Ayodhya movement leadership.

f. The Prime Minister taking an overt position in favour of the AIBMAC and against the Ayodhya movement, among other things, on building the temple without disturbing the "mosque".

g. Holding back the evidence collected by the Special Cell appointed by the Prime Minister, instead of making it public and using it to solve the problem, so as to justify the Prime Minister's public stand repeatedly taken that the Temple must be built without touching the "mosque".

The cumulative effect of all these factors compelled the Sants and the VHP to confirm on October 30 and 31, 1992 that the Kar Seva would commence not in November as repeatedly stated by the VHP in public, but in December, particularly on December 6, 1992. There was no surprise about the announcement at all. Only if the Dharma Sansad had decided not to do Kar Seva or to defer it, it would have been surprising. The date of the meeting of the Dharma Sansad in which over 5000 Sants were expected to participate, and eventually did was fixed as October 30 and 31, 1992, on September 29, 1992, that is, over a month earlier. So the Kar Seva announcement was no sudden or unexpected decision.

5.3. But the White Paper published by the Government makes this announcement — which it charges as sudden, inexplicable and deliberate — as intended to disrupt the negotiations and force a confrontation. This is clearly false in the face of the known facts.

Frantic efforts by the BJP, the VHP and the Sants to get the Central Government to delink Kar Seva from the disputed structure, and determined efforts by the Government to thwart the delinking

6.1. The far reaching move of the Uttar Pradesh Government to delink the Kar Seva on 2.77 acres from the disputed structure had been thwarted by the interim injunctions which the Allahabad High Court and the Supreme Court had issued at the time of the Kar Seva in July 1992. It continued to remain crippled by the interim orders as the hearings continued

in the Allahabad High Court, day after day and month after month. As a result, the final disposal which even the Supreme Court expected to take place in December 1991, did not happen in July, nor in August, nor in September nor even in October 1992. Thus even a year after the Supreme Court expected the judgement on the land acquisition Writs, things stood in October 1992, where they had been in October 1991.

Delay in High Court judgement unexpected and inexplicable

6.2. Despite the fact that a well-meaning and the only practical solution had been caught in the maze of court proceedings, the Uttar Pradesh Government, the BJP, and the Ayodhya movement leaders were always clear that whether the judgement finally went in favour of the acquisition or against it, the Kar Seva could commence. As even if the judgement went against it, 2.04 acres out of 2.77 acres acquired being owned by the VHP, it would revert only to the Ayodhya movement and the Kar Seva could commence on that. By the time the Kar Seva decision was formally announced on October 30 and 31, 1992, the hearing on the acquisition Writs had virtually come to an end. Eventually, the hearing was concluded on November 4, 1992 and the court reserved its judgement on that day. Considering the importance of the matter and the narrow issue involved, no one expected that the judgement would not be delivered even by December 6, 1992. The Sants, the VHP, and the BJP were clear that whenever the judgement was delivered, no force on earth could stop the Kar Seva on the 2.77 acres if the court upheld the acquisition, and on 2.04 acres out of it if the acquisition was struck down.

The High Court judgement is delayed despite the Supreme Court request in August to expedite it

6.3. But that is where the catch was. The judgement which was reserved did not come, despite the expectation to the contrary, before December 6, 1992 and finally came, much too late, on December 11, 1992. This was despite the fact that after the July Kar Seva, the Supreme Court in its order dated August 4, 1992 had clearly spelt out how an expedited judgement of the Allahabad High Court was necessary. The Supreme Court had said:

> "It is also appropriate that the High Court should decide the case most expeditiously as, indeed, we were told that the High Court is doing its best to expedite the disposal of the case. In view of the matter, it is not necessary to withdraw to this court, the proceedings now being heard by the High Court. The High Court will deal with and dispose of the matter most expeditiously."

6.4. This was in August 1992. But despite the Supreme Court order the High Court took its own time to conclude the final hearing on November 4, 1992, reserved the judgement which was badly needed before December 6, 1992, and did not deliver it even as late as 25th November, 1992.

The judgement does not come even after a further request by the Supreme Court in November 1992

6.5. At this stage, the Supreme Court, which had greater appreciation of the sensitive nature of the issue, again passed an order on 25th November, 1992 as under:

> "If any constructive response is coming from the State Government, we might in order to strengthen the hands of the State Government in handling the religious groups, consider making appropriate request to the High Court in the matter of a need for a most expeditious decision of the matter" (Para 9 of the order).

6.6. The foregoing assurance by the Supreme Court suggested five distinct possibilities:

a. That a request by the Supreme Court to the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court meant that the judgement regarding the land acquisition shall be delivered well before 6th December, 1992. (After all, the hearings in that case had been completed as far back as 4th November, 1992 and the judgement had been kept pending in reserve for weeks thereafter.)

b. Once the judgement was delivered, the orders staying construction activity would automatically get extinguished.

c. If the acquisition was upheld, the U.P. Government would have all of 2.77 acres to allow the construction; if the acquisition was quashed, the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas would have 2.04 acres of land (the portion that had belonged to the Nyas before the acquisition proceedings had taken place) to carry out the Kar Seva.

d. It became obvious that, either way, the Karsevaks would get all the opportunity to do real and genuine Kar Seva on the 6th December and thereafter.

e. And once the Karsevaks got involved in Kar Seva, conserving and protecting the disputed structure thereafter would offer no problem whatever, and the State Government would be able to fulfil its undertakings given to the Supreme Court, the National Integration Council, and the High Court in letter as well as in spirit.

Therefore, neither the State Government nor the other leaders had any hesitation in giving a categorical and clear undertaking to the Supreme Court that no Court Order would be permitted to be violated. However, when the U.P. Government's undertaking had been placed on the Supreme Court file, to the shock and dismay of the respondents, all that the Supreme Court ordered was as follows:

"SHRI VENUGOPAL ALSO RECALLED TO US THE TERMS OF THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF THE ORDER MADE ON THE 25TH NOVEMBER, 1992 TO THE EFFECT THAT IF ANY CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE WAS FORTHCOMING FROM THE STATE GOVERNMENT, WE MIGHT CONSIDER REQUESTING THE HIGH COURT FOR AN EXPEDITIOUS DECISION OF THE MATTER. SHRI VENUGOPAL SAYS THAT THE STATE GOVERNMENT BY ITS PERFORMANCE IS NOW ENTITLED TO COURT'S CONSIDERATION OF THIS PRAYER.

INDEED, IN A MATTER OF THIS NATURE, IT IS NEITHER ADVISABLE NOR PRACTICABLE TO TELL THE HIGH COURT WITHIN WHAT TIME-FRAME IT SHOULD RENDER A JUDGEMENT; BUT HAVING REGARD TO WHAT WAS SAID ON PREVIOUS OCCASION, WE REQUEST THE HIGH COURT TO CONSIDER THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTIES AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF JUSTICE AND BESTOW ON IT SUCH THOUGHT IT MIGHT CONSIDER PROPER."

In effect then, the Supreme Court just backtracked. It did not issue any request to the High Court that could strengthen the hands of the U.P. Government. In fact, what it ultimately ordered emboldened the High Court to become totally impervious to the pleas of urgency, and to decide to give its judgement only on December 11, 1992.

The Ayodhya movement and the BJP leaders plead for at least the operative part of the judgement

6.8. This is what was happening in the court, particularly in the Supreme Court, to a request to get the High Court to pass an early judgement. Outside, throughout the period subsequent to the announcement of the Kar Seva on October 31, 1992, the dialogue by the Sants, the RSS leaders, the VHP leaders, and BJP leaders centered around the single plea that the Central Government should request the Allahabad High Court to deliver the judgement, at least the operative part of the judgement, before December 6, 1992 so that the Kar Seva could go on. Scores of meetings took place throughout the month of November 1992 among different persons from the Ayodhya movement and the Ministers in Shri Narasimha Rao Government, including the Prime Minister Rao himself.

6.9. Specifically, the meetings that took place between the BJP, Ayodhya movement leaders, and independent personalities on the one hand, and the Central Ministers on the other, were as follows:

On 2 November 1992	S/Shri Sharad Pawar and P.R.Kumaramangalam with Prof. Rajendra Singh (RSS), Shri Moropant Pingle (RSS) and Shri. Bhairon Singh Shekhawat (BJP), **at Bombay**
On 8 November 1992	Shri Narasimha Rao with Swami Chinmayananda.
On 12 November 1992	Shri Narasimha Rao with Shri L.K.Advani.
On 17 November 1992	Shri S.B. Chavan with Shri L.K. Advani.
On 18 November 1992	Shri Narasimha Rao with Shri L.K. advani.
On 19 November 1992	Shri Narasimha Rao with Shri Kalyan Singh.
On 20 November 1992	Shri Narasimha Rao with Prof. Rajendra Singh.
On 25 November 1992	Shri Narasimha Rao with Swami Paramahans Ramachandradas.
On 30 November 1992	Shri Narasimha Rao with Shri Nanaji Deshmukh and Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee.
On 3 December 1992	Shri Narasimha Rao with Prof. Rajendra Singh.
On 5 December 1992	Shri Narasimha Rao with Shri Nanaji Deshmukh.

6.11. In all these meetings, the leaders of the movement pleaded for just one thing — let the Uttar Pradesh Government and the Central Government jointly approach the Supreme Court or the High Court for expediting the judgement. In fact, Shri Advani on 18th November 1992, Shri Kalyan Singh on 19th November 1992, and Prof. Rajendra Singh on 20th November 1992 and 3rd December 1992, appealed to the Prime Minister to take steps to ensure that if not the whole judgement, at least the operative part of the judgement, was pronounced before December 6, 1992. This plea was on the premise that the Kar Seva could go on peacefully and lawfully even if the judgement or the operative part of the judgement went against. This was not something which the leaders merely told the Government of India in private; it is their publicly stated position also. Shri Kalyan Singh publicly appealed to the Allahabad High Court on 18th November, 1992 to deliver at least the operative part of the judgement.

6.12. One of the last ditch effort was made by Shri B.P. Singhal, a National Council Member of the BJP and a former bureaucrat. He spoke to Shri Naresh Chandra, the head of the Special Ayodhya Cell in Prime Minister's Office, on the morning of December 5, 1992, and both of them agreed that on that afternoon the Uttar Pradesh Government would plead before the Allahabad High Court that it deliver at least the operative part of the judgement, and the Counsel for the Central Government would support the plea. But when the Uttar Pradesh Government moved the application pleading as agreed, the Counsel for Central Government failed to turn up in the court, with the result that the application made by the Uttar Pradesh Government was summarily dismissed.

The meetings with the Prime Minister were a farce, he had already decided to thwart the Kar Seva

7.1. The only sensible solution to the Ayodhya issue pending the sensitive issue of the disputed structure, was to delink the karseva, and allow the construction to go on without affecting the structure. But that that was not found acceptable to the Central Government, which raised grave questions about the Government's intentions in the matter.

7.2. Whenever the BJP leaders or the Uttar Pradesh Government proposed the issue of Kar Seva being delinked from the disputed structure, the Prime Minister and the Home Minister had no rational objection to that, but wanted the Uttar Pradesh Government to consent to moving the Supreme Court under Article 138(2) of the Constitution. When this suggestion was made to Shri Advani by the Prime Minister on 18th November, 1992 and by the Home Minister on 17th November, 1992, Shri Advani said that while BJP could not agree to invoking Article 138(2), that would not solve the immediate problem of Kar Seva, and that Kar Seva had to be delinked. Again, Shri Advani suggested that the Central Government could refer the matter for judicial opinion by the Supreme Court under Article 143 and need not insist on the Uttar Pradesh Government's consent. In fact, Shri Kalyan

Singh told the Prime Minister that the Uttar Pradesh Government could not be party to the move under Article 138(2). He urged that Kar Seva be delinked and permitted. Even as late as 22nd November, and 24th November, 1992, Shri Advani publicly pleaded that the Kar Seva should be delinked from the structure.

