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**Address by
The Hon'ble 14th President of India
HE Shri Ram Nath Kovind
At**

Srivijayadashami Utasav

**Nagpur, Maharashtra
Thursday, 02nd October, 2025**

**On the occasion of Srivijayadashami Utasav - Prominently
present on the dais:**

- **Sarsanghchalak of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Dr. Mohan Bhagwat ji,**
- **Prant Sanghchalak Shri Deepak Tamshettiwar ji,**
- **Prant Sah-sanghchalak Shridhar Gadge ji**
- **Mahanagar Sanghchalak Shri Rajesh Loya Ji,**
- **Office bearers of the Sangh**

- **Distinguished guests and Swayamsewaks,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**
- **Namaskar to all of you**

1. First of all, I extend my heartiest greetings on the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami to all the volunteers of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, to all the members of the organizations that form the Sangh Parivar, and to all the Indians throughout the country and across the world. By a happy coincidence, today also happens to be the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri ji. I pay my respects to the memory of these great men.

2. This day of Srivijayadashami Utsav also marks the 'Shatak-purti-divas' of the Sangh. Today, marks the culmination of the centenary celebrations of the

world's largest voluntary organisation which has carried forward the glory of the world's most ancient culture.

3. On this auspicious occasion, I express my profound respect for all the great personalities, past and present, who led the Sangh and the organisations of the Sangh Parivar. I also express my hearty appreciation for all the Swayamsevaks, Karyakartas and members of the RSS and the Sangh Parivar for their contributions.

4. This holy land of Nagpur is associated with the sacred memories of the extraordinary builders of modern India. Among those nation-builders, there are two doctors who have held a very special place in the shaping of my life. Those two great

personalities are - Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar and Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar.

5. It is only because of the principles of social justice enshrined in Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution that a person like me, from an ordinary economic and social background, could reach the highest constitutional office in the country. Dr Hedgewar's profound thoughts helped me have a clear understanding of the common man, the society and the nation. The ideals of national unity and social harmony formulated by these two great personalities have inspired my spirit of public service.

6. During this visit to Nagpur, I had the good fortune of visiting the sacred Dikshabhoomi of revered Babasaheb Ambedkar and the hallowed

residence of the first Sar-Sanghchalak Dr Hedgewar ji. I felt a great sense of fulfilment in me after paying my tributes to revered Dr Hedgewar ji and revered Shri Guru ji.

7. On this day, I would also like to pay my heartfelt tributes to Shri Balasaheb Deoras Ji, Shri Rajju Bhaiya Ji and Shri Sudarshan Ji. I also pay my respects to the memory of countless Swayamsewaks who have served Mother India with utmost dedication.

8. The sapling of the organisation planted and nurtured by Dr Hedgewar Ji was nourished and strengthened by Shri Guru Ji. The Sangh continued to flourish under the leadership of Shri Balasaheb Deoras Ji, who laid a special emphasis on Samarasata. Rajju Bhaiya Ji guided the RSS amidst

the greatest and most wide ranging economic changes after Independence, and the consequent social changes. Shri Sudarshan Ji carried forward the mission of the Sangh amidst social and ethical changes during a period of political transition. RSS is continuing its forward march under the extraordinary leadership of the present Sarsanghchalak Dr Mohan Bhagwat Ji. Like a sacred and huge Vatvruksh with its great network of roots and branches, Sangh is providing the elixir and the comforting shade of unity, dignity and progress to the people of India. Besides being an unparalleled interpreter of the Indian tradition, Dr Mohan Bhagwat Ji is also a farsighted social scientist working to integrate modernity with tradition. In every meeting with him, I get to observe new dimensions of his patriotism and dynamism, as well as inclusive and creative leadership.

9. Under the leadership of all the Sarsanghchalaks, the Sangh has not only responded to the flow of the times but has also changed the flow when the situations so demanded.

10. I express my heartfelt gratitude to Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh for making a common Swayamsewak like me a participant in this historic occasion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. The Sangh is performing a commendable task of bringing together people from all walks of life. From farmers to space scientists, from students to entrepreneurs, from tribal communities to providers of healthcare, from workers to advocates, from ex-servicemen to artists, from children to women, that is, every section of society is being united through

the diverse and multidimensional activities of the Sangh.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. For centuries, the enduring enthusiasm of the Indian people for the Vijayadashami festival reflects that the people of India have always stood for Dharma (Righteousness) and Satya (Truth). I understand that the Adya Sarsanghchalak Dr Hedgewar ji chose not only the most auspicious day, but also the most meaningful day for founding the Sangh.

