Rashtra Swayamsevak Sangh

Address by Param Poojaniya Sarsanghchalak
Dr. Shri Mohan ji Bhagwat on the occasion of
Sri Vijayadashami Utsav 2020
(Sunday, October 25, 2020)

English translation of the original Hindi Speech
We are all aware that this Vijayadashami the celebrations are restrained in terms of numbers. We are also aware of the cause. To prevent community spread of Corona virus social gatherings are restricted.

Since March the talk about Corona pandemic has shadowed all other talk about developments across the world. Many noteworthy incidents took place between the last Vijayadashami and now. With due observance of parliamentary procedure Article 370 was abrogated well before the Vijayadashami 2019. After Diwali, on November 9, 2019, the Hon. Supreme Court passed an unambiguous, verdict in the Ram Janmabhoomi case, thereby making a historical judgment. The exemplary patience and understanding of Bharatiya people regarding this judgment became evident in the restraint along with piety and festive fervour displayed on August 5 in Ayodhya at the bhoomipujan and shilanyas samaroh of the soon-to-be constructed Ram Mandir there. The Citizenship Amendment Act was lawfully passed in the Parliament as per the due constitutional process. This law envisaged expediting the process of granting citizenship to our brothers and sisters who face discrimination and persecution in some of the neighbouring countries and are displaced to seek refuge in our country. These countries have a history of religious persecution against minorities. This amendment in the Citizenship Act does not oppose any particular religious community. The constitutional provisions for granting citizenship to foreigners who come to Bharat continue to be the same. But those who wanted to oppose this new law misled our Muslim brothers by propagating a false notion that it was aimed at restricting the Muslim population. Opportunists took advantage of this delicate situation by unleashing organised violence and causing social unrest in the name of protests. As a consequence, a tense atmosphere was created in the country that put our communal harmony at stake. Even before something could be thought out and done to resolve the situation the Corona pandemic crept in and gradually took hold. In the background, the efforts by rioters and opportunists to reignite the conflict still continue. It is not making a mark on the collective consciousness or garnering headlines in publications other than the ones that fuel such activities because of the overwhelming discussions of Corona in the media.

The scenario is common throughout the world. In comparison to many countries, Bharat stood strong in the face of adversity and dealt with the calamity effectively. There are some reasons why we escaped Corona debilitation that few countries could not. Our governing and administrative agencies promptly sprung up in action. They cautioned citizens, created emergency task forces and efficiently implemented control measures. The media monotonously aired news on just this issue. While this exercise created an
atmosphere of disproportionate fear among the common man it also compelled the society to exercise caution and restrain by obeying rules. Government officials, medical practitioners practising different forms of medicine, police officers, municipality workers and cleaners displayed an extraordinary sense of responsibility by dedicately serving the infected patients. Maintaining social distance with their own family members, these warriors, risking their lives, embraced the death-scare posed by the virus and bravely stood at the frontline in this war round the clock. Citizens of the country too mobilised private resources and left no stone unturned in offering all possible help their fellow beings needed. While even in these testing times, the tendency to exploit the drawback of the needy to one's own advantage surfaced here and there, the larger picture was that of sensitivity, cooperation and mutual trust between governmental administrative agencies and society. The women-folk also propelled in action with self-motivation. Those who were displaced owing to the pandemic or the ones who lost jobs and faced misfortune and hunger faced difficulties while remaining patient and tolerant all along. In fact, many anecdotes of people ignoring their own troubles and stepping up to help others came to the fore. Ferrying the state migrants back to their homelands, arranging for food and resting spots on the way, delivering food and medicines at the doorstep of the sick or needy, great efforts were jointly made by the entire society to cater to such critical needs. By setting the example of unity and sensitivity, our society displayed a larger set of service activities in response to the quantum of the Herculean problem. Many of our traditional habits pertaining to cleanliness and hygiene, healthy lifestyle and strengthening immunity with the science of Ayurveda also proved to be useful in this period.

Homogeneity and unity of the society, deep compassion and cooperation during difficult times- all aspects that make up for what is called the social capital were experienced during this time, reflecting our centuries-old cultural ethos. For many, the kind of patience, collectivism and self-confidence experienced was a first since Independence. I respectfully bow to all the volunteers who are known and unknown, those who are alive and who laid their lives for service, medical practitioners, municipality workers and all other agents of service from different sections of the society. They are all admirable. Our sincere homage in the holy remembrance of all those who sacrificed their lives.

