

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING)
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

‘हर काम देश के नाम’

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Raksha Mantri presides over ‘Run for Unity’ event in Lucknow on 148th birth anniversary of Iron Man of India Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

National Unity Day is an occasion to pledge ourselves to unity & integrity of India: Shri Rajnath Singh

Appeals to the youth to join Mera Yuva Bharat Abhiyan being launched by PM Modi

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh presided over the ‘Run for Unity’ event, organised by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh on the occasion of 148th birth anniversary of Iron Man of