13. In its 50th year, following the declaration of Emergency, the Sangh was banned in June 1975. The strong resistance against Emergency launched by RSS through an underground movement became a subject of international discussion. Even leaders

and parties with differing ideologies praised the Sangh. They surmised that there must have been some high ideal that infused the Swayamsewaks with the spirit of sacrifice and indomitable courage for their heroic deeds. The organization faced bans in 1948, 1975, and 1992. After every ban, the Sangh grew bigger and emerged stronger amidst serious challenges.

14. So many institutions, ideologies, personalities and nations that dominated the world stage have been washed away by the currents of history in the last hundred years. Some of them have been totally forgotten. But the Sangh has grown greatly, not only in size but in strength and vibrancy too. This growth comes from the nourishment it systematically draws from the elixir of patriotism and the Indian ideals. Dr Hedgewar created an organisation whose simple,

natural and effective ideology and system of working have provided it with a unique life-force. Although the Sangh does not have any formal membership, yet one does not get to see the kind of dedication which the Swayamsewaks of the Sangh demonstrate, anywhere else.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. I came into close contact with the ideology and swayamsewaks of the Sangh during the 1991 general elections. I was the BJP candidate from Ghatampur Lok Sabha constituency of Kanpur district. During that election campaign, I got the opportunity to meet and work with people from different sections of the society. The colleagues whom I found to be the most spontaneous, sincere and completely free from the practices of caste-based discrimination happened to be the office bearers and Swayamsewaks of the Sangh. Even to

this day, many in the society are not aware that there is no place for any kind of caste-based discrimination or untouchability in the Sangh. I believe that there is a need to eradicate the baseless misconceptions related to the Sangh in many sections of our society.

16. In this context, I would like to mention the Dalit Sangam Rally held in the premises of the Red Fort in the year 2001. At that time, I was the National President of the 'Anusuchit Jati Morcha'. Respected Atal Ji was the Prime Minister. Many people have been spreading disinformation and creating a misconception about the Sangh Parivar and Atal Ji of being anti-Dalit. Addressing that rally, Atal Ji had declared that "Our government has been formed for the welfare of Dalits, backward and the poor..... Our government will work not on the basis of Manusmriti

but on the basis of Bhim Smriti. Bhim Smriti means the Constitution of India.” Atal ji also said, “we are Bhimvadi, which means, Ambedkarvadi.” His address played a historic role in countering the disinformation campaign which was carried out with a view to turning this section of the society against the ideology of the Sangh and Atal Ji. In fact, the RSS has been a strong supporter of social unity and reform, and has always been active in this direction.

17. For the past few years, I had been trying to write my autobiography, which I have recently been able to complete. I have given it the title “Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Journey, My Struggles.” With total humility, I would like to say that the ideals which gave me strength and inspiration during my life’s journey and struggles are based on the Indian Constitution and our core national values. In the

story of my life's journey described in my autobiography, I have covered incidents about how the entry of Swayamsewaks into my life, and my close association with them, strengthened my life-values. I hope that by the end of this year, my book will reach all of you and other readers.

18. I am fortunate to have received personal guidance from great personalities associated with the Sangh. The fourth Sarsanghchalak of the Sangh, respected Rajju Bhaiya Ji, guided me in developing my approach towards public service and spirituality. On his suggestion, I started practicing Vipassana-meditation during my tenure as a Rajya Sabha MP. I have noticed that the Swayamsewaks give much importance to the continuity and unity inherent in the Indian traditions. Respected Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji and his value-based politics inspired

and guided me towards public service and I became a member of the Rajya Sabha. I had the privilege of meeting the respected Nanaji Deshmukh several times. I have closely witnessed many rural development projects operated under his guidance. Even during my tenure as the President of India, I had the opportunity to visit Chitrakoot and see the extensive changes brought about by him. I received invaluable lessons from respected Dattopant Thengadi Ji on the welfare of workers and social service.

19. I had the opportunity to serve at the Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Research Foundation. While working there, I developed a deeper understanding and appreciation of the process of ideation in the Sangh and the importance of its role in the prevalent context.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

20. While performing my duties as an advocate, a Rajya Sabha MP, the Governor of Bihar and as the President of India, I have given the highest importance to constitutional values. For understanding the constitutional values, the thoughts of the chief architect of the Constitution Babasaheb Ambedkar have guided my thinking and illuminated my vision like a light house. Babasaheb had given topmost priority to national unity while framing the Constitution. The spirit of nationalism is at the core of our Constitution. In his address at the Sangh Shiksha Varg Third Year Closing Ceremony in the year 2018, my predecessor President Shri Pranab Mukherjee had said that the concept of Indian nationalism is based on Constitutional Patriotism. Babasaheb Ambedkar also directed us that after the

adoption of the Constitutional systems, every problem ought to be solved within the bounds of the Constitution. Similarly, it is completely logical, fair and true the spirit to say that after adopting, enacting and giving to ourselves the Constitution, we should look for the sources of our national ideals in our Constitution only.

