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# SC resumes hearing challenges to Places of Worship Act: The legal battle, explained

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## Background of the 1991 Law

The Places of Worship Act, 1991 was passed to keep the religious status of all places of worship the same as on August 15, 1947. It stops any change in their religion or character after that date.

It also bars courts from hearing new suits or matters about changing the religious character of these places

## Why the Law Is Being Challenged

The petition argues that the Centre did not have the power to make this law because matters like “pilgrimage” and “public order” are state subjects under the Indian Constitution.

It says the law takes away the right to go to court, which is a fundamental right.

The cut-off date of August 15, 1947 is claimed to be arbitrary and unfair to communities whose places of worship were altered before that date.

## What the Supreme Court Has Done So Far

The Supreme Court of India has stopped courts nationwide from registering new suits or issuing final orders in cases involving the Act until the constitutional challenge is decided.

This pause applies to cases that were already pending as well as new ones.

**Kamaraj IAS Academy**

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

The Court has also said that no effective interim orders (like surveys by the ASI) should be passed until it resolves the matter.

Recent Court Action: A plea about the Ajmer Sharif Dargah and claims it was once a Hindutemple was dismissed, but the Court said it will enforce its existing directions strictly.

Arguments in Support of the Act: Supporters say the law helps protect secularism and prevent historic conflicts from resurfacing. It was referenced in the 2019 Ayodhya verdict as an important tool for national unity.

Current Status: The Supreme Court has not yet decided the constitutional question about whether the Act itself is valid. The case continues.

### **In Simple Terms**

A law from 1991 prevents changes to the religious identity of worship places as they were on India's Independence Day.

People argue it is unconstitutional and blocks justice.

The Supreme Court has paused legal actions under the law until it settles this bigger question.