To emerge from the current scenario a different kind of Sewa initiative is required. Restarting educational institutions, compensating teachers, resending students to their schools and colleges while paying a fee for the same, these tasks are arduous. Schools that stopped receiving funds cannot afford to pay their teachers. Guardians who lost their jobs or shut businesses are in a fix as they do not have funds for their ward’s fee. We will have to devise service assistance to ensure the opening of schools, paying teachers’ salaries and students’ education. Displacement left many unemployed. Failing to find alternate sources of employment they are compelled to explore other sectors. Getting employment in a new sector mandates prior training. These are the problems facing the displaced today. Finding a replacement for the migrant workers to complete the pending tasks that were abandoned halfway is becoming a challenge too. Therefore creating employment opportunities and providing training to the unskilled is essential. In cases where families are facing such deprivation, stress creeps up in the households. To prevent negative dispositions like crime, depression and suicide there is an extensive need of counselling and support services at this time.
Since March Sangh swayamsevaks are working to fill the gaps wherever needed in this difficult backdrop. They will also make wholehearted contributions in the new Sewa initiatives enumerated above. I am hopeful that other members of the society will also decipher the need for persistent long-term efforts and make needful contributions.

The world does not have a complete understanding of the virus. It is a transmutable pathogen that is rapidly communicable, but its virulence is low - this much we have come to understand. Therefore, safeguarding oneself from this pathogen for a longer time is essential. At the same time, while working to find the remedy to the social and economic challenges posed by it on our fellow beings will be the long-term focus. While we must not let fear cripple us, we need to proceed cautiously and strategically. With the social life nearing normalcy, complying with the rules and motivating others to do the same is our moral responsibility.

Many other facets of our society became apparent during the battle against this pandemic. A shift in favour of introspective thinking is trending across the world. The phrase “new-normal” often comes up in conversations. The corona pandemic has brought lives to a total and complete standstill, forcing curtailment of several activities that man went about mechanically earlier. An evaluation of the merits of those activities made it apparent that the superficial practices that had invaded human life were unnecessary, while the essential ones comprised the heart of life in these times. Some activities though watered down did not fully fade. Within one week of lockdown, we noticed a marked difference in the quality of the air we breathe. Water bodies like rivers, springs and ponds cleared up and clean waters began flowing out. Bird songs tinkled human memory again as the birds and other creatures were audible in neighbourhood parks and open urban spaces. In the rush towards amassing wealth and consuming more, we alienated ourselves from certain basic life functions which during this time of need fell back on our plate and added meaning and joy to life. We have become mindful of the value of some virtues. The corona pandemic has bestowed the wisdom to differentiate regular from irregular and eternal from temporary upon all of humanity. With many families actively deliberating sustainable lifestyles compatible with the time and space and the ways to transition into those, people have become acutely aware of the merit of cultural ethos. Humans have once again realised the importance of family systems and the need for harmonious coexistence with nature.

Whether these realisations are merely side effects of the pandemic breakout or has humanity actually shifted its stance in these matters, will be answered in time. However, one thing is clear that this calamity has played the role of that magnet which has attracted all human consciousness to the vital life values.

Until recently the philosophy of integrating the world on the basis of the market forces dominated human imagination but with the latest turn of events, the idea of safeguarding life and exercising international cooperation by promoting unique strengths and assets of each country is an idea that has started to take shape in the global mind. The philosophy of ‘Swadeshi’ has trumped once again. It is time to redefine these adages in view of the current Bhartiya context and to rebuild paths that will lead us back to our time-tested values and traditions.
China’s role in the breakout of this pandemic may be disputable but its misuse of their riches by unleashing terror on the borders of Bharat and boisterous efforts to invade our territories are well-known to the whole world. Bharatiya defence forces, government and the people remained unfazed and responded sharply to this attack. This example of a strong resolution, exercising self-respect and bravery has stunned China. Going further we must be watchful and remain firm. Even in the past, the world has time and again witnessed China’s expansionist attitude. Rising above China economically, strategically, in securing cooperative ties with our neighbours and at international relations is the only way to neutralise those demonic aspirations. The policies proposed by our leaders seem to be charting those very horizons. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar (Bhramadesh)- such neighbouring countries have shared a friendly bond with us and are more or less aligned over issues of values and ethical code with us. We must now pace up our efforts to secure cooperative bonds with these countries. The impediments in this journey like the differences of opinions, conflicted issues and old grouses must be settled sooner than later.