21. On 25 November 1949, Babasaheb had expressed some concerns in his historic address to the Constituent Assembly, which, I have observed, are also seen in the concerns and thoughts of the Sangh. The social weakness that Babasaheb had presented before the Constituent Assembly from his historical insight is expressed in an English proverb - “United, we stand. Divided, we fall.” It means that the strength of unity preserves identity. Divisiveness leads to downfall. Dr. Hedgewar also used to say

that the foreigners gave the laathi to our own people to beat us. We remained unorganized and divided.

22. Established in 1925, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh became a symbol of unity and organization. Today, millions of volunteers across thousands of shakhas are continuously marching ahead with the goals of personality -development and character-building, community-building and nation-building.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

23. In the political scenario before independence, many elements were active in inciting the feeling of communal divide. Many enlightened contemporaries of Babasaheb believed that in order to guide the people to rise above communal feelings and give primacy to patriotism, they should tell the masses that we were Indian first and only thereafter we were Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians. But

Babasaheb's thinking about Indian-ness was far deeper. He would suggest that the leaders should tell the people that we were 'Indians first, Indians thereafter and Indians at the end'.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

24. I believe that every Indian must read the Sangh's Ekatma Stotra. This stotra contains the best expression of Indian history, geography, culture and values, and of social inclusion and harmony.

25. In the Ekatma Stotra, the inclusion of the names of Maharshi Valmiki, Eklavya, Sant Ravidas, Sant Kabir, Sant Tukaram, Bhagwan Birsa Munda, Mahatma Phule, Shri Narayan Guru, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and other personalities as worthy of being respectfully remembered every morning is a proof of the all-inclusive social vision of

the Sangh. However, it is unfortunate that many people across our society are still unaware about this all-inclusive social vision of the Sangh. I would like this vision of social inclusion to reach every single individual in our society. All possible mediums, including social media and digital technology, should be leveraged for this purpose.

26. Expressing the vision of an equitable Indian society which was totally free of discrimination, Sri Narayan Guru, a social reformer, poet and a great spiritual personality of Kerala, had said:

जाति-भेदम् मत-द्वेषम् एदुम्-इल्लादे सर्वरुम्

सोद-रत्वेन वाडुन्न मात्रुका-स्थान मानित

It means that an ideal place is one where all people live like brothers, free from the discrimination of caste and creed.

Every India should know that Sri Narayan Guru Ji is remembered daily by millions of Swayamsewaks while they recite the Ekatma Stotra.

27. One verse of this Ekatmata Stotra is also dedicated to the iconic women of our motherland. You all know that verse. I repeat that verse to express my respect to these remarkable women -

अरुंधती अनसूया च सावित्री जानकी सती,

द्रौपदी कण्णगी गार्गी मीरा दुर्गावती तथा,

लक्ष्मीः अहल्या चन्नम्मा रुद्रमाम्बा सुविक्रमा,

निवेदिता सारदा च प्रणम्या मातृ देवता।

28. The mention of Sister Nivedita in this verse is of special importance. Sister Nivedita had given a memorable speech on this very day in the year 1902, exactly 123 years ago, while addressing the

Hindu Mahila Social Club in Mumbai. She had requested the sisters of India to preserve the familial values like respectful humility and strong bonds of affection. She appealed to them to preserve the family -tradition of the elders providing farsighted mentoring to the children and the children demonstrating respect and dutifulness. To this end, the Sangh's current efforts for Kutumba Prabodhan under the Panch Parivartan Abhiyan are commendable. The importance of adopting family values, making the family a hub of personality-development and awakening the power of traditions and sanskars at home has immensely increased in the modern context of nuclear family and the digital age.

29. Women are equal partners in our family system. This fact is also reflected in the development journey

of the Sangh. About 90 years ago, on 25th October 1936, on the day of Vijayadashmi, the Sangh established the Rashtra Sevika Samiti. According to the Sangh's belief, women's responsibility is not limited to building a family only. It extends to building the community and the nation. Many women have contributed to these wider objectives in the past. Iconic women like Jijamata, Ahilyabai Holkar, Rani Abbakka, Rani Chennamma, Lakshmi Bai, Jhalkari Bai, Avanti Bai Lodhi, Savitri Bai Phule, Lakshmi Bai Kelkar, Vijayaraje Sindhia and Sushma Swaraj have made invaluable contributions to nation building with their sacrifice, bravery and leadership.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

30. Samajik samarasata is the top priority in the Panch-Parivartan Abhiyan. The Sangh is known for social equality and unity. With efforts like one

temple, one well, one cremation ground, divisive tendencies are being rooted out. It is admirable that several projects of social service and transformation are being implemented by the Sangh with the spirit of samarasata and social service. The work being done by the swayamsewaks in the localities of the poor across the country to improve education, health and public awareness is specially commendable.

