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**Ayodhya order  
by Nov 17 would  
be a miracle: SC**

The Supreme Court said on Thursday it would be a miracle if it is able to pronounce its verdict in the Ayodhya land dispute case by November 17, the scheduled retirement date of CJI Ranjan Gogoi, reports **Dhananjay Mahapatra**. "There cannot be a single extra day given beyond October 18 for conclusion of arguments by both sides (Hindu and Muslim parties). Even if it concludes on October 18, then too, it will be miraculous to pronounce a judgment in four weeks," the SC said. P 11

# It will be a miracle to pronounce Ayodhya verdict before Nov 17: SC

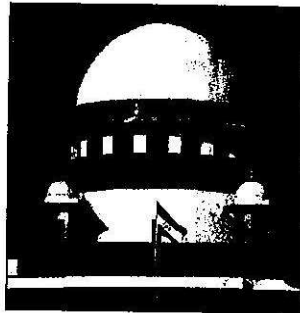
Dhananjay Mahapatra  
@timesgroup.com

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New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday said it cannot offer even a day beyond October 18 for Hindu and Muslim parties to conclude arguments in the Ayodhya land dispute case, and that it would still be a miracle if the court could pronounce verdict four weeks thereafter.

What the bench had in mind was November 17, the scheduled retirement date for CJI Ranjan Gogoi, as it re-fixed the hearing schedule for the available 10 days and insisted that parties must conclude arguments by October 18 on the vexed 70-year-old litigation for ownership of the 2.77 acre disputed Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land in Ayodhya, though the dispute between the two communities over the site goes back to 1858.

On Day 32 of the hearing, the bench comprising CJI Gogoi and Justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazeer said,



"There cannot be a single extra day given beyond October 18 for conclusion of arguments by both sides. Even if it concludes on October 18, then too, it will be miraculous to pronounce a judgment in four weeks." The bench was indicating the workload to the counsel—reading Allahabad high court's 2010 judgment and documents running into thousands of pages, appreciating written submissions by both sides also running into over thousand pages, burning the midnight oil to appreciate lengthy arguments in the light of evidence on record and then write the judgment.

**There cannot be a single extra day given beyond October 18 for conclusion of arguments by both sides. Even if it concludes on October 18, then too, it will be miraculous to pronounce a judgment in four weeks, the SC bench said**

On Thursday, senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan attempted to ease senior advocate Meenakshi Arora's analysis of the archaeological excavation report. On Wednesday, Arora had faced a barrage of questions from the bench when she cast doubts over the manner in which Archaeological Survey of India carried out excavation at the disputed site in 2003 on the HC's order and the methodology it employed to interpret excavated data.

The bench had on Wednesday asked her why Muslim parties did not cross-examine the ASI team of archaeologists before the HC and what use

was her attempt to discredit the ASI report during hearing of appeals before the SC. Dhavan said, "No one is arguing that the report is not authentic. If we wasted the court's time on that aspect on Wednesday, we are sorry. But there is a big question mark on authenticity of the summary or conclusions drawn by the ASI. The court must consider it."

Arora resumed from where she left on Wednesday and attempted to punch holes in the ASI report citing "absurd inferences" drawn by the ASI on periods of history to which layered construction of the "massive structure" discovered beneath the mosque belonged. She also doubted the ASI's inference that artefacts and figurines discovered were linked to Hindu religion. "This shows that inference of massive Hindu structure beneath the disputed structure was a result of presumptions and conjectures of ASI," she said and asserted that the structure had no relation to the Ram Janmasthan temple.