



Temple timing

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Temple timing-The Centre should not create a political crisis over the Ram temple issue

- As the Lok Sabha election draws nearer, the Bharatiya Janata Party and affiliates of the Sangh Parivar have begun mobilisation in the name of a Ram temple at Ayodhya.
- This is part of an attempt to force a political solution to what is essentially a legal dispute over the title of the land where the Babri Masjid once stood.
- The show of muscle at the Dharma Sabha of the Vishva Hindu Parishad in Ayodhya was clearly intended to pressure the executive, the judiciary, and the various stakeholders in the dispute to pave the way for the construction of the temple.
- Although the Supreme Court is seized of the issue, the Sabha appealed to the Muslim community to give up their claims to the land in dispute, and urged the government to expedite the process for construction.
- The court is due to fix in January 2019 a date for hearing the title suit appeals, and a ruling in the case is unlikely before the general election.
- Clearly, for the Hindutva outfits at the forefront of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, the question is when, and not if, a Ram temple will come up at the disputed site.
- There is no sign of a willingness to wait for, and abide by, the Supreme Court verdict.
- Any attempt to bypass the legal process through an executive order will be ill-advised and likely to be struck down by the court.
- But in a situation where political signalling is what counts, many in the BJP-led government might indeed contemplate such a course.
- Mr. Modi gave little credit to the Supreme Court in framing the issue in this manner, but his statement is an indication of the political pressures that are brought to bear on this case.
- The BJP also faces political intimidation on the issue from its far-right ally, the Shiv Sena, which is calling for action on the issue, saying that

the government had slept over it for the last four years.

- Any attempt to polarise the country over this case must be resisted at every level.

The Hindu