The Prime Minister had decided to go for confrontation

7.3. But all this was a cry in the wilderness. All these meetings had no value; it was mere charade. The Prime Minister had already decided a line, the line of confrontation. But he was giving the very opposite impression, namely, that he was all for a settlement and that the BJP and the leaders of the movement were the law-breakers. The negative line pursued by the Prime Minister — to delay the dialogue and other efforts; to mark time by dialogue; to operate through multiple channels to no solution; to divide the Ayodhya movement; to hold back and put in disuse the evidence collected; to take overt position against the movement's objectives and demands — ultimately left him with no option, but to sink more and more into the quagmire of confrontation.

The Prime Minister tells the AIBMAC — Kar Seva will not be permitted

7.4. Consistent with that strategy, the Prime Minister assured the AIBMAC delegation as early as 12th November, 1992 that he "would not allow the Kar Seva and that the law would take its course"; and even before that, on 9th November, 1992, he decided to call a National Integration Council meet — the third exclusively devoted to Ayodhya.

7.5. Subsequently, in the third and fourth weeks of November, massive and continuous reports appeared in the Press about a contingency plan the Government of India had designed — it meant the dismissal of the Uttar Pradesh Government.

The Central Government seeks an alibi from the court to act, but does not get any

7.6. This contigency plan commenced with an application moved by a private party before the Supreme Court, seeking to appoint the Central Government as the Receiver of the disputed structure and 2.77 acres, and to punish Shri Kalyan Singh for contempt.

On 20th November, 1992, the Supreme Court issued a notice to the Central Government asking the latter to clarify its stand on Kar Seva .

On 22nd November, 1992, reports appeared in the Press that the Central Government was expecting the Supreme Court to pave way for the next step.

On 23rd November 1992, the National Integration Council gave Shri Narasimha Rao free hand to deal with the situation.

On 24th November 1992, Shri Narasimha Rao declared that the Kar Seva was illegal and that the Central Government would implement the court orders. He also charged that the organisers had asked the Karsevaks to reach Ayodhya by 27-28 November 1992.

On the same day, the Attorney General pleaded with the Supreme Court that the court should do something as the next two days were vital. The court refused.

The newspapers reported the movement of Central forces to Ayodhya.

On 25th November, 1992, the Supreme Court refused to appoint the Central Government as Receiver.

Movement of troops had started on 19th November, 1992. By 27th November, 135 Companies of Central forces were stationed in Ayodhya, and Uttar Pradesh Governor visited Delhi setting off speculations about dismissal of the State Government.

The Prime Minister asked Shri Vinay Katiyar, MP (Faizabad) and leader of the Bajrang Dal, whether there was a way to start the Kar Seva without violating court orders so that he, that is, the PM could get a few days more. Shri Katiyar answered in the affirmative. In confidence he explained that a portion of the platform adjacent to the former police outpost was outside the 2.77 acres, and that construction could be started there. But on 28th November the Attorney General asked the court to prevent the Kar Seva from being performed there also. The Supreme Court did not accept that plea. The Attorney General could not on his own have known of a plan which had been disclosed in confidence to the Prime Minister. Quite clearly, the latter had sought Shri Katiyar out merely to elicit any alternatives the Karsevaks may have open to them, so that he could have all of them blocked, and thereby deal a decisive blow to the credibility of the Ayodhya movement.

7.7. Thus, the resolve of the Government to prevent the Kar Seva was evident from the course of events, nothwithstanding the charade of negotiations and talks the Prime Minister was having with the Ayodhya movement leaders.

The strategy of the Government in the final stages of the confrontation designed in November

8.1. The Central Government strategy was evident from its conduct:

a. To keep the forces in readiness so that if the Supreme Court passed any adverse order, the Uttar Pradesh Government may be sacked on the ground of violation of the court order.

b. To ensure that by not cooperating with the State Government in delinking the Kar Seva by pleading for an early judgement by the High Court, the State Government is made wholly responsible for implementing the court orders, that is to say, that it should be made obligatory — but impossible — for the State Government to implement the court order on construction.

c. If the Uttar Pradesh Government does not eventually implement the court orders on construction, get political mileage and even dismiss the State Government thereafter.

The Prime Minister see the Ayodhya issue as only a poll problem, as a tussle between the Congress and the BJP

8.2. The Narasimha Rao Government obviously enjoyed the predicament of the Kalyan Singh Government to enforce the ban on construction of the Temple when it was, by its election mandate, obliged to build the Temple at Ayodhya. This was to heckle and to throw the BJP on the defensive — a politically sound strategy but, ethically and from the stand point of national interest, a disaster. The Narasimha Rao Government thus did not look beyond the political advantages it could get out of the difficulties of the Kalyan Singh Government.

8.3. In short, the Congress Government led by Shri Narasimha Rao saw the Ayodhya issue as only a tussle between the BJP and the Congress. And Shri Narasimha Rao also saw in it the opportunity to outwit Shri Arjun Singh. Thus Shri Narasimha Rao and his Government did not, and could not, see beyond or rise above, the political advantages that would accrue to them by their acts or omissions, regardless whether such acts or omissions were for the larger good or not.

The strategy of the Ayodhya movement leaders in the final stages

9.1. When it was becoming clear that the Central Government had taken a confrontationist line, the movement leaders and the Uttar Pradesh Government were working through the Supreme Court for an expedited High Court order. Because if it were an adverse order, Kar Seva would be legal as already discussed. They were hoping for the judgement before December 6, 1992, especially after the order of the Supreme Court dated 23rd November 1992. In fact, when it was announced that the High Court would deliver the judgement on December 11, 1992, the Margadarshak Mandal directed on December 5, 1992 that the Kar Seva not amounting to construction would go on upto 10th December 1992, and that from December 11, 1992, after the judgement came out, the possibility of construction could arise.

Kar Seva yatra by Shri L.K. Advani and Shri M.M. Joshi

10.1. When the BJP saw that the Narasimha Rao Government had become totally insensitive to the aspirations of the Hindus and stood against construction even when it was delinked from the structure, the party decided to send Shri L.K. Advani and Shri M.M. Joshi on a yatra to explain the position of the party and its Government to the people and to participate in the Kar Seva. Shri Advani commenced his yatra from Varanasi and Shri Joshi from Mathura.

10.2. The yatra received unprecedented response. The yatra was more to expose the Central Government's designs than to mobilise the Kar Seva. In fact, on the third day of the yatra, the two leaders had had to appeal to the Karsevaks to defer their departure to Ayodhya because of the unprecedented rush of Karsevaks to Ayodhya.

Unprecedented rush of Karsevaks to Ayodhya

11.1. The Kar Seva had been planned for 18 days from December 6, 1992 onwards. December 5, 1992 was the day of Gitopadesh by Lord Krishna to Arjuna. The organisers had planned the inflow of Karsevaks so as to spread it throughout the 18-day period. But seeing the press reports of a contingency plan of dismissal of the Kalyan Singh Government, most of the Karsevaks who were to come later rushed to Ayodhya. An unprecedented number, over 75,000, had reached Ayodhya by December 4, 1992. The VHP had to issue an appeal asking the Karsevaks to stay where they were and not to move towards Ayodhya. The unmanageable number of Karsevaks as a result of provocative actions and speeches of the Central Government and pseudo-secular parties and leaders, was one of the important reasons for what happened on December 6, 1992.

Every one knows what happened at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, but many and certainly the pseudo-secular parties and rulers do not know why it happened

12.1. The highly provocative structure on the one hand, government's calculated strategy to use courts to thwart Kar Seva and the provocative speeches of the pseudo-secular leaders in Parliament, set the stage for an emotive outburst.

12.2. The result was demolition — an unexpected act. The Government's efforts to prevent the construction succeeded, but only at the cost of failure to prevent demolition. The structure was demolished, not inspite of the court orders, but because of the court orders, and despite the efforts of the organisers. The role of the organisers is now a matter of public knowledge. They certainly wanted the structure to go, though not the way it went. The observer appointed by the Supreme Court reported to the court on December 6, 1992 that "no construction took place" on that day. It is precisely because no construction took place that the destruction happened.

Demolition — the historical and immediate provocation

12.3. The historical and immediate provocation for the demolition may be summarised as below:

- The general and growing Hindu resentment against pseudo-secularism and minority appeasement;
- The allergy of most political parties to Hindusim and the consequent loss of national identity;
- The political effect implicit in the Babri structure which is an invader's victory monument;
- The deliberate pseudo-secular attempt to ignore the truth and clothe it with religious sanctity;
- The identifying of a mosque structure in Sri Rama's birthplace as a symbol of minority rights and secularism;

- The insulting interpretation of Sri Rama and the Ramayana by Marxists under the cover of secularism;
- The characterisation of Babar as secular and the Ayodhya movement as communal;
- Ignoring that the bipartite legal systems cannot solve a mass politico-religious issue;
- The admitted incapacity of the courts to decide the Ayodhya issue and yet insistence on a judicial verdict;
- The tendency of courts to expedite the proceedings that would prevent the Kar Seva, but to delay the proceedings that would help it;
- Ignoring the continuous Hindu struggle for their holy place in Ayodhya;
- Ignoring the fact that for 37 years till 1986 the idol of Rama was behind bars and under lock at Ayodhya — a most provocative sign for any Hindu;
- Forcing the Hindus to fight for everything on Ayodhya — from taking out Rama Shila yatras to Shilanyas to Kar Seva even without touching the structure;
- The attempts of V.P. Singh to divide the Ayodhya movement;
- The issue of the Ordinance and its withdrawal by Shri V.P. Singh under pressure from Marxists and Muslim fundamentalist leaders;
- The massacre of the unarmed Karsevaks by Mulayam Singh to prevent the Kar Seva;
- The suspension of the dialogue between VHP-AIBMAC after the fall of the Chandrashekhar Government;
- The total neglect by the Narasimha Rao Government of the Ayodhya issue for a whole year;
- The thwarting of the Uttar Pradesh Government's move to delink the structure from the Kar Seva in order to make construction possible;
- The extraordinary delay in the High Court verdict on the acquisition of 2.77 acres;
- The Prime Minister going back on the assurances to the Sants in July 1992;
- The neglect of the issue by the Narasimha Rao Government even after July Kar Seva;
- The strategy of keeping the talks going to no end;
- The Prime Minister's design to divide the Ayodhya movement;
- The refusal of the Central Government to help expedite the judgement of the Allahabad High Court;
- Ignoring the fact that the December 1992 Kar Seva was the third after the October 1990 massacre, the Satyagraha in December 1990, and the July 1992 Kar Seva;
- The strategy of rendering the construction impossible;
- The eagerness of the court to hold midnight and holiday sittings to prevent the Kar Seva;
- The provocative speeches of pseudo-secular parties in Parliament.

12.4. The cumulative effect of all this produced a volcanic explosion at Ayodhya which could not have been controlled except by an understanding system — the Government, the courts and the political parties.

A spontaneous reaction, not pre-planned

13.1. The demolition of the disputed structure was an uncontrolled and, in fact, uncontrollable upsurge of a spontaneous nature which was provoked only by the callousness of the Government in dealing with the Ayodhya issue without understanding the sensitive nature of the issue; it dealt with it as an inter-party tussle between the BJP and the Congress. A straightforward Government could have tackled it differently. But the Narasimha Rao Government chose to be cunning and conceited where the greatest understanding and sincerity was warranted.

13.2. When the demolition took place, the Prime Minister charged the movement leaders with conspiracy, criminal intent, and perfidy, in an effort to conceal the fact that the demolition was just the echo of all that he and his colleagues and comrades in ideology had said and done in the months and days preceding the Kar Seva. He even charged the Ayodhya movement leaders with pre-planning and conspiring to demolish, only to retract from the charge later. More than anyone else, it was his own Home Minister who, three weeks after the Prime Minister had alleged a conspiracy, denied it. Shri S.B. Chavan stated categorically that the demolition was not pre-planned. *The Pioneer* newspaper carried the following report on January 3, 1993:

> **Union Home Minister S.B. Chavan sprang a surprise on Friday when he stated that the demolition of the Babri Masjid was not pre-planned.** He said that the intelligence agencies, too, had not given any inkling of what was to happen on that fateful day.
>
> "In fact, we have been consistently saying that if we had any prior information, we would definitely have taken preventive steps," he pointed out, adding, "Even on December 6, the observer appointed by the Supreme Court in Ayodhya reported that everything was peaceful".
>
> The Union Home Minister, however, told journalists that the entire incident was being probed by a commission of inquiry and he could not comment on it.
>
> **When told that Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao had stated that the demolition was pre-planned, Mr. Chavan reacted strongly, saying, "The Prime Minister never made such a statement". He charged the media with twisting facts and explained that the Prime Minister had actually expressed his apprehensions and stated that it had appeared that the December 6 incidents could have been pre-planned.**
>
> In an obvious change of stance, the Home Minister repeatedly clarified the Prime Minister's statement, but hastened to add that it was for the inquiry commission to arrive at a conclusion.

