

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **archaeological** (adjective) – relating to archaeology (the study of the human past using material remains).
2. **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** (noun) – The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, was established in the year 1861 is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
3. **resurrect** (verb) – relaunch, reinstitute, bring back.
4. **civil court** (noun) – a court of law that handles noncriminal cases.
5. **ascertain** (verb) – find out, discover, dig out.
6. **demolish** (verb) – destroy, bulldoze, knock down, pull down.
7. **unconscionable** (adjective) – unethical, immoral, unprincipled, wrong.
8. **intervention** (noun) – the process of intervening in something; involvement, interference, intrusion, meddling.
9. **floodgate** (noun) – something which is restraining/holding back/stifling an outflow of something else.
10. **open the floodgates** (phrase) – to make something easier for a lot of things to happen (or) to make it possible for a lot of people to start doing something that was not permitted previously.
11. **protracted** (adjective) – very long, long-lasting, prolonged, extended, extensive.
12. **apparently** (adverb) – seemingly, evidently, it appears that.
13. **gross** (adjective) – flagrant, blatant, glaring, obvious.
14. **explicit** (adjective) – clear, straightforward, definite, specific, categorical.
15. **legislative** (adjective) – relating to legislation; governmental, judicial.
16. **prohibition** (noun) – the act or practice of forbidding something by law; banning, forbidding, prohibiting, barring, debarment.
17. **litigation** (noun) – legal case, legal proceeding, legal action.
18. **fillip** (noun) – stimulus, boost, incentive.
19. **majoritarian** (adjective) – relating to a philosophy that states that a majority (sometimes categorized by religion, language, social class, or some other identifying factor) of the population is entitled to a certain degree of primacy (priority) in society, and has the right to make decisions that affect the society.
20. **revanchist** (adjective) – relating to a policy of fighting back, especially to recover lost territory.
21. **carry on** (phrasal verb) – engage in, conduct, undertake, be involved in.
22. **culminate** (verb) – come to an end with, finish with, conclude with, terminate with.
23. **hand over** (phrasal verb) – pass, transfer, assign.
24. **conspire** (verb) – plot, collude, collaborate, intrigue; work/act together.
25. **plaintiff** (noun) – a person who is bringing a lawsuit against another person before a court; claimant, litigator, petitioner.
26. **faith** (noun) – religion, religious belief, religious group.
27. **commission** (verb) – order, authorize (a person or organization) to do something.

28. **look for** (phrasal verb) – search for, try to find.
29. **sort of** (phrase) – to some extent, somewhat, somehow, slightly.
30. **adduce** (verb) – present, offer, propose; cite/mention/quote (as an evidence).
31. **on one's own** (phrase) – alone, all alone, by oneself, all by oneself, independently, single-handedly.
32. **the fact that** (phrase) – used to refer to a particular situation/condition under consideration.
33. **reserve** (verb) – defer, postpone, put off, delay, withhold (a judgement).
34. **maintainability** (noun) – an act of preserving/keeping something in an existing condition.
35. **pronounce** (verb) – give a ruling on, pass judgement on, give a verdict on, make a ruling on.
36. **go ahead** (phrasal verb) – to proceed, to continue to do something, to start/begin to do something.
37. **directive** (noun) – instruction, order.
38. **Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991** (noun) – An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
39. **abate** (verb) – decline, reduce, diminish, mitigate.
40. **freeze** (verb) – hold in a fixed state.
41. **barring** (preposition) – except for, with the exception of, excepting, excluding, omitting, leaving out.
42. **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958** (noun) – An Act to provide for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for the protection of sculptures, carvings and other like objects.
43. **trial court** (noun) – the court of original jurisdiction (where cases are tried at first, as against an appeal court).
44. **afresh** (adverb) – anew, over again, once more.
45. **presumably** (adverb) – probably, in all likelihood, undoubtedly, seemingly.
46. **seek** (verb) – request, ask for, appeal.
47. **regardless of** (phrase) – despite, notwithstanding, in spite of.
48. **merits** (noun) – an essential inherent quality (rights and wrongs only) while evaluating a case (not by external aspects).
49. **ought to** (modal verb) – must, should.
50. **harmony** (noun) – unity, solidarity, oneness, brotherhood/sisterhood.
51. **setback** (noun) – problem, difficulty, issue.
52. **secularism** (noun) – the belief that religion should not have a strong influence in education or other public parts of society.
53. **coexistence** (noun) – The state of two or more different things existing/living together at the same time or in the same place.
54. **wisdom** (noun) – judgement/discernment.
55. **statutory** (adjective) – legitimate, acceptable, permissible.

56. **quietus** (noun) – (something that has a peaceful) conclusion/end/dissolution.
57. **squabble** (noun) – quarrel, row, argument, fight, disagreement, dispute, contention, clash.

A disturbing order: ASI survey in Gyanvapi mosque

APRIL 10, 2021 00:02 IST

mosque should not be allowed to resurrect disputes buried by law

The order of a civil court in Varanasi that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) should **conduct a survey to ascertain whether the Gyanvapi mosque was built over a demolished Hindu temple** is an unconscionable intervention that will open the floodgates for another protracted religious dispute. The order, apparently in gross violation of the explicit legislative prohibition on any litigation over the status of places of worship, is likely to give a fillip to majoritarian and revanchist forces that earlier carried on the **Ram Janmabhoomi movement** over a site in Ayodhya. That dispute culminated in the country's highest court **handing over the site to the very forces that conspired to illegally demolish the Babri Masjid**. The plaintiffs, who have filed a suit as representatives of Hindu faith to reclaim the land on which the mosque stands, have now succeeded in getting the court to commission an ASI survey to look for the sort of evidence that they would never have been able to adduce on their own. The order has been issued despite the fact that the Allahabad High Court reserved its order on the maintainability of the suit on March 15 and is yet to pronounce its ruling. It is not clear why the civil judge did not wait for the ruling and went ahead with his directive to the ASI.

By an order in 1997, the civil court had decided that the suit was not barred by the **Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991**, which said all pending suits concerning the status of places of worship will abate and that none can be instituted. The 1991 Act also froze the status of all places of worship, barring the then

disputed site in Ayodhya, as on August 15, 1947. There was another exception — any place of worship that was an archaeological site or ancient monument covered by the [Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958](#).

On a revision application, another court had asked the trial court to decide afresh the question whether the suit was barred afresh “after taking evidence”. Presumably, the latest application seeking a survey by the ASI as an expert body is aimed at providing that “evidence”. Regardless of the merits of either side’s case, it ought to be clear to anyone concerned with peace and harmony in the country that the attempt to resurrect disputes buried by law is a serious setback to the cause of secularism and peaceful coexistence. That new challenges are emerging to the wisdom of Parliament in giving a statutory quietus to squabbles over religious sites is deeply disturbing.

GUPTA CLASSES