We intend to be friendly with all. This is our nature. But mistaking our benevolence for weakness and attempts to disintegrate or weaken us by sheer brute force is unacceptable. Our reckless detractors should know this by now. The indestructible patriots of Bharat Mata and their formidable valour, leaders with a sense of self-respect and the indomitable ethical-patience of the citizens should have sent a loud and clear message to China. This must compel it to reform its attitude but if push comes to shove we will not fall short of alertness, firmness and readiness, this resolve is clear among our countrymen.

External threats to the country's safety and sovereignty is not the only call for our vigilance. A careful analysis of many of last year’s internal events also demand alertness, understanding and harmony in the society and preparedness of governmental agencies and national leadership. Push and pull for power on the part of those out of it is intrinsic to the democratic political process, however, exercising discretion to see political competition for what it is and not as a bloody battle between enemies is pivotal. Healthy competition is always welcome, but the competition that morphs into hatred, bitterness and animosity that weakens the social fabric is unwarranted. Forces that see opportunity in rifts among competitors, that wish to weaken and fragment Bharat, that have long projected our diversity as differences and insinuated people into unfortunate scrimmages over old disagreements resulting in formidable struggles are very much prevalent in the world and active in Bharat. They should not be given that opportunity by us. The government agencies should seek cooperation of people to immediately nab and severely punish the culprits if incidents of crime and violence continue to occur in the society despite measures to curtail those and attempts of total restrain on criminal and violent tendencies. We must see to it that our actions do not create any opportunities for them. To ensure this, our reactions to government decisions or expressions of discontent must heed national integrity. We should be sensitive towards people of all religions, regions, castes and linguistic backgrounds and conduct ourselves within constitutionally warranted limits. Unfortunately, those misaligned with or opposed to our socio-cultural values have, while professing to be the champions of democracy, constitution and secularism, continued to fool and confuse the people of our country. In his August 29, 1949 address to the Constituent Assembly, Revered Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar used the phrase “grammar of anarchy” to describe the actions of such elements. We have to learn to identify such disguised elements and defuse their
conspiracies by alarming and alerting our brothers and sisters so that they can not be shepherded away by such predators.

To avoid this type of confusion about the Sangh, realising Sangh's preference for a specific vocabulary and how it interprets certain popular terms is crucial. Hindutva is one such term. Its meaning has been distorted by appending a ritualistic connotation to it. Sangh does not use it to refer to this misconception. To us, it is the word expressing our identity along with the continuity of its spirituality based traditions and its entire wealth of value system in the land of Bharat. Therefore Sangh believes that it is the word applicable to all the 1.3 billion people who call themselves the sons and daughters of Bharatvarsh, whose everyday life is a striving toward an alignment with its moral and ethical code and who are proud of the heritage of their ancestors who successfully traversed the same spiritual landscape since time immemorial. Being oblivious to the true meaning of this term weakens the thread that integrates us with this country and society. It is for this reason that this term is the first target of castigation by those who instigate intergroup conflicts, who are bent on splitting our country and society. They by presenting as separate, our diversities which are traditionally accepted, respected and are a part of larger scope of Hindu philosophy in reality, try to convert them into a source of alienation or separatism. ‘Hindu’ is not the name of some sect or denomination, it is not a provincial conceptualisation, it is neither a single caste’s lineage nor the privilege of the speakers of a specific language. It is that psychological common denominator whose vast courtyard cradled human civilisation, that which honours and encompasses innumerable distinct identities. There may be some who have an objection in accepting this term. We do not object their using other words if the content in their mind is the same. However, in the interest of the country’s integrity and security Sangh has over the years humbly assimilated the colloquial and the global interpretations of the term Hindu. When Sangh says Hindusthan is Hindu Rashtra it does not have any political or power centered concept in its mind. Hindutva is the essence of this Rashtra’s ‘Swa’(self-hood). We are plainly acknowledging the selfhood of the country as Hindu because all our socio-cultural practices are directed by its principles with their spirit percolating in the personal, familial, professional and social life of each one of us. Circumambulating the emotional ambit of this view of life does not require giving up one’s faith, language, land or any other identity marker. It only mandates an abandonment of the quest for supremacy. One has only to be alert and keep away from the selfish and hateful forces who confuse and instigate people by showing them false dreams of supremacy, encourage radicalism and foster separatism.