31. Mahatma Gandhi was also highly impressed by the practice of harmony, equality and complete absence of caste-based discrimination in the working of the Sangh. A detailed description of this is available in the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji addressed the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh rally held in Delhi on 16th September 1947. In that address, Gandhiji mentioned about his visit to an RSS camp years ago

during the lifetime of its founder Dr. Hedgewar. During that visit, Gandhiji was very impressed by the discipline, simplicity and total absence of the practice of untouchability in the RSS camp. In January 1940, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's visit to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) shakha in Karad town, Satara district of Maharashtra is a historical testimony of the inclusive vision and approach of the Sangh characterised by samarasata. There, Babasahab had met the people of the shakha, expressed his sense of belonging, and offered his support to them. At that time, the Marathi-language newspaper Kesari was respected as a national newspaper. The Kesari of 9 January 1940 quoted an important statement by Babasaheb. He had said: "Even though there are some differences of opinion, I still look upon this Sangh with a sense of belonging." This news was also published in

Babasaheb's own weekly paper 'Janata', reporting that after attending a function of the Karad Municipality, Babasaheb met members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and assured them of his support whenever needed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

32. Promotion of economic self-reliance and Swadeshi has been a priority for the Sangh. This priority has acquired a greater relevance in today's global context. The Sangh's roadmap of Panch-Parivartan includes realization of the Self, Swadeshi and Atmanirbharata, all of which are fundamentally inter-related.

33. The Sangh has always emphasized on an environment-supportive lifestyle based on simplicity which is part of Indian values. The traditional Indian

lifestyle has been based on the spirit of respecting nature. I am confident that the campaign for Environment Protection included in the Panch-Parivartan roadmap for the centenary year of the Sangh will prove helpful in spreading a lifestyle in harmony with nature. Incidences of natural calamities like excessive rain, drought, famine, unexpected snowfall, death of animals, birds and humans due to heatwaves, have increased in the last few years. Through individual, family, social, organizational and national efforts, we all have to march further ahead in the direction of establishing environmental balance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

34. Channeling the energy of the youth is essential for the strong future of the country. It is encouraging to observe the growing attraction of youth towards

the Sangh. The Sangh Parivar can make a huge contribution in spreading the values of honesty, humility, authenticity and positive attitude among the youth. I urge all the affiliated organizations to unite and create new generations which are yoga-oriented and drug-free.

35. I would urged the youth to enthusiastically participate in public service. Participation in politics based on moral values is an effective means of public service. A thinker has rightly said that it is a mistake for the virtuous and capable individuals to avoid politics, because their apathy enables the lesser-capable people to rule over them. Being active in politics, inspired by the spirit of public service and rising above narrow selfish goals is not only good for the youth, but it is also in the interest of the society and the nation.

36. I would like to say to every citizen, especially the youth, that whatever you have achieved has been made possible largely by the contribution of the society and the country, apart from the family. This is the debt of the society and the country on you. You should be ready in every way to repay this debt. It is our national duty to uplift those who have been left behind in the development journey, by lending them a helping hand. The Panch-Parivartan roadmap implemented by the sangh also includes duties of citizens. We, the people of India, have taken a constitutional resolution to ensure social justice. We will be able to fulfill our duties as citizens by working for the goal of Antyodaya. I would like to emphasize my point through a very popular song often sung in the shakhas. Millions of swayamsewaks know this song very well. Still, I would like to repeat this line:

देश हमें देता है सब कुछ,
हम भी तो कुछ देना सीखें।

Ladies and Gentlemen,

37. The working style of the Sangh is not individual-oriented. It is organisation-oriented and essence-oriented. This is the strength of the Sangh. In the last hundred years, the Sangh has made Bhagirath Prayas to build a samaras, organised and inclusive society and a strong nation. The RSS has knitted our society and nation together in the thread of unity with the contributions from sant-parampara, sajjan-shakti and matru-shakti. There is a need to take the work of the Sangh forward at a faster pace by adopting new tools and technologies. I hope that the Sangh will expand even more in the future. I hope that the swayamsewaks, who have been advocates

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of Samajik Samarasata and social justice at the grassroots level, will work with renewed vigour and determination to ensure justice to the poor and deprived.

38. I am sure that the Sangh will make an immense contribution in building a developed India and a completely samaras and ekatma Bharat by the year 2047. Once again congratulating all of you on the auspicious festival of Vijayadashami, I conclude my address.

Thank you,

Jai Hind!