What is not pre-planned can only be spontaneous.

That it is the spontaneity of the Karsevaks' reaction which wiped out the disputed structure, cannot be denied even by the Narasimha Rao Government.

Appendix XIV of the Government's White Paper cites the Home Minister's Statement

in Parliament on 18 December, 1992: "On 6 December 1992, initial reports from Ayodhya indicated that the situation was peaceful. However, between 11:45 and 11:50 hours about 150 Karsevaks suddenly broke the cordon and started pelting stones at the police personnel. Equally suddenly, about 100 Karsevaks broke the RJB–BM structure. About 80 Karsevaks climbed the domes of the structure and started damaging them. At 14:40 hours, a crowd of 75,000 Karsevaks was surrounding the structure and many of them were engaged in demolishing it."

Saintly restraint shown by the Karsevaks in the past, not just on once, but on four occasions

15.1. The Karsevaks had in the past exercised saintly restraint in the face of all provocations — not once, but four times. First in November 1989, at the time of Shilanyas. Second in October 1990, at the time of the first Kar Seva; Third in December 1990, during the Kar Seva satyagraha. And last in July 1992, at the time of the previous Kar Seva which lasted for 18 days. Despite the gravest provocations, the Karsevaks were peaceful even when bullets hit them.

15.2. It was only when their patience was tested beyond the tolerance limit of even saints, by an insincere and insensitive Government, a judicial system that is not equipped or qualified to adjudicate on such issues, and a heckling polity dominated by pseudo-secular intellectuals, parties and leaders, that they reacted by being defiant and irrepressible. The degree of their pent up anger can be guaged from the manner in which they disregarded the appeals of the BJP–RSS–VHP leaders not to harm the structure, and from the determined manner in which they overcome the efforts of RSS volunteers to physically restrain them and push them back.

Swami Vivekananda — on reconstruction of ravaged temples

16.1. What happened was not desecration, as only a non-mosque if it could ever be so-called was removed. How it happened was certainly a digression from the Hindu ethos. But Swami Vivekananda, whom even the Marxists have begun to revere as the model for modern India, obviously thought differently. This is what he says about the reestablishment of the destroyed Hindu temples:

> "Temple after temple was broken down by the foreign conqueror, but no sooner had the wave passed than the spire of the temple rose up again. Some of these old temples of South India, and those like Somnath in Gujarat, will teach you volumes of wisdom, which will give you a keener insight into the history of the race than any amount of books. **Mark how these temples bear the marks of a hundred attacks and a hundred regenerations, continually destroyed and continually springing up out of the ruins, rejuvenated and strong as ever! That is the national mind, that is the national life-current. Follow it and it leads to glory."**

CHAPTER VII

THE AFTERMATH OF AYODHYA AND ITS FALL OUT

The power of Rama and Ayodhya understood more after December 6, 1992

1.1. The aftermath of Ayodhya revealed, as never before, the depth and strength of the Ayodhya movement. The culturally Anglicised elite of India alone came to regard the demolition as "a betrayal of the nation" and as "a national shame", but the ordinary people of India appear to have owned the demolition and welcomed it. All political parties in India which had functioned in a certain environment after Independence could not correctly guage the popular sentiments that the Ayodhya movement commanded. Even the leadership of the Ayodhya movement and the BJP which whole-heartedly supported the movement could not entirely judge the intensity of the common man's sentiment on Ayodhya. The real strength of the Ayodhya movement became manifest only after December 6, 1992. Every political party save few, all intellectuals excepting a handful, and every English language newspaper invariably, not to speak of the Government controlled Doordarshan or the foreign media which had no love for any nationalist assertion, were all aligned on one side and the people of India on the other. And yet finally it is the ordinary people who overcame the unprecedented assault mounted by the pseudo-secular political parties, leaders and intellectuals. Is that why Mahatma Gandhi kept on expounding the power of Rama and the virtues of Rama Rajya and held out both as the model Indian and model India respectively?

Popular indignation over the Government's and political parties' shrill reaction

1.2. The shrill reaction against the demolition orchestrated by the Government, and articulated by the Anglicised Indian intellectuals which singled out Ayodhya to discredit the Hindus, brought forth even greater indignation from the masses. The debate soon turned on what we mean by secularism, communalism, and nationalism. The Ayodhya incident awakened the Muslims to realise how from election to election they had been treated as nothing but ballot papers. This has set off an internal debate the like of which the community had not witnessed. The pseudo-secular parties soon realised that the ground swell was not in favour of their style of politics. They began to change their vocabulary. The Indian Communists who till the other day had derided Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna and harassed their institutions so much, so that the Ramakrishna Mission had to claim protective minority status, are now seeking refuge in Swami Vivekananda's view of Hinduism and India! This is how the nation stands changed in the post-Ayodhya era. Every action or omission of the Narasimha Rao Government has reinforced rather than undermined this transformation.

1.3. However, this ground swell was not visible to it or to its protagonists or the psuedo-secular parties when the Narasimha Rao Government began to respond to the demolition on December 6, 1992.

The Prime Minister calling the demolished structure a mosque invites riots in and out of India, and indignation from some Muslim nations

2.1. In his speech telecast over the Doordarshan on the night of December 6, 1992 the Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao called the demolition a national shame and said that what was demolished was a "mosque". This was notwithstanding the fact that the Government was fully aware that it was not a "mosque". In fact, the White Paper on Ayodhya issued by the Government admits on the very first page of the document that "In effect, therefore, from December 1949 till December 6, 1992 the structure had not been used as a mosque". Page after page of the White Paper refers to the structure as a disputed structure. And yet the Prime Minister consistently — as no other Prime Minister had ever done — labelled it as a mosque; and this he did even on December 6, 1992. The consequences of this deliberate act of the Prime Minister were terrible.

First, this was a great provocation to violence in India and against India in some Muslim countries because what was actually an abandoned structure was held out by the Prime Minister himself as a mosque, and that too on the Doordarshan. Secondly, this was an invitation for condemnation by Islamic countries. If, on the contrary, the Prime Minister had told the truth, the consequences would have been entirely different.

To tell the truth that it was not a mosque, meant endorsing the BJP view

2.2. Why then did the Prime Minister deliberately refer to the structure as a mosque? Simple. It was only the BJP, the VHP and the Sants who were calling the structure a non-mosque. If the Prime Minister had told the truth, he would have been hauled up by the pseudo-secular parties and by his own colleague, Shri Arjun Singh, for endorsing the BJP stand.

Decision to rebuild "the mosque", the decision to ban RSS, etc.

2.3. The very next day, 7th December, 1992, the Prime Minister announced two important decisions:

First, the decision to ban all communal organisations, without naming any.

Second, the decision to rebuild the demolished structure.

Both the decisions of the Government were described by the entire press and political circles as forced by the internal tussle within the Congress. Each one of them was designed to thwart Shri Rao's second in command, Shri Arjun Singh, from challenging Shri Rao's position.

While the Prime Minister was promising to rebuild "the mosque", the Karsevaks were building the Rama Temple

2.4. But even as the Prime Minister was announcing the second decision, the Karsevaks were erecting the temporary Temple for Rama Lala at the very place where the central dome

of the disputed structure had been. A 5 feet high wall was being put up. The last dome of the disputed structure had fallen at 4.50, and Shri Kalyan Singh had resigned as the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister at 5.30 p.m. on December 6, 1992. The re-installation of Rama Lala, and the construction of the makeshift temple for the deity, all took place under the Central rule, ironically even as the Prime Minister was announcing the decision to rebuild the "mosque".

Kar Seva on disputed site, under the rule of Shri Narasimha Rao

2.5. From the evening of Sunday the 6th December, 1992 to the morning hours of 8th December, 1992 it was under Shri Narasimha Rao's rule that the Kar Seva for temple construction took place. It was not under the rule of Shri Kalyan Singh. The 135 companies of Central Forces were the guardians for the Kar Seva. The White Paper of the Government lists phone calls after phone calls from the Home Ministry and the Home Minister to every official of the Uttar Pradesh Government, from the Chief Minister to the ADM of Faizabad, asking, pleading, and directing them to use the Central Forces. This was from 12.00 a.m. to 5 p.m. on December 6, 1992. But after Shri Kalyan Singh resigned and Shri Narasimha Rao's Government ruled Uttar Pradesh through the Governor Shri Satyanarayan Reddy, the Central Government did not use these Central Forces! In fact, the Kar Seva started when Ayodhya was under President's Rule, which meant, the Prime Minister's rule. Why then did the Prime Minister not act? The Government's White Paper attempts a clever, but feeble explanation. It says:

> "In view of the situation in RJB-BM complex and the presence of over 2,00,000 Karsevaks in aggressive and militant mood, the decisions about the timing of the entry of the Central Forces were left to the forces themselves."

2.6. Considering the fact that for 36 hours the Central Forces did not think it proper to act, would the same judgement not have held good for Shri Kalyan Singh also? How could Shri Kalyan Singh be faulted if he had decided not to fire upon the unarmed Karsevaks? As on the telling of the Government's own White Paper, the judgement of the Central Forces not to intervene from the evening of December 6, 1992 to the morning of December 8, 1992 to prevent the Kar Seva is justifiable, the decision of Shri Kalyan Singh not to intervene during the six hours on the afternoon of December 6, 1992 was also perfectly in order.

Court orders against Kar Seva violated only under the Central rule

2.7. Further, the violation of court orders — not to do any construction work or Kar Seva other than Kar Seva not amounting to construction — took place not when Shri Kalyan Singh was in office, but under Central rule. The issue before the Prime Minister was not whether to shoot the Karsevaks, but who should order the shooting. While Shri Kalyan Singh refused to order — he said so — and paid the penalty — the Prime Minister is taking shelter under the refusal of Shri Kalyan Singh. Why did the Central Government not prevent the Kar

Seva? Or fire upon the Karsevaks? The reason is simple. No Government could follow such a course. Neither did Shri Kalyan Singh, nor would Shri Narasimha Rao. Does this not clearly justify the farsighted plan of the Kalyan Singh Government to delink the Kar Seva from the structure? If Kar Seva had been permitted under the delink plan, the Karsevaks would not have thought of harming the structure. And if it was right to "dismiss" Kalyan Singh for not having saved the structure, should Shri Narasimha Rao not have resigned for not having saved it either?

2.8. In any event, the important aspect of the Central rule over Ayodhya was the erection of the Temple though Kar Seva in violation of the court orders, even while the Prime Minister had been announcing the decision to construct the "mosque" at the very place.

Take-over of the site and arrests

2.9. On December 8, 1992 two moves took place, First, the Central Forces intervened at Ayodhya and took over the site; and second, Shri L.K. Advani and Shri M M Joshi were arrested along with S/Shri Ashok Singhal, V.H. Dalmia, Vinay Katiyar and Kum. Uma Bharati on frivolous charges.