The deplorable attempts to disintegrate the unity that has perpetually remained an inextricable part of the diversity of Bharat by making false promises and by creating hate amongst scheduled-castes, scheduled-tribes and the so called minorities of our country are underway. Members of this conspiratorial gang instigate and promote slogans like “Bharat tere tuakte honge” (Bharat will be disintegrated). An unusual blend of political interest, separatist and fundamentalist tendencies, a hatred of Bharat and a quest for global domination is working to dampen Bharatiya unity. We will have to patiently proceed with a deep understanding of the matter. While remaining free from the influence of these forces we must focus on integrating our society through peaceful means, in obeisance of our constitution. If we exercise self-control, remain balanced and keep each other’s best interest in mind then an environment of mutual trust can prevail which will aid in the resolution of old conflicts; while the mistrust that stems from contradictory behaviours
would make the solutions seem unattainable and problems unfathomable. Reactionary and fearful stance and unreasonable opposition lead to uncontrolled violence and the gulf separating the people widens.

To be able to increase the atmosphere of faith in each other and friendliness, restraint and patience we all need to accept and embrace the truth of our larger and shared identity. Our actions cannot waver in time following a political cost-benefit calibration. Bharatiya cannot be extricated from Bharat. All attempts at doing this have always failed, we have many testaments before us to prove so. It is the time to realise that our instinct for emancipation is nudging us all to integrate with a single sentiment. Acknowledgement of the fact that the emotional spirit of Bharat, its acceptance for and support to multiple belief systems and faiths, is a byproduct of the Hindu culture, traditions and Hindu practice of not just tolerance but acceptance and respect of all, is the need of the hour.

The word ‘Hindu,’ features in almost every statement of Sangh, yet it is being discussed here because several related terms have gained popularity in the recent past. ‘Swadeshi’ is one such word which is oft-discussed nowadays. The ‘Swa’ or ‘self’ here refers to the same Hindutva. That very eternal philosophy underlying our tolerant and accepting nature which was hailed by Swami Vivekananda on the land of America referring to all people as brothers and sisters, meaning parts of a single unit or family. Poet laureate, Shri Rabindra Nath Thakur also clearly emphasised a philosophical foundation for the Bharatiya revival based on this very concept in his essay ‘Swadeshi Samaj.’ Shri Aurobindo proclaimed it in his Uttarpara address. The introspections and contemplations conducted by our society after 1857 and the experiences of the exercises conducted by several national bodies are encased in the Preamble to our Constitution which embodies the same spirit of Bharat. That spirit or ‘swa’ should be the compass directing our intellectual brainstorming and plans of action. It should be the light that illuminates the directions, aspirations and expectations of our country’s collective consciousness. The results of our efforts in the physical plane and their consequences should be in accordance with this principle. Then and only then will Bharat qualify as self-reliant. Places for production, the workforce that is involved in the production process, economic benefits emanating from sales of the production and the rights of production must be in our national control. But this alone does not qualify as Swadeshi methodology. Shri Vinoba Bhave ji identified a combination of self-reliance and non-violence as Swadeshi. Late Shri Dattopant Thengadi ji claimed Swadeshi cuts beyond goods and services and stands for attaining a position of international cooperation by achieving national self-reliance, sovereignty and parity. So to achieve financial independence in the future and attain a position of international cooperation we are open to foreign investors and give relaxations to companies offering newer technologies, provided they engage on our terms and mutually agreeable conditions. But such a decision has to be based on mutual consensus.

