



Justice, 34 years on

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Justice, 34 years on-The conviction of two men offers a glimmer of hope to other victims of the anti-Sikh pogrom

- The conviction of two rioters for their role in the 1984 anti-Sikh violence in Delhi marks a rare success in the long struggle to bring the perpetrators to justice.
- The Central government's decision in 2015 to form a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to reopen serious cases related to the 1984 riots has yielded results.
- The trial court has rightly brushed aside minor discrepancies in evidence and technical objections to the fresh investigation being taken up, and concluded that the testimony of key witnesses, who were themselves injured, was cogent and reliable.
- It is possible to argue that there is little justice, or even meaning, in securing the conviction of those who may have been sucked into the mob frenzy that followed Indira Gandhi's assassination.
- However, it cannot be forgotten that obtaining a conviction in instances of communal and sectarian riots is quite rare.
- Investigators and prosecutors seldom succeed in nailing political leaders and their key henchmen.
- Impunity for participants in pogroms has been the norm, and successful prosecution the rare exception.
- The slow judicial process was made even more excruciating by manipulated investigation and shoddy prosecution.
- The latest verdict demonstrates that the efflux of years need not be an impediment to the project of securing justice.
- It offers a glimmer of hope for substantial justice despite the passage of 34 years.

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