Riots mostly unrelated to Ayodhya — it was more a context than the cause

2.10. During the period from December 7 to December 14 there were riots in different parts of the country. In India, Pakistan and Bangladesh many temples were destroyed and Hindus attacked. Not a word against the desecration came from any political party in India other than the BJP. Worst among the riot-affected states were Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Assam and Andhra Pradesh. The casualties in the Congress or Centre-ruled states were 907 and in the BJP-ruled states 154. The riots that followed were not Hindu-Muslim riots, but clashes mostly between the rioters and the police. This view has not been contradicted, and the number of people who died in police firing indicate the truth. Again, the very fact that the riots were not widespread in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, but were more intensive outside also indicated that there were collateral reasons for the riots. In Bombay and Calcutta, the press has exposed the fact that the riots were provoked by local factors — land disputes, private revenge, criminal gangs — and were unrelated to Ayodhya. Ayodhya provided the context, it was not the cause. It is important to recall in this context that even for a mosque far away, Al-Aqsa, there were riots in India in the early seventies, although no one in India was responsible for what happened in Jerusalem, the riots here run to a pattern.

Ban on RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal etc.; the dismissal of the BJP Governments

2.11. On 10th December, 1990 the Central Government banned the RSS, the VHP and the Bajrang Dal along with Jamait-e-Islami Hind and Islamic Sevak Sangh, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967.

2.12. On 15th December, 1992, the BJP Governments in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh were dismissed on flimsy grounds just to quell the dissent against the Prime Minister in the Congress. This action of the Government was widely condemned by the Press and the public.

Struggle for Darshan of Rama Lala again shows the power of Sri Rama

2.13. The discontent against the Government manifested in the demand for Darshan of Rama Lala in Ayodhya. Here, too, the local authorities permitted the Darshan, but Shri Narasimha Rao feigned that he was unaware of the permission. The local authorities, however, confirmed that they had acted on Centre's instructions conveyed via Lucknow. This candour on the part of local authorities was followed by stoppage of the Darshan. This in turn led to irresistible popular demand for Darshan; the reaction was threatening to become popular resistance when it was defused by a judgement of the Allahabad High Court permitting the Darshan of Rama Lala.

The Government move to build the Temple through an independent Trust has no takers

2.14. Another fall out of Ayodhya events of December 6, 1992 was the acquisition of the entire Ayodhya complex by the Narasimha Rao Government by an Ordinance on January 8, 1992 for building, through a Trust, a Temple for Rama and for rebuilding, through another Trust, the demolished "mosque". For days before the actual move, the idea was floated, and it had no takers. Yet the Government went ahead and presented a *fait accompli*; even then, it has no takers — neither among the Muslim leaders nor among the Hindus. In fact, the Prime Minister has tried through his emissaries, and personally also, to approach leading religious heads to head the Trust for Temple building. No one was willing. The Prime Minister personally met Shri Jayendra Saraswati, the Shankaracharya of Kanchi, for this purpose. The Shankaracharya told the Prime Minister that he would not head the Trust. He was equally emphatic that if all the Sants in the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas were included in the Trust, he would have no objection to be in the Trust. Before anyone else could react to the Narasimha Rao Government's proposal to rebuild the mosque, the Kanchi Shankaracharya had warned the Government not to revive the problem by attempting to rebuild the mosque. The text of the *Indian Express* report read as under:

> "Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamy of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham has expressed the view that the move of the Government 'to rebuild the disputed mosque' at Ayodhya would amount to 'reviving an issue closed fortuitously'.
>
> "In a statement to the *Indian Express*, the Sankaracharya said that although the 'unexpected incidents have shocked many in the country', the issue is now closed. In a carefully worded response, especially in the context of the Government's move to rebuild the demolished structure, the Sankaracharya implicitly advised against it and indirectly referred to it as "reviving the problem'. The following is the text of his statement:

> "The unexpected incidents in Ayodhya on December 6, have shocked many in the country. There has never been two opinions on the need to find an acceptable solution to the Ayodhya issue. But the unexpected incidents at Ayodhya have put a full stop to the issue. Because of what happened at Ayodhya, there are tensions in some parts of the country. The important reason for this tension is 'all politics'. At least hereafter the politicians should not attempt to revive the problem and if they refrain from doing so, that would be their greatest service to the nation. The people of India must, forgetting the unpleasant happenings, live as brothers — not like Vali and Sugreeva, but, like the ideal brothers, Rama and Lakshmana. This is our prayer to the Almighty."

Afterwards, Pujya Pejawar Swamiji and other Shankaracharyas also came out against the Government's idea of rebuilding the mosque. Now, even after two months, there are no takers for the Narasimha Rao Government's Sarkari Rama Temple and a Sarkari Babri Masjid. In fact, the *Economic Times* editorially mocked at the idea of the rebuilding the mosque as "Narasimha Mosque" — not the Babri Mosque.

Ayodhya movement now a multidimensional struggle

2.15. Thus between 7th and 15th December, 1992, the Narasimha Rao Government exhausted all its measures against the RSS, the VHP and the BJP — including ban, arrests, dismissal of the State Governments. But far from such measures undermining the Ayodhya movement, they created indignation and revulsion against the Central Government and also the pseudo-secular parties. In these ways the aftermath of the Ayodhya incidents of December 6, 1992 transformed the Ayodhya movement into a multidimensional struggle against the pseudo-secular parties and the present Government. A clear polarisation is taking place with the BJP emerging as the mainstay of national politics, and the national scene featuring the BJP versus the rest as the political agenda of the future. The ban on the BJP rally at Delhi, the curbs on BJP's political activities in several parts of the country, and the proposed legislation against use of religion in politics aimed against the BJP, have already enlarged the Ayodhya struggle into a massive ideological tussle between the BJP on the one hand and the Congress and ex-Congress parties along with their left allies on the other. The issues that are firmly on the national agenda are: What is nationalism? What is communalism? What is secularism? Thus the aftermath of December 6 shows that our great nation is coming into its own.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WHITE PAPER OF THE NARASIMHA RAO GOVERNMENT: FACTS OR FICTION?

A White Paper doctored to be 'harsh' on the BJP

1.1. In the month of February, 1993, the Narasimha Rao Government finally came out with the official version of the Ayodhya events. It is titled "White Paper on Ayodhya". Much before its appearance, it received some unflattering publicity. Shri Arjun Singh, the Cabinet Minister incharge of Human Resources Development, resigned as the head of the Cabinet Committee set up by Shri Narasimha Rao to finalise the White Paper. The newspaper reports suggested that Shri Arjun Singh was upset over the fact that the draft White Paper of the Government did not adequately damn the BJP, the RSS and the VHP. The contents of the Government's White Paper were thus not to be settled by facts, but by what Shri Arjun Singh or someone else wanted. The primary target of Shri Arjun Singh was not the BJP or the RSS or the VHP — it is Shri Narasimha Rao himself.

1.2. So with Shri Arjun Singh's resignation charging, although not publicly, that the White paper of the Government was soft, there must have been pressures on the Prime Minister to make the White Paper 'harsh' on the BJP, the RSS, the VHP and the Bajrang Dal. So, it can be presumed that the White Paper presented by the Government is Shri Narasimha Rao's strongest case against the BJP and the RSS Parivar, and the worst that the Government can put together against them.

Four vital facts in the White Paper condemn the Prime Minister and endorse BJP

2.1. An analysis of the Government's White Paper reveals four vital facts — one implied and three express — which indict none other than the Prime Minister himself, and endorse the views of the BJP and the RSS.

The Prime Minster's charge of conspiracy repudiated by the White Paper

2.2. First, while Shri Narasimha Rao had expressly charged the RSS, the VHP and even the BJP with hatching a conspiracy and pre-planning to demolish the mosque, the White paper does not even remotely hint at a conspiracy. In fact, it contains evidence which rules out any conspiracy.

Thus, his Government's own White Paper has falsified Shri Narasimha Rao's charge of conspiracy against the Ayodhya movement leaders.

Significantly, more than 7 weeks before the White Paper was out, Shri S.B. Chavan the Union Home Minister had said: "There was no conspiracy to destroy the mosque."

The White Paper admits that the structure was being not used as a mosque

2.3. Second, the Government confesses in the White Paper, on the very first page, that

"In effect from October 1949 till December 6, 1992, the structure had not been used as a mosque".

The White Paper refers to the structure as "disputed structure" and not as "mosque"

2.4. Third, in page after page, the White Paper refers to the demolished structure as "disputed structure", nowhere has the White Paper used the word "mosque" for the disputed structure.

The Paper says that the focus of the Ayodhya movement was to build the Temple, leaving the structure intact

2.5. Fourth, the White Paper, again on the very first page, admits that the focus of Ayodhya movement from October 1991 onwards was to start construction of the Temple by way of Kar Seva on the land acquired by the Uttar Pradesh Government while leaving the disputed structure intact.

The White Paper condemns the Prime Minister

2.6. The first two express references completely refute the Prime Minister's view expressed not once but many times, that the disputed structure was a mosque. The Prime Minister told the Parliament and the public of India on many occasions that demolished structure on December 6 was of a mosque. He repeated this over the Doordarshan when his speech was telecast on December 6, 1992. The White Paper disagrees with the Prime Minister when it consistently refuses to use the word "mosque" and mentions only a disputed structure. Even when the White Paper specifically refers to the Prime Minister's statement in Parliament on July 27, 1992 (extracted in the White Paper at pp. 80-81) in which the word "mosque" is used, it uses only the expression "disputed structure".

2.7. While the Prime Minister says in his statement on 27th July, 1992 that "The Congress is for the construction of the temple without demolishing **the mosque",** the White Paper says at page 2 that "The Government of India was for the construction of the temple at Ayodhya while leaving the disputed structure intact."

2.8. Thus, without openly saying so, the White Paper of the Government repudiates the Prime Minister's stand that there was a pre-planned conspiracy to demolish the structure, and that the demolished structure was a mosque. The stand of the Government in the White Paper is to endorse and uphold the views of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar and the Sants, that

a. there was no conspiracy or pre-planning of the demolition;
b. the demolished structure was not a mosque, but a disputed structure;
c. from December 1949, the demolished structure was not being used as a mosque; and
d. the intent of the Ayodhya movement from 1991 was to construct and leave out the structure, meaning that the target of the Karsevaks was not the structure.

The two charges in the White Paper

3.1. The White Paper of the Government makes two explicit charges against the Sants, the VHP, the BJP and the Uttar Pradesh Government.

Charge I: Negotiations disrupted to opt for confrontation:

First, when crucial decisions were expected in the next round of talks between the VHP and the AIBMAC slated on November 8, 1992, in a sudden and unexpected move, the Margadarshak Mandal and Dharma Sansad announced, on October 30-31, 1992, that the Kar Seva would re-commence on December 6, 1992. The White Paper says: "This move was totally inexplicable in view of the smooth movement of the negotiations... The only explanation imaginable could be that the intention of this unilateral announcement was to disrupt the course of the negotiations and prevent the expected reference of the dispute to Supreme Court, thus dragging the matter into confrontation again" (Paras 1.15/1.16).

Charge II: Because of the Chief Minister's orders not to use force, the mosque was demolished

Second, referring to the sudden demolition that place, the White Paper says:

"While this criminal activity was going on, the local authorities and the police appeared to be standing as mute spectators, ostensibly under the instructions of the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. This dismal picture of inaction and the State Government's dereliction of duty was because of orders of the Chief Minister of UP **not to use force.** Even the small contingent of Central Reserve Police was rendered inactive and powerless by express direction given to them by the local Magistrate and higher State Government authorities. A worse example of irresponsibility and abdication of power by those who had taken oath to defend the Constitution and uphold the rule of law cannot be imagined.

"The demolition of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid structure at Ayodhya on 6th December, 1992 was a most reprehensible act. The perpetrators of this deed struck not only against a place of worship, but also at the principles of secularism, democracy and the rule of law enshrined in our Constitution. In a move as sudden as it was shameful, a few thousand people managed to outrage the sentiments of millions of Indians of all communities who have reacted to this incident with anguish and dismay.

What happened on December 6, 1992 was not a failure of the system as a whole, nor of the wisdom inherent in India's Constitution, nor yet of the power of tolerance, brotherhood and compassion that has so vividly informed the life of independent India. It was, the Supreme Court observed on that day, 'a great pity that a Constitutionally elected Government could not discharge its duties in a matter of this sensitiveness and magnitude'. Commitments to the Court and Constitution, pledges to Parliament and the people, were simply cast aside. **Therein lay the failure, therein the betrayal."**

3.2. In simple terms, these two charges mean that

a. The VHP abandoned and broke the negotiations and opted for confrontation.

b. When the demolition was going on, the Uttar Pradesh Police did not act, nor could the Central forces act, because the Chief Minister had ordered them not to use force, and as a result the demolition really struck at secularism, democracy and the rule of law.