In self-reliance, dependence on self is intended. Our vision decides our destination and our path. Even we attain a prime position by following the same wasteful exertions that the rest of the world is after, that will certainly be a courageous victory. But it will be in the absence of the spirit and participation of the ‘Swa’(Self). For instance, while designing our agricultural policy we should empower our farmer to control his seed banks, create manure, fertilisers and pesticides on his own or procure these from areas neighbouring his village. He should be educated about the art of storing and processing his produce and have

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access to such facilities. We have a deep, extensive and ancient history of agriculture. Therefore the newer policies should aim to make our farmer aware of modern agricultural science and also enable him to blend that knowledge with time-tested, contextually relevant traditional knowledge. The policies should be such that a farmer should be able to use these research findings and sell his produce without getting trapped, either in the profit aimed interpretations of those findings or sponsored research by the corporate sector or under the pressure of the market forces and middlemen, only then such a policy will be compatible with the Bharatiya view and be a truly Swadeshi agrarian policy. It is likely that incorporating these changes immediately within the present agrarian and economic system might not be possible. In that case, the policies should focus on creating a conducive environment to translate the suggested changes into reality.

Some positive steps in the direction of assimilating this ‘swa’ in our economic, agriculture, labour, manufacturing and education policy have been taken. A new education policy formed on the basis of extensive deliberations and dialogue has been declared and launched. Along with the entire educational field, the Sangh has also welcomed it. “Vocal for local” is a great start in the exploration of the possibilities of Swadeshi. But, for these initiatives to be successfully implemented the process will have to be watched and monitored keenly to the finish. Therefore given these wide-ranging perspectives we will have to imbibe this spirit of ‘swa’ or self, only then we can move forward in the right direction.

Our Bharatiya thought does not endorse struggle as an essential ingredient of progress. Struggle is considered as a last resort for the elimination of injustice. The conceptualisation of progress here is based on cooperation and coordination. Therefore, the spirit of oneness is critical to actualising self-reliance in various aspects of life. Self-reliance then essentially implies overall well-being and upliftment of the whole nation through coordinated efforts and cooperation with each other, akin to interdependent organs of one body. A policy-making process where all concerned people and parties discuss and deliberate extensively and draw consentient conclusions fosters the spirit of oneness and trust among all. Open dialogue with all, drawing consensus through discussion, ensuring cooperation and resultant trust - this is the prescribed method for securing credibility and eminence among one’s family and community.

समानो मन्त्रः समिति: समानी समान्य मन: सहचित्तमेषाम् ।
समान मन्त्रमभिमन्तये व: समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥

Samaano mantraḥ samitiḥ samanee
Samaanam manah sahachittameshaam
Samaanam mantramabhimantraye vah
Sameenena vo havisha juhomi

( Let our speech be one; united our voices. May our minds be in union with the thoughts of the Wise. Sharing a common purpose; we worship as one.)

Fortunately, we can rely on and expect from the prevailing political leadership to engender the feeling of oneness and trust with regards to matters small and big among all the people. An administrative system connecting the society with the government has to be more sensitive and transparent to facilitate and accomplish this task in a better fashion. Prompt implementation of mutually agreed policies does not require massive changes and boosts the environment of cooperation and coordination. Remaining alert and
exercising total control over the implementation of proposed policies till the end-point is significant. Besides policy-formation promptness and transparency at execution also optimise policy rewards.

The need to decentralise agriculture and manufacturing sectors by supporting small and medium scale enterprises, creating employment opportunities, aiding the self-employed, initiating eco-friendly businesses and self-sufficient production units aiming to bolster the economic progress has drawn the attention of many intellectuals alongside the policy-makers of the country in this time of Corona. Those employed in these sectors from small-time and seasoned entrepreneurs to farmers are all eager to taste entrepreneurial success for our nation. The government will need to provide extra cover for them so they can attain world-class standards that will allow them to stand a competitive chance alongside other economic giants of the world. Along with the allocation of funds, its actual disbursement on the ground has to be ensured so that they can restart again after six months of the corona crisis.

With a progress-oriented mindset, the developmental path of the country whose destination complies with the culture and aspirations of our people will have to be delineated. After establishing consensus with a positive contribution from all views we must freeze the execution plans in letter and spirit. If it is ensured that the rewards of the developmental achievements percolate down to the most disadvantaged; if exploitation and extortion by middlemen and touts are eliminated; the producers and manufacturers have direct interface with the markets and the developmental schemes, only then our dreams can come true, otherwise dangers that cause failure are lurking around.

