

PRESS RELEASE

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Randeep Singh Surjewala, Incharge Communications, AICC has issued the following statement to the press today:-

“In the past 23 months, Bhartiya Janta Party and its ideological parent, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, have deliberately and wilfully launched an attack on important symbols of the Nation. They have indulged in insulting important ‘National Symbols’ with the sole aim of creating disharmony and with an intent to create fault lines in the society to suit their political narrative. Yesterday, in a speech on a public forum, RSS' Sah Sarsanghchalak, Shri Bhaiyyaji Joshi raised questions on the Nation's tricolour, which was nothing short of an insult of our National flag. What is now clear and stands exposed is RSS' denial of India's glorious freedom movement.

The freedom movement led by the Indian National Congress led to India getting its freedom on 15th August, 1947. The Indian tricolour was chosen as the National flag as it symbolised the struggle and the hopes of all those who participated in the freedom movement. It went on to fill all Indians with an immense sense of faith, pride and patriotism every time the tricolour was unfurled. India's history is witness as to how the then Congress President Shri Jawaharlal Nehru in 1929 asked the Nation to unfurl the tricolour to celebrate 26th January, 1930 as India's Independence Day.

What is unfortunate that around the same time, the then RSS chief, Shri Hedgewar, in a letter to all its members said, "On 26th January, 1930 I urge all members of the RSS to organise sabhas to unfurl RSS' saffron flag'. This clearly reveals RSS' mindset to what they always felt about the tricolour. The same feeling continues to exist even today and is exposed in Bhaiyyaji Joshi's speech. The insult and dishonour of Nation's tricolour appears to be ingrained in the mindset.

Another incident in RSS' history also tells us what they feel about India's National flag:

RSS' second chief, Shri Golwalkar, also felt similarly as Shri Hedgewar. Here are his feelings revealed on the tricolour:

1. On the occasion of Guru Purnima on 14th July, 1946 in Nagpur, where he said ' the saffron flag is the glorious symbol of India's cultural history, and also symbolises our gods. This is the reason why we believe this is the only flag that we will salute to. We have full faith and are certain that in the future this is the flag that the entire Nation will salute.' After reading this, it becomes clear as to why till date RSS continues to push a different flag than the tricolour as an agenda for the Nation. With BJP coming to power, the RSS now believes they can set their long overdue agenda.
2. On 15th August, 1947, when the Nation was all set to celebrate it's Independence from 200 years of British rule by unfurling the National tricolour, RSS' magazine Organiser, in its edition dated 14th August, 1947 said that ‘those who have come to power due to sheer luck are trying to enforce the tricolour as our National flag,

try as they may, Hindus will never respect the tricolour nor accept it. Number three in itself is unlucky and if it is applied to the National flag it will turn out to be disastrous for the Nation’.

3. After Independence, Shri Golwalkar in his article 'Patan hi Patan' wrote for example, ‘our leaders have decided on the National flag for us. Why have they done so?’

This is also recorded in history that RSS was banned after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination by the then Home Minister, Shri Vallabhai Patel. The ban was lifted in 1949 after RSS had apologised and explained the role of its organisation. The Home Ministry, in a notice/order dated 11th July, 1949 said that ‘the leaders of RSS have assured us that the organisation will show their total faith in the Indian constitution and give all the respect to the tricolour as the National flag. After receiving this assurance, the Government of India has reached the conclusion that RSS should be given a chance to be a democratic, cultural organisation that dedicates itself to work under the constitution of the country and acceptance of the National flag. The organisation will stay away from secrecy and violence to continue their contribution as an organisation.’

On another important issue, our pride-instilling ‘National Anthem’, ‘Jan Gana Mana’ has also come in RSS' line of attack by pitting it against the National Song, 'Vande Mataram'. This is yet another sinister attempt by the RSS-BJP to rewrite history, create divide and reduce the significance of these songs that are pride of all Indians. The very statement of RSS that ‘Vande Mataram’ instils more patriotism than ‘Jan Gana Mana’ is a deliberate insult to both. It also pitches one against the other. It is a shameful attempt by the RSS' Bhaiyyaji Joshi.

Post the Bengal partition in 1905, Indian National Congress adopted the ‘National Song’, ‘Vande Mataram’ to reflect India's unique ‘Unity in diversity’. It is indeed hypocritical that RSS, since 1925 till date, has not used ‘Vande Mataram’ in any of its texts (texts that describe the entire history of RSS and its leaders). The RSS, since 1939 till today, sings only 'Namaste Sadavatsale' in their various shakhas and offices. During the freedom movement, on 20th October, 1937, the Indian National Congress in a committee constituted with Pt. Nehru as President and distinguished members such as Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Shri Subhash Chandra Bose gave its clear cut stance on ‘Vande Mataram’ as a symbol of India’s patriotism. It said, the first two paragraphs of ‘Vande Mataram’ are the most important and instil a sense of immense pride and patriotism. Since then, ‘Vande Mataram’ became a favoured and popular song of the freedom struggle.

The ‘National Anthem’ written by Shri Rabindra Nath Tagore, not only reflects a binding force for the Nation into one but also reflects on India’s diversity and was sung on 27th December, 1911 in Indian National Congress' Calcutta Conference for the first time, while RSS came into existence only in the year 1925. On 24th January, 1950, the same time as India got its own constitution and after a lot of debate and deliberation it went on to be adopted as the ‘National Anthem’ by the constituent assembly.

Indian National Congress celebrates, takes pride in and sings both ‘Jan Gana Mana’ and ‘Vande Mataram’ on every important occasion as both the ‘National Anthem’ and ‘National Song’ have a place of pride and reverence in India’s rich history. Our simple question to the RSS is – Will it give up singing its own anthem in its every shakha and at least now sing the ‘National Anthem’ and ‘National Song’ i.e. ‘Jan Gana Mana’ or ‘Vande Mataram.

On behalf of the 125 crore people of India, the Indian National Congress wants to ask the BJP-RSS that with zero contribution to the Nation's freedom movement or in creating Nation's symbols, what gives them the right or authority to insult them with impunity? Isn't this an insult to the 125 crore Indians who derive immense patriotism through these songs and flag? We, at the Indian National Congress, demand that BJP government takes action against Bhaiyaji Joshi under the ‘Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971’. Divisive politics over Nation's symbols is unacceptable and goes against National interest. We want Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi to categorically express his stance on this issue because his silence would mean he is in agreement with what Bhaiyyaji Joshi and RSS have spoken.”