If these two charges are answered, there is nothing left in the White Paper except a

resume of events mainly relating to the history of the Ayodhya movement from July 1992, and several mis-statements which need separate attention.

Did the VHP disrupt the course of the negotiations, and opt for confrontation by announcing the Kar Seva decision on October 30-31, 1992?

4.1. These charges are based on four assumptions:

- First, that (on 30-31 October, 1992) the talks were pregnant with productive results;
- Second, crucial decisions were expected in the next round of negotiations on 8th November, 1992;
- Third, the announcement of the Kar Seva decision on October 30-31, 1992 was sudden and inexplicable; and
- Fourth, the announcement was intended to disrupt the course of the negotiations.

4.2. It can be proved that each one of these assumptions is incorrect. They are, in fact, assertions because the Government has not cited a single piece of evidence, oral or documentary, in support of them. And, evidence to the contrary, to disprove the assertions, exists.

Was the VHP-AIBMAC dialogue pregnant with productive results on October 30-31, 1992?

4.3. First of all, as explained in detail in Chapter VI, the Prime Minister did not actually give much weight to the VHP–AIBMAC talks. He followed, unlike Shri Chandrashekhar who trusted only the direct dialogue, a hydra-headed strategy in which the revival of the VHP–AIBMAC dialogue was the last resort. The revival of the dialogue which should not have taken more than a week, actually took 70 days, after the Prime Minister promised the Parliament that he would proceed from where Shri Chandrashekhar had left. The VHP–AIBMAC dialogue commenced with only 20 days to go for the expiry of the three months time the Prime Minister had secured from the Sants. It is obvious that this dialogue was not among his priorities at all. As would be seen later and as explained in Chapter VI, the reasons given in the White Paper for the delay in the resumption of the VHP–AIBMAC talks are patently false.

Direct talks — a farce

4.4. Next, as explained in Chapter VI, the diverse channels through which the Prime Minister was circulating, or allowing the circulation of, different proposals, and disowning them whenever any proposal came up for serious consideration or close to acceptance, undermined the direct and open dialogue between VHP–AIBMAC, and virtually made it a farce, more to exchange documents, notes and opinions than to suggest or offer any formula for solution.

Talks not for solution, but to mark time

4.5. Finally, during the month of October 1992, only two meetings had taken place between the VHP and the AIBMAC — the first was on October 3, 1992 and the second on October 16. The second meeting was over, it became clear to everyone that the talks were not directed to finding a solution. Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat who participated in the talks in 1990 as well as in 1992, contrasting the first one under Shri Chandrashekhar and the second, under Shri Narasimha Rao, said: 'Shri Chandrashekhar wanted the talks to be directed to make a reference to the Supreme Court under Article 143 to find out whether a Hindu structure existed at the site."

4.6. But Shri Narasimha Rao set no such objective for the talks. When asked by Shri Shekhawat as to what was the object of the talks, the Prime Minister advised him "to keep the talks going; about the objective we shall see later."

4.7. This was the position not just before the talks began. This, according to Shri Shekhawat, continued to be the position even after the talks commenced and progressed from the first meeting on October 3, to the second meeting on October 16. This was the position even on October 18, 1992 when Shri Shekhawat could not help expressing his view that the Prime Minister was merely marking time by the dialogue. This was also reported in newspapers.

Evidence and counter-evidence not concluded

4.8. When the evidence and counter-evidence were tendered on 29th October, 1992, it became clear that the talks would never end and would go on and on. The "independent historians", Prof. D.N. Jha, R.S. Sharma, M. Athar Ali and Suraj Bhan, representing the AIBMAC wrote a letter to the Government stating as follows:

> "We are enclosing our **interim comments** on Ayodhya material shown to us at Purana Qila and also on the evidence shown on the audio-visual cassette. After having perused the material mentioned above on 23rd October 1992, we are convinced of the necessity for us to visit Ayodhya along with a team of at least eight scholars to make an on the spot assessment of the material. This is possible only if the Government of India makes necessary arrangements for our travel to, and stay and security at Ayodhya as well as for the availability of the material said to be found there."

This made it clear that the process of assessing evidence, far from ending, had not really crossed the stage of investigation. And yet, the White Paper claims (at pp. 4 and 20) that crucial decisions were expected on November 8, 1992 as the work of presenting evidence and offering comments thereon **had concluded.**

Nothing had concluded. There was only an interim reply from AIBMAC's consultants; they wanted to go to Ayodhya and the Government was asked to provide for their travel and stay, and guarantee their security.

It was all over on 29 October, 1992, says Shri Shekhawat

4.9. Shri Shekhawat has testified that "it was clear on 29th October that it was all over;

and the talks had virtually collapsed. But Shri Sharad Pawar and myself just wanted that we should not say it is over and withheld the announcement." Therefore, far from being pregnant, the dialogue had become sterile, (as it was intended to be) by October 29, 1992.

Was any crucial decision expected on November 8, 1992?

4.10. Second, on whether any crucial decision was expected on November 8, 1992, Shri Shekhawat says: "No, no decision was expected. No one, neither myself, nor Shri Sharad Pawar or Subodh Kant Sahay or P.R. Kumaramangalam knew what the talks were for; at least I did not know it and if I did not, no one in the open meeting would have known it. No one, none of the Central Ministers or Shri Sahay gave me or anyone else the impression that there was any meaning in the talks after 29th October, 1992. In fact, Shri Sharad Pawar did not disagree with me on the view that by 29th October, 1992 the talks had collapsed".

4.11. The assertion in the White Paper that crucial decisions were expected, is a clear concoction; there is not a single statement from the Government between October 30-31, and November 8, 1992, or thereafter, that crucial decisions expected on November 8, 1992 could not be taken because of the Kar Seva announcement.

Was the Kar Seva announcement sudden, and inexplicable?

4.12. Third, as already explained in detail, the Kar Seva announcement on October 30-31, 1992 was in accordance with the stand explicitly stated by the VHP repeatedly. Even on the very day, 26th July, 1992, when the VHP suspended the Kar Seva, the Karsevaks were clearly told that the next Kar Seva would be in October or November 1992 when the three month time frame expires. This was repeated in public on 28th July, 21st September (when the date of the meeting of Dharma Sansad as October 30-31 was also decided), 29th September; 16th October; 18th October; and 20th October. The meeting of Dharma Sansad of 5000 Sants had been set only to fix a date for Kar Seva. Only if the Sansad had not fixed the date it would have been unexpected and inexplicable.

Was the announcement intended to disrupt the dialogue?

4.13. Fourth, the date of Kar Seva was fixed on October 30-31, 1992 after five weeks on December 6, 1992 only to enable the negotiations to proceed. So the intention was to continue and not disrupt the talks. In fact, only a decision to recommence Kar Seva had been announced by October 31, 1992. The Kar Seva had not commenced by November 8, 1992 when the AIBMAC wanted the Kar Seva call withdrawn. In contrast, in December 1990, the dialogue between the VHP and the AIBMAC was going on from 1st December, 1990 to 6th February, 1991 along with a massive Satyagraha for Kar Seva from 6th December, 1990 in which lakhs of Karsevaks participated. If the AIBMAC could participate in the talks when the actual Satyagraha was on, and decided to participate earlier when the call for Satyagraha

was pending, why should they withdraw from the talks on a mere announcement. In fact, the VHP could not have intended that the AIBMAC should walk out of the talks. Therefore the allegation that the Kar Seva call was intended to disrupt the talks is clearly untenable.

4.14. Again, the VHP was entitled to expect, given the December 1990 experience, that the talks would not be disrupted by the announcement even as a result.

4.15. If the VHP did not intend to disrupt the talks, as it could not have and in fact did not, in the circumstances explained above, the consequential charge that it opted for confrontation also fails.

Does the conduct of the UP Chief Minister, Shri Kalyan Singh, in ordering the forces not to use force, amounts to striking at secularism, democracy and rule of law, and also betrayal?

5.1. While answering this issue, the first point to be clarified is that Shri Kalyan did not order the forces not to use force, but only not to fire upon the unarmed Karsevaks. This very issue has been explained by Shri Kalyan Singh himself in his affidavit filed before the Supreme Court. The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister says in his affidavit:

> "At 12.17 p.m. on 6.12.92, a large crowd suddenly attacked the disputed structure overcoming all the arrangements. Tear gas and lathi-charge was resorted to but it was of no avail. I personally contacted the D.M. on phone immediately and asked him to take the help of the Central force stationed at Ayodhya. Phone message was confirmed by following fax message from Principal Secretary Home to D.M. Faizabad:
>
> > 'No.17391/G.S./92 dated 6.12.1992. As directed on Telephone around 12.35 Hrs. Please make use of Central Forces immediately to control the situation in Ayodhya. Report compliance.'
>
> A special I.B. team had been deputed by the Union Home Ministry to study the situation on the spot so that the said Ministry is in full know of the ground situation at any given moment. The Union Home Minister who was fully posted with the ground situation talked to me at about 1.00 p.m. on 6.12.1992 and was satisfied that nothing better could be done than what was being done to handle the situation.
>
> "The District Administration approached the Deputy Director General, C.R.P.F. for making available 50 Companies but the Central Forces could not reach the spot. The Home Department received the following Radiogram from D.M./S.S.P., Faizabad:
>
> > 'Magistrate and Circle Officer moved with CRPF from Faizabad towards Ayodhya. Thousands of Kar Sewaks have sealed all the roads leading to Ayodhya. CRPF cannot move in Ayodhya without heavy firing resulting in massacre. Instruction solicited.'
>
> The Home Secretary immediately put up the following note:
>
> > 'At 12.35 p.m. today the D.M. Faizabad was asked to make use of Central Para Military Forces to handle the situation. It has been reported that the Central Forces are not able to move to Ayodhya on account of obstruction by big crowds of Kar Sevaks. The District Administration have sought instructions as to whether or not firing should be resorted to resulting in massacre. The Chief Minister had directed that Central Para Military Forces be utilised without resorting to firing. In the circumstances necessary instructions have to be issued to the District Administration.'
>
> The State Government agreed that firing would result in massacre and such a great amount of bloodshed that it will make the situation still more tragic and its backlash will further result

in flames of violence engulfing the State and the country. The order passed by the then Chief Minister i.e. myself is as under:

> 'Having regard to the situation at Ayodhya there is every possibility of firing leading to large scale bloodshed, flames of which can engulf the entire state and also the entire country which will be more tragic and unfortunate. Firing should therefore not be done. Except firing, all possible steps be taken to control the situation.'

It was, therefore, directed that short of firing all possible steps be taken to handle the situation. I respectfully submit that in a democratic functioning of the Government a Chief Minister, who is collectively responsible with his Ministers, while taking administrative decisions, has to give weight to the advice of his colleagues, on the spot assessment of any situation by its officers and an overall view of the matter. All these have a strong influence in taking a final decision.

"I, as also the State Government and its Officers, have throughout acted bonafide and in good faith. Although the State Government and its Officers had done their best in handling the situation, I accepted moral responsibility and tendered resignation of my Council of Ministers. It may be mentioned that even after imposition of President's Rule, it was not considered advisable to resort to firing on account of reports of the ground commanders on their assessment of the situation."

The six points in Shri Kalyan Singh's testimony

5.2. Six points emerge from Shri Kalyan Singh's sworn statement

- **One,** the Karsevaks' attack on the structure was sudden;
- **Two,** tear gas shelling and lathi-charge proved of no avail;
- **Three,** Shri Kalyan Singh himself directed the District Magistrate to take the help of Central Forces and followed it up with a fax message to that effect from the Principal Secretary Home to DM Faizabad;
- **Four,** even the Union Home Minister after talking to Shri Kalyan Singh was satisfied at 1 p.m. that nothing better could be done;
- **Five,** D.M. Faizabad wanted instructions to order firing which would result in massacre, as otherwise the Central Forces could not enter Ayodhya;
- **Six,** it was then that Shri Kalyan Singh ordered that except firing (which will have uncontrollable consequences) all possible steps should be taken to control the situation.

Kalyan Singh asked for Central Forces, but ordered them not to fire

5.3. By reference to documents, Shri Kalyan Singh establishes that far from being averse to use of the Central Forces, he ordered their use, but they could not be used unless he also authorised them to fire upon the Karsevaks — a course which he decided against and was rather prepared to quit office on moral grounds of not being able to protect the disputed structure than fire upon and massacre people.

The White Paper supports Kalyan Singh's testimony

5.4. There is nothing in the White Paper which contradicts what Shri Kalyan Singh has

said. In fact, the White Paper is untrue when it says that the State Government was unwilling to use the Central Forces and the D.M. sent them back at 2.20 p.m. (page 7). The question arises that having earlier requested for the Forces at 12.45 p.m., why did the D.M. send the Central Forces back. The answer is in the White Paper itself:

2.20 p.m. DG, ITBP informed MHA that 3 battalions which had moved from DRC had met resistance and obstructions. Enroute there were a lot of road blocks and people stopped vehicles. The convoy reached with great difficulty at Saket Degree College where the force was again stopped and the road was blocked. Minor pelting of stones also took place. The magistrate asked them in writing to return. DG, ITBP further informed that the 3 battalions had returned accordingly. The Commissioner had been contacted who informed that CM, UP had ordered that there will be no firing under any circumstances.

2.25 p.m. HS spoke to DGP, UP informing him of sending back of the force by the local administration and requested to issue necessary instructions for use of force. DGP, UP informed that CM's instructions were that firing should not be resorted to but other kinds of force could be used. HS asked DGP, UP that State Government should issue necessary instructions immediately. DGP promised to attend to this matter immediately.

2.30 p.m. HS spoke to Chief Secretary, UP and requested him also similarly.

2.35 p.m. HS spoke to Defence Secretary to keep helicopters ready if any force would have to be moved by air immediately. He was also requested to keep one or two transport planes ready for movement of additional troops if necessary.

3.30-4.30 p.m. HS was informed that communal incidents had started occurring in Ayodhya, and spoke to DGP, UP and told him that the situation was fast deteriorating and not only Central Forces had been unable to move but there was serious apprehension of communal riots. DGP, UP informed that situation cannot be controlled without resorting to firing and orders of CM were being obtained.

Thus, the question was not, as the White Paper falsely alleges, whether to use the Central Forces or not, but how to use them. The CM had clearly instructed, in his own hand, at 12.45 p.m. (which was made known forthwith at 1.00 p.m. by the CM to Home Minister Shri S.B. Chavan) and again at 2.20 p.m. (page 7) that under no circumstances firing should be resorted to.

Who should have ordered firing?

5.6. So the Central Government knew, and Shri Narasimha Rao also knew (as from 9.30

a.m. to 7.30 p.m. on December 6, 1992 the Home Minister was continuously in touch with the Prime Minister) that Shri Kalyan Singh had decided not to order firing upon the Karsevaks and that without firing, the Central Forces could not even enter Ayodhya. Why then did Shri Narasimha Rao not dismiss the Kalyan Singh Government and order firing, which Shri Kalyan Singh had defiantly refused to do? The White Paper says everything except that at 5.30 p.m. Shri Kalyan Singh resigned as CM. It was thereafter that the re-installation of the idols (6.45 p.m.) and the Kar Seva for the temporary Temple (7.30 p.m.) commenced. Why did the Central Government, that is Shri Narasimha Rao, not act — dismiss Kalyan Singh, impose President's Rule, and fire upon the Karsevaks? In fact, the constitutional duty of the PM to act — dismiss Shri Kalyan Singh and order firing — became imminent and inevitable the minute Shri Kalyan Singh refused to order firing. That a court order operated on Shri Kalyan Singh and not on Shri Narasimha Rao, did not make any difference to Shri Rao's constitutional obligations, the court order on Shri Kalyan Singh does not reduce the constitutional obligations of the Prime Minister. In fact, once Shri Kalyan Singh failed and failed to the knowledge of the PM, the latter's responsbility became double.

5.7. Notwithstanding this constitutional argument, why did the Prime Minister not act? The reason is simple. No Government can order firing on Ramabhaktas at Ayodhya. As Mark Tully said over BBC on 6th December, 1992, "no Government could afford to fire on Hindus in Ayodhya". The Narasimha Rao Government wanted Shri Kalyan Singh to order firing, which he would not. The Central Government did not have the courage either to say that it also would not fire upon Karsevaks, or to dismiss the UP Government and order firing. The question was not whether to fire or not, but who should order it. Shri Kalyan Singh courageously owned up the decision. Again, the stand of the Kalyan Singh Government on 6th December, 1992 that it would not order firing, was not a new or surprising decision. Even in the July 1992 Kar Seva, the UP Government under Shri Kalyan Singh had refused to order firing to enforce the court orders.

The charge in the White Paper holds good, not only against Kalyan Singh, but against the Prime Minister too

5.8. The charge in the Government White Paper that Shri Kalyan Singh, by allowing the demolition contrary to his own assurance to the court, betrayed the courts, the rule of law, secularism and democracy, is clearly misconceived. The charge proceeds on the assumption that a Chief Minister is accountable to rule of law, secularism and democracy only because he has given an undertaking to the court. But the undertaking is only a confirmation of his duty. It does not add to his duty. If he does not perform his constitutional duty he is no less guilty even if he has given no undertaking to the court. Thus, the fact that Shri Kalyan Singh gave an undertaking to the court does not make his constitutional duty higher or stricter than otherwise. And merely because the Central Government did not give any such undertaking

to the court, its constitutional duty is not qualitatively inferior. If Shri Kalyan Singh was guilty of betrayal, of striking at secularism, democracy and rule of law, by not ordering firing, the same charge can be made against the Central Government too, not just from 12.45 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. on 6th December, 1992, but upto the morning hours of 8th December, 1992. If the argument in the White Paper were accepted, only if there are binding court orders, as in the case of Shri Kalyan Singh, a Government will have constitutional obligations, and where there are no binding court orders, as in the case of Shri Narasimha Rao, keeping quiet and asking Shri Kalyan Singh to order firing because he has to comply with court orders, would be legitimate. The entire charge against Shri Kalyan Singh holds good equally against Shri Narasimha Rao, unless it is accepted that no responsible Government could have ordered firing in Ayodhya on that day.

Expressly and by implication, the Government's White Paper conceals the truth and tell lies

6.1. In para 1.10 (page 3) the White Paper states that although the Prime Minister was meeting several persons on Ayodhya, it was merely being accessible to those persons and no specific proposal or suggestion was made on behalf of the Government.

As explained in Chapter VI, the Prime Minister was trying various methods allowing proposals to be circulated with his knowledge, trying to delay the solution, and even dividing the movement. The contention that the Prime Minister was merely being accessible to those who wanted to meet him, that he was not calling or inviting anyone, that he was having non-serious dialogue with them over perhaps a coffee or a dinner, and that he was spending days and months on such useless exercise to no specific purpose, is a clear lie.

6.2. The defence in para 1.9 as to the delay in the work of the Special Cell, namely, that authentication of the documents took time, is, as explained in Chapter VI, clearly untenable.

6.3. The White Paper dismisses the 450 year history of the struggle over Ramajanmabhoomi in just 450 words on the first page, and yet it claims to be a document "on Ayodhya".

6.4. The White Paper has dealt mostly with what happened under the present Government, and withheld the details of what the earlier Governments did. As also the intensity of the movement and its depth.

6.5. The Government version also suppresses the fact that in the year 1988, Shri Narasimha Rao was made by Shri Rajiv Gandhi the head of the Group of Ministers to solve the problem. If it had been mentioned, it could be seen that the Prime Minister was not new to the subject.

6.6. The White Paper incorrectly says (p. 17, para 3.10) that it was only in July 1992 that the Prime Minister took initiative in the matter.

6.7. The White Paper totally suppresses the details of the negotiations by the Prime Minister from July 1992 to December 5, 1992. Thus, the White Paper of the Government is

neither a truthful document on what happened during the regime of Shri Narasimha Rao, nor a comprehensive document on the Ayodhya movement. To call it a White Paper on Ayodhya is to understate the depth and expanse of the Ayodhya movement, and to name it a White Paper is to upgrade its worth beyond its actual probate value.

CHAPTER IX
THE ROLE OF LAW AND JUDICIARY IN THE AYODHYA CASE

Hindu case under the Islamic and, later, the British Rule

1.1. Any study of the Ayodhya movement would be incomplete without a scrutiny of the role of the law and the judiciary. As discussed in Chapter II, the Hindus resorted to judicial means to repossess the Ramajanmabhoomi during the British period when a semblance of rule of law established by the British had become part of the governance. Till the British came in, in areas under Muslim rule, what kind of law governed those who were not Muslims is explained by Roland Knyvet Wilson in *Anglo Mohammedan Law* (3 Ed. 1908). The author says:

> "The rules laid down for the treatment of infidel subjects (Zimmis) could not be applied in its entirety. In strictness, the Hindus being idolators and polytheists, should not have been admitted to the status of Zimmis at all; but should have been either converted or exterminated; supposing this idea was to be abandoned as it was at a very early period, they should at least have been burdened with a special capitation tax (Jezya) and should have been restricted to the humblest edifices and the most unostentatious form of public worship" (pp. 26-27).

This was the law that was applicable to the Hindus under Islamic jurisprudence. So there was no question of any judicial inquiry into the grievances of Hindus under Muslim rule. The legal inquest into Ayodhya became possible only after the British Government took roots. Even the British had legislated, under the Regulations of 1772, that where a legal dispute arose between a Hindu and a Muslim, and the Hindu is the plaintiff and the Muslim is the defendant, then the law applicable will be the law of the defendant, namely, Islamic law. With this jurisprudence, there was hardly any possibility of the Hindus fighting for their legal rights even under the British.

The Hindus win the case, but lose the Janmasthan in 1886

1.2. The first legal case for repossession of Ramajanmabhoomi was filed by Mahant Raghubardas in 1885 and the judgement of the Faizabad District Court was delivered in March, 1886. An English Judge Col. F.E.A. Chamier acknowledged:

> "It is most unfortunate that a Masjid should have been built on land specially held sacred by the Hindus, but, as that event occurred 356 years ago, it is too late now to remedy the grievance. All that can be done is to maintain the party in status quo. In such a case as the present one any innovation may cause more harm and derangement of order than any benefit."

Thus the Hindus won the case, but could not get the Janmasthan. Purely in legal terms, this judgement was correct. Even now, what this English Judge said is the intellectual justification offered by the Leftist and Anglicised sections in India, namely, that it happened over 400 years ago. But can that answer the faith and sensibilities of the Hindus? If it cannot, has the law to change or the faith? Could this law, or judgement have been applied to Somnath? Purely in the legal sense, could the Somnath Temple have been built? But it was built. How? Because the responsible national leaders decided that that was the correct way.

Judicial proceedings restart in 1950 after the Hindus physically take possession of the structure

1.3. So the law could not help the Hindus for more than 60 years, from 1885 to 1949. But when they physically occupied the structure after the idols of Sri Rama appeared on 22-23 December, 1949, the same law okayed it, and the same law enforcing courts — the District Court in 1950 and later in 1955 the High Court — granted to the Hindus the right to worship and injuncted against removing the idols. Two suits were filed by Shri Gopal Singh Visharad and Paramhans Ramachandradas (who is today heading the Temple construction committee) — one for a permanent injunction against removing the idols, and the other for performance of pooja. The court granted both.

The High Court directed as early as 1955 that the case be disposed of forthwith, but that case is pending even today

1.4. While granting to the Hindus the right to worship, the High Court regretted that the two cases were pending from 1950 and directed that they should be disposed of forthwith. The court said:

> **It is very desirable that suit of this kind is decided as soon as possible and it is regretted that it remained undecided after four years.** The delay appears to be principally due to the fact that the record of the proceedings in the trial court was summoned by this court in the year 1953 on the application of the present appellants. **Had that not been done, the suit would probably by now have been decided.**
>
> ...We, however, consider it extremely desirable that the suit should be disposed of at once and we accordingly direct that the record of proceedings is to be sent back to the lower court.

However, even today, that is, 38 years after the High Court's directive for disposal of the cases forthwith and 43 years after their first institution by the Sants, they are pending even today — pending in the same state, without any progress whatsoever. Can there be any other case which can be compared to these frozen cases, frozen virtually in a state of suspended animation?

Most of the parties to the suit are dead

1.5. In the first suit, not only the plaintiff Gopal Singh Visharad, but, all five individuals who were defendants, are no more. Gopal Singh Visharad has been substituted by his son, Shri Rajendra Singh. Amongst those in the second suit, the Plaintiff Paramhans Ramachandradas alone is alive, but no defendant has survived.

The third suit, filed by the Nirmohi Akhara in 1959, is also pending although all parties to the suit are dead

1.6. The Nirmohi Akhara filed this suit for a decree to direct that the Rama Temple at Ayodhya was not interfered with by the defendants. All parties to the suit, six of them, are dead.

The fourth suit, and the first from Muslims, by the Sunni Waqf Board filed in 1961

1.7. This suit was filed by the Sunni Waqf Board for wresting the title and possession of the Ramajanmabhoomi and the structure from the Hindus, and for the removal of the idols from the structure. This suit was filed on 18.12.1991, barely four days before the 12 years limit of adverse possession was to expire.

Can any court order the removal of Ram Lala?

1.8. Apart from the fact that this suit is frivolous, even if legally tenable, can any court in India order the idols to be removed? And even if a court did, can any Government implement that order?

1.9. And yet this case is also pending today despite the fact twelve of the parties to the suit are already dead.

The Waqf Board suit is totally frivolous

1.10. This is the only suit by the Muslims against the Ramajanmabhoomi. If this suit goes, there is no legal dispute at all about the title and possession of the Hindus over Ramajanmabhoomi. Certain vital facts about this suit are:

a. Under Islamic law, only the Mutawalli of the Masjid is authorised to initiate legal action.

b. The Mutawalli of the Babri structure is Mir Javad Hasan, a descendant of Mir Baqi and resident of a village 10 km. away from Ayodhya where Mir Baqi's Mazaar is situated.

c. Mir Javad Hasan has refused to join the Waqf Board suit.

d. He is maintaining himself out of 40 acres of land given by the British for military and political service rendered to them by his forefathers.

e. He has demanded the transfer of the "masjid" to his village so that he can offer prayers there, and the Janmabhoomi reverts to the Hindus.

f. His right to Mutawalliship has been recognised by the Sunni Waqf Board itself in its report dated 10th December, 1949 and Office Note dated 25th November, 1948 sent by the Waqf Board to him.

Thus Mutawalli being the only proper person to act in law for a mosque, the Sunni Waqf Board is an interloper, and cannot file a case for wresting the Ramajanmabhoomi.

The settled law is that adverse possession extinguishes Muslims rights

1.11. If this is the position in fact, in law too a mosque not being a juristic person, unlike a Hindu idol, there cnnot be a representative litigation by the Muslims for a mosque. This was settled by the Lahore High Court in 1930 and its judgement was confirmed by the Privy Council in 1940. The Lahore High Court said:

> **"When a mosque is adversely possessed by non-Muslims, that is to say Hindus, the Muslims lose all the right in the land and the building, including the right of worship.** The building cannot maintain the character of a mosque and no duty is cast upon the persons in possession thereof to maintain its original character or to maintain it even as a building. **All the rights of the Muslims being thus extinguished, including their right to pray, the persons in possession commit no wrong, much less a continuing wrong, by not permitting, or refusing the right of the Muslims to pray therein.** A suit instituted by a Muslim as a beneficiary for the exercise of his right to pray at a mosque is a suit for the enforcement of an individual right and not a collective right of the Muslims."

The limitation period for the relief claimed in the Waqf Board suit is 6 years, while it was filed 11 years and 360 days late. Thus the property has come into the hands of the Hindus by adverse possession. When the Lahore case was appealed against, the Privy Councel upheld the Lahore judgement. If this ruling is applied, the Sunni Waqf Board case has no legs to stand on.

Civil judge Faizabad holds that the disputed structure is not Waqf property at all

1.12. The City Civil Judge of the Faizabad court has given a preliminary finding that the disputed structure was not a Waqf property as no proper notification has been made under the law declaring it to be a Waqf property. This was on April 21, 1966.

Waqf Board suit suffers from unsurmountable difficulties

1.13. Thus the only case of the Muslim, the Sunni Waqf Board suit, is untenable in law for 3 insurmountable difficulties:

a. Only a Mutawalli, and not a Waqf Board can enforce the legal right on a mosque; the Mutawalli of the Babri structure wants it to be shifted.
b. The Waqf Board suit is time-barred.
c. The Babri structure is not a notified Waqf property at all.

This is the only case against the Ramajanmasthan. And it is clearly frivolous, pending almost where it stood when filed 34 years ago. Yet this is what the government, the Congress and ex-Congress parties and Marxists describe as property subject to judicial proceedings, and ask the Hindus to await the judicial verdict.

Fresh suit by Hindus on 1st July 1989

1.14. A fresh suit was filed in the name of Lord Rama himself by Shri Deoki Nandan Agarwala for declaration of title and possession in favour of the deity.

On 10th July 1989, all cases transferred to High Court

1.15. All five cases — the two filed in **1950**, one in **1959**, the Waqf Board suit in **1961**, and the new case in **1989** — were withdrawn by the High Court to itself, on an application made by the UP Government in the year 1987.

Special Bench of 3 Judges constituted in 1989

1.16. The UP Government also asked for a Special Bench of three judges to be constituted to hear all Ramajanmabhoomi cases, and the application was granted.

Yet the cases are where they were, 34 years or 43 years ago

1.17. All cases have been consolidated, a single Special Bench has been constituted, and yet the cases do not progress; they stay where they are.

The case for opening of the locks — a contrast

1.18. Compare it with the lightning speed with which the case filed by an unknown advocate was heard and disposed off. It is worth recalling the event.

- **First,** an unknown advocate (Umesh Chand Pande) filed an application on 21st January, 1986, within two days after the Sants' ultimatum in the Munsif court at Faizabad;
- **Second,** on 28th January, 1986, the Munsif refused to pass any orders;
- **Third,** an appeal was filed forthwith, in the Court of District Judge, Faizabad;
- **Fourth,** on 1st February, 1986 i.e. within three days of the Munsif Court order, the District Court passed an order directing the Government of Uttar Pradesh to unlock the gate, and further directed that they shall not impose any restriction or hurdle in the darshan or pooja by the Hindu community;
- **Fifth,** within hours of passing of the above order, the Temple was unlocked and even the Doordarshan cameramen were present to cover the occasion which was widely telecast all over India.

1.19. How did this case move at this speed? How did the Government acquiesce in this case? How did the Faizabad District court allow the appeal ordering the opening of locks in a matter of two days when the Hindus had been pleading for nearly 37 years? How did the Doordarshan cameras click the opening of the locks within an hour of the court orders? All these questions have only one answer — when the Government is not against, such things can, and do, happen. Even the courts respond. So, could it be said that the law or the courts are solely responsible for Ramajanmabhoomi cases being where they are, or is the that government which wants the cases to remain frozen?

The Special Bench of the High Court endorses the view of the Sants, the BJP and the VHP

1.20. The Special Bench which was constituted to go into all Ramajanmabhoomi cases, said on 7th November, 1989, at the time of the Shilanyas:

> "It is doubtful that some of the questions involved in this suit are soluble by judicial process."

Thus even the judiciary held the same view as the BJP and the VHP, namely, that the Ramajanmabhoomi issue cannot be subject to judicial determination. However, this observation not withstanding, the judiciary continued to play an active role.

The High Court ignores what the Supreme Court observed on 12th January 1990

1.21. On 12th January, 1990, on an application by Paramahans Ramchandradas, the Supreme Court observed:

> "If the defendants press the contention regarding maintainability grounded upon limitation to be raised as a preliminary issue, the High Court which is trying the case will do well to entertain the request."

Armed with this order, the Hindu defendants in the Waqf Board suit asked for preliminary determination of the limitation issue. The High Court, virtually defying the Supreme Court by its order of 22nd August, 1990, refused to decide any issue as preliminary issue. This the High Court did even without hearing the argument of the defendants on merit.

Paramhans Ramchandradas applies for withdrawal of his case

1.22. The very next day, 23rd August, 1990, Paramhans Ramchandradas personally applied for the withdrawal of his suit filed in 1950, saying that "he had lost all hope of any decision on his suit filed 40 years ago, even by the Special Bench of the High Court". He also orally told the court that he was withdrawing the litigation completely, and was leaving the matter entirely in the hands of Bhagwan Sri Rama for preserving and enforcing the right of whose worship he had instituted the suit when he was 40 years of age. He was now 80 years old, and saw no hope of any end to the litigation in the court. There can be no greater indictment of the judicial system, especially in the manner it has dealt with the Ayodhya issue.

The limitation as preliminary issue, pending before the Supreme Court since 1990

1.23. The refusal of the High Court to hear the limitation as preliminary issue is now the subject of a Special Leave Petition pending before the Supreme Court from September 1990 and it is pending even today.

The Kalyan Singh Government sees no judicial resolution of the case

1.24. This was the position in the year 1950, in 1959, in 1961, and in 1990. The same was the position in June 1991 when the BJP Government assumed office in UP. By then it was evident that as the Special Bench of the High Court (before which all the cases were pending) had observed that some of the issues were doubtful of judicial solution, there could be no judicial decision on these cases.

The UP Government follows a different strategy

1.25. The Kalyan Singh Government therefore devised a construction plan delinked from

the disputed structure, and acquired 2.77 acres of land (including 2.04 acres from the Ramajanmabhoomi Nyas) for Temple construction. This was in October 1991.

Writ Petitions were promptly filed in the High Court and in the Supreme Court, challenging the acquisition. The High Court, the same Special Bench, by an interim order on 25th October, 1991, upheld the acquisition, but granted an interim injunction against permanent construction and alienation.

The Supreme Court expected final hearing in December 1991

1.26. On 15th November, 1991 the Supreme Court transferred its Writ Petitions to the High Court, stating that the High Court was taking up the case for final disposal in December, 1991.

But the case was pending even in July 1992

1.27. This case which was to be taken up for final hearing in December 1991, kept on being heard from month to month, and was pending even in July 1992 when the Kar Seva took place.

The Supreme Court requests the High Court to expedite the case

1.28. When the Kar Seva was on, the Supreme Court said on 23rd July, 1992 that if the UP Government could stop the Kar Seva the Supreme Court could transfer the acquisition cases to itself and decide them in a consolidated manner. But finally, the Supreme Court did not do so because the case before the High Court was far advanced. The Supreme Court, however, stressed that the High Court should expedite the hearing and disposal.

The High Court concludes the hearing but reserves the judgement

1.29. The final hearing before the High Court concluded on 4th November, 1992 and the High Court reserved the judgement. The Kar Seva had been set for December 6, 1992. All that the UP Government and the organisers of the Temple movement wanted was the judgement of the High Court, no matter whether it was for or against, because even if it went against, the Kar Seva could go on, on the land that would revert to VHP.

The Supreme Court again requests the High Court to expedite the judgement

1.30. The High Court judgement was badly needed before 6th December, 1992. The UP Government persuaded the Supreme Court to pass an order on 28th November, 1992 requesting the High Court to expedite the judgement, which the Supreme Court did. Yet the High Court did not deliver the judgement. The UP Government pleaded that the High Court might deliver only the operative part of their judgement. But the plea was rejected.

The judgement expected in December, 1991, then in July 1992, and finally in November 1992, comes after December 6, 1992

1.31. Finally, the High Court delivered the judgement only on 11th December, 1992, five days after the crucial date — after it was all over.