While all the suggestions made above are highly significant the collective resolve of a society is the preceptor and the foundation of the nation’s development. The consciousness that has prevailed in the aftermath of corona, viz, realisation of the true meaning of ‘self,’ spirit of oneness with all the people, the importance of cultural values and environmental awareness plus the need for remedial actions to restore its balance should not be disregarded by our society. We must not drop the momentum, lose sight of these indispensable values and fall back in a pattern of insensitive behaviour. Gradual and consistent practice of right conduct and responsible behaviours of an entire society alone can bring rewards. Starting with small incremental changes, conducting regular awareness initiatives can cause this behavioural shift. Each family can be a part of this movement. Once a week all family members can get together to jointly do some prayer and have homemade food followed by two to three hours of informal discussion. The above-mentioned subjects can be deliberated in those discussions as actionable items and small family level resolutions can be taken, which can further be reviewed in the next week’s discussion. The act of discussion in the family is paramount, newness or oldness of the subject/object notwithstanding, the outcomes of an investigation alone decide the usefulness and relevance of the issue. Our scriptures describe this method as-

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\text{संतः परीक्ष्यान्यतरद् भजन्ते मूढः परप्रत्ययनेय बुद्धः} | \\
\text{Santah pareekshyanyatarad bhajaate mudhah parapratyayena buddhih}
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If we examine the subject matter holistically in the informal family setting, exercise discretion as to the relevance of the issue and by choice accept or reject a view, then the resulting behavioural changes will more likely be permanent.
In the beginning, matters of common concern like domestic arrangements, design of the dwellings, our family culture, long-standing customs and traditions can be discussed. Owing to everyone’s familiarity with environmental concerns, ways for total boycott of plastic, water conservation, increasing green cover by planting saplings of flowering plants, fruit trees and vegetables in our courtyards and terraces can be discussed and actionable plans jointly created. According to the time available and the needs, all of us spend money over personal and familial requirements every day. We can contemplate what amount of money and time we spend for our society on a day-to-day basis and how to go about doing it? Do we have friendly associations with people and families that belong to different castes and regions and speak varied languages? Have we mingled deeply- sharing meals and visiting homes of those acquaintances? To promote societal harmony these are vital discussion topics. Emphasis can be laid upon participation of our family in actual programs and initiatives, e.g. our family can contribute in Blood Donation, Eye Donation or help create awareness about its importance.

Through these minute undertakings, harmony, uprightness, patience, discipline and values-driven personal conduct can be cultivated. Consequently, our collective behaviour while in keeping with the civic discipline becomes that which augments mutual cooperation and harmony. If we work to raise the general level of consciousness of a common man and nurture his intrinsic spirit of oneness with Hindutva as the guiding force, if we make individual efforts for developmental progress with a deeper understanding of the structure of our country and acknowledge our interdependence to cooperate with other members of the society, if we have confidence in our collective strength to achieve any dream and set developmental goals rooted in our values then in the near future Bharatvarsh will emerge as the torchbearer for the rest of the world and come to be known as the Bharatvarsh that showed the path of peaceful and congenial progress to humanity- freedom and equality in the true sense of the word.

Behavioural conduct of such individuals and families will create an overall atmosphere of fraternity, meaningful action and lawful order in the whole country. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has been working to effect these changes directly in the society since 1925. Such an organised state is the natural state of a healthy society. Such an organised society is the precondition for the resurrection of this country that has become independent after the centuries-long darkness of invasions. Many great personalities have worked to build such a society. After independence, with this very goal in mind, our constitution was crafted in age-relevant codes of desired conduct and passed on to us. Sangh work only will ensure inculcating a clear vision to realise the objectives of our constitution, and the conduct of mutual harmony, the spirit of oneness and the sentiment of national interest are paramount. Swayamsevaks are sincerely, selflessly and dedicatedly involved in realising this goal. With an invitation that you all to be their fellow-workers in this campaign for upstart reconstruction, I end my address here.

प्रश्न बहुत से उत्तर एक कदम मिलाकर बढे अनेक ।
वैभव के उत्तुङ्ग शिखर पर सभी दिशा से बढे अनेक िार
|| भारत माता की जय ||

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