The effect of judicial orders

1.32. Thus, the judicial proceedings pending from 1950 responded only to prevent the construction whenever the courts were approached — whether in 1989, or in 1991 or in 1992. But when the UP Government or the organisers of the Temple movement wanted the courts to consider their plea for deciding a preliminary issue or to deliver an early judgement which would advance the construction, it was turned down. It is not that there could be, or was any motive — but that was the result. The net result of the court orders was to expedite the proceedings that would prevent the construction, and delay the proceedings that would help the construction.

The bipartite legal system and the Ayodhya issue

1.33. In the final analysis, it would appear that a bipartite legal system and principles meant for determination of private property rights cannot decide far reaching historical issues that are related to faith and politics. Only because of this inadequacy, the legal system could not decide the issue for over 30 years. It was this inability of law to settle the issue that led to the Hindus resorting to a mass movement. First the Rajiv Gandhi Government in 1989, later the Narasimha Rao Government in 1991 and 1992, began using the courts as a weapon and as a shield, a process in which by the application of the bipartite principles of jurisprudence, the courts could not help becoming parties in a highly emotive and complex religio-political matter. Such involvement in areas where the orders of the court conflict with mass mandate like the one, the UP Government had to build the Temple, only eroded the efficacy of the judiciary and its orders as the Narasimha Rao Government began to utilise the court to deal with what was essentially a political problem.

Was not the Allahabad High Court farsighted when it said in 1989 that "some questions in the case are doubtful of judicial resolution"?

CHAPTER X
CONCLUSIONS

This magnum opus on the Ayodhya movement catalogues and centralises at one place and in a coherent manner the full canvas of the movement, and gives a true account of its evolution and progress, of its causes and consequences, of its participants and detractors. The contents of the foregoing nine chapters constitute a well-documented biography of the movement. The conclusions that flow out of this exercise are highly instructive. They are:

First, the Ayodhya movement is not just a movement for a Temple at Ayodhya, but encompasses the greatest nationalist reassertion of India in its known history. The movement is founded on a sound philosophy that is rooted in truth. It has evolved as a corrective to the distortions of the post-Independence Indian politics and has re-commenced the Somnath evolution that stood suspended after the death of Sardar Patel. (Chapter I)

Second, the Ayodhya struggle is not the creation of the Sangh Parivar, or the BJP, or even the Sants. It is a continuation of the unremitting struggle of the Hindus to repossess their holy place desecrated by the invaders. The Hindus adopted different methods — first, military means and war diplomacy; second, legal means, and third, mass agitation — depending upon whatever means were effective at any given time. The massive Ayodhya movement from 1984 is a historical continuity whose context was an insensitive polity and an unmoving judiciary. (Chapter II)

Third, the evidence available on Ayodhya irrefutably established that a Hindu Temple was brought down to raise a mosque, and that this had been the point of struggle between the Hindus and Muslims for centuries. And yet the dialogue between the VHP and the AIBMAC on evidence could not produce any result because of the unreasonable and evasive response of the Masjid groups and the anti-Temple approach of the Central Government led by the Congress and of other parties. (Chapter III)

Fourth, the attitude of different governments, Prime Ministers, political parties and leaders since the Ayodhya movement took shape, clearly and unequivocally pointed to their concern for office and success from electoral point of view and the block votes of Muslims. This compelled them to adopt means and strategies that were delinked from fairness and national interest. (Chapter IV)

Fifth, the attitude of the Narasimha Rao Government at first was to neglect and ignore the issue as long as it was possible. But when the issue became highly sensitive in July 1992,

the Prime Minister defused it with the active co-operation of the BJP by giving an assurance that he would solve the problem and remove the hindrances to the Kar Seva in 3 months, and thus got the Kar Seva by the Sants suspended. He had, however, no intention of solving the issue as he had promised, as indeed the subsequent events confirmed. (Chapter V)

Sixth, having secured 3 months time from the Sants, the Prime Minister did nothing for 70 days. He devised a hydra-headed strategy to achieve certain political objectives that were calculated to deal with the challenge to him within his party and government. For this purpose, he had to involve high institutions like the judiciary in the Ayodhya controversy. In his ambitious plan to achieve the impossible, he wanted to fire, literally and figuratively, over the shoulders of the BJP by using the courts. He merely treated the Ayodhya issue as a BJP-related problem, and turned it into a political game. Finally, all his dexterity and cleverness which are no substitutes for sincerety and candour, boomeranged on him. The mosque was demolished not in spite of his efforts or the court orders, but, precisely because of both. (Chapter VI)

Seventh, the aftermath of Ayodhya and its fall out bring out how the Prime Minister was coerced by the intra-party power struggle into more and more wrongs against national interest — the promise to reconstruct the mosque, the ban on RSS, etc., the arrest of the Ayodhya movement leaders, the dismissal of the BJP governments, the ban on the BJP rally in Delhi and elsewhere, and the attempt to promote a sarkari Trust to displace the Ayodhya movement. While the Narasimha Rao Government is endlessly running amok, the national debate has centered around what is secularism, nationalism, and communalism. The Ayodhya movement appears to have taken the lid off the Muslim community in India and set-off a debate which that community was consistently held incapable of. It has not stopped at that. The Ayodhya movement has made all secular parties less allergic to Hindutva and the Marxists now find even Swami Vivekananda agreeable. (Chapter VII)

Eighth, the White Paper put out by the Narasimha Rao Government virtually repudiates and condemns what the Prime Minister had been saying, and upholds what the Sants and the BJP had been asserting. While the PM charged the Ayodhya movement with pre-planning and conspiracy to demolish the disputed structure, the Government White Paper ruled out both. While the PM repeatedly labelled the structure as a mosque, his White Paper says on its very first page that from 1949 it was not being used as a mosque and in page after page thereafter it says that it was only a disputed structure. The charges against the VHP and the UP government made in the Government White Paper are palpably false.

(Chapter VIII)

Nine, the role of law and the judiciary in the Ayodhya case clearly confirm the confession of the judiciary that some aspects of the Ayodhya case are incapable of judicial determination. It also brings out the fact that the judiciary had condemned itself as far back as 1955, that is 38 years before, for keeping the Ayodhya case pending; it is ironical that it should be pending even today. The effect, regardless of the intent, of the interim judicial orders in the Ayodhya case was to prevent the construction, while the delay, unprecedented in legal history, indefinitely prolonged the suit. It is evident that the English system of jurisprudence which is intended to settle bipartite property disputes cannot adjudicate on an explosive issue like Ayodhya. (Chapter IX)

Thus this White Paper deals with all aspects of the Ayodhya movement — its historic relevance and philosophic background as a recommencement of the suspended Somnath evolution; its historic background and the different methods by which the Hindus have been struggling for centuries to repossess the Ramajanmabhoomi; the thorough and compelete evidence that proves how the temple was destroyed to raise the mosque, without anything to rebut the Hindu case which has fully met the shifty and shifting demands of the Masjid groups; the role of the different governments, Prime Ministers, political parties and leaders in response to the Ayodhya movement; how the cleverness of Shri Narasimha Rao landed his Government in a mess from which it drifted from one wrong to another and finally turned the Ayodhya movement into a multi-dimensional struggle; how the White Paper published by the Government repudiated Shri Narasimha Rao's declarations and accusations and how it prevaricates and withholds truth; and how the law and judiciary confessed their inability to solve the Ayodhya issue and yet kept passing interim orders to stifle the Temple construction. There is no aspect of the Ayodhya movement or its implications which this White Paper has not dealt with.

The BJP trusts that this comprehensive document will be an invaluable input to the ongoing national debate on Ayodhya and related issues — the meaning and content of secularism, communalism, and nationalism — which the Ayodhya movement has thrown up for public debate and discourse. The BJP hopes that those who aspire to know and understand the depth and the reach of this greatest mass movement in the history of this nation, will find in this White Paper a true and sincere account of the Ayodhya movement.

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GLOSSARY

Ayodhya	Holy town in Uttar Pradesh province in North India, also referred to as Saket. The birthplace of Sri Rama and revered as a place of pilgrimage for thousands of years by the Hindus.
Babri Masjid	The mosque-like structure built by Mir Baqi to commemorate the conquests of his King Babur: this was built at Ayodhya.
Bajrang Dal	Volunteer corps of Hindus formed during the Ayodhya Movement. (Bajrang= Hanuman; Dal=corps).
Bhagawan	'God', 'Lord'.
Darshan	Viewing idol/holy personage.
Dharma Sansad	Forum of Hindu religious figures.
District Magistrate	Head of civil administration in a district. His duties include maintenance of law and order. There are over 600 districts (unit of civil and revenue administration) in India.
Faizabad	District headquarters town adjacent to Ayodhya.
Janmasthan	"Place of birth" — Refers to the area revered as the birthplace of Rama in Ayodhya. The disputed site.
Kar Seva	Holy task to be accomplished voluntarily (esp. renovation/repair/construction of temple/gurudwara etc.).
Karsevak	Volunteer for holy task. A form for volunteers coming forward to build a temple to Sri Rama at the Janmasthan.
Mahant	Hindu religious leader.
Margadarshak Mandal	Apex committee of religious leaders formed to guide the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Ayodhya Movement.
Maryada Purushottam	'Epitome of Human Attributes' — Refers to Rama.
Moulvi	Religious preacher of Islam
National Integration Council	A forum of leading personalities including political leaders, Members of Parliament, intellectual, artistes etc., for discussing matters relating to national integration.
Ram Lala	Lala = affectionate term for child. The idol of 'Child Rama' being worshipped at the Janmasthan.
Ram Kot	'Fort of Rama' — The revenue village where the disputed site is situated.
Ramajanmabhoomi	'The land where Rama was born' also known as Janmasthan, in Ayodhya. The disputed site.
Ram Rajya	'Rama's Rule' — A reference to the ideal conditions when Rama ruled his kingdom. An ideal of Hindu society down the ages that was projected sharply by Mahatma Gandhi during the struggle for freedom from British rule. (See also 'Swaraj' and 'Swadeshi').
Rathyatra	Chariot journey undertaken to mobilise mass opinion. (Rath=chariot, vehicle; Yatra=journey).
Sangh Parivar	Refers to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (a voluntary organisation for socio-cultural change in Hindu society formed in 1925) and a cluster of connected organisations: Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (labour organisation); Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (students organisation); Vishwa Hindu Parishad (religious); Vidya Bharati (educational); etc., (Parivar=family.)
Sant	A honorific term for religious leaders, ascetics, heads of organisations, monasteries etc.

Shia, Sunni	Two major Islamic sects formed following differences as to who should lead the Muslims after Prophet Mohammed.
Shilanyas	Foundation-stone laying ceremony. One of the major events in the Ayodhya Movement.
Shila Pujan	Shila=stone, brick; Pujan=worship. Hundreds of thousands of bricks specially made and inscribed with 'Sri Ram' were consecrated in villages all over India and abroad and brought to Ayodhya to be used in the Rama Temple complex.
Sita ki Rasoi	'The kitchen where Sita cooked' — a revered structure in the Janmasthan complex.
Somnath	A magnificent temple of Siva on the western coast of India that was the repository of unparalleled wealth and which was repeatedly looted and desecrated by invaders. Finally the temple was destroyed and a mosque erected in its place. After 1947, a strong movement for the renovation of Somnath temple sprang up with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi and the backing of Vallabhabhai Patel. The Somnath temple was finally resurrected and built in all its glory.
Swadeshi	'Of one's own country' — An economic concept of giving pre-eminent status to indigenous skills and efforts. A rallying cry of the Indian Freedom Struggle.
Swaraj	'Self-Rule'. Indigenous rule. A clarion call given by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and taken up by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle.
Tulsidas	16th century poet who wrote the Ramayana in Hindi as Ramcharitmanas.
Waqf Board	Autonomous board to manage affairs of religious places bequeathed by Muslims.
Vaishnavite	Pertains to worship of Vishnu — one of the three major Gods of the Hindu pantheon. Rama is believed to be the avatara (incarnation) of Vishnu.
Vishwa Hindu Parishad	International organisation of various Hindu denominations/sects. The organisation in the forefront of the Ayodhya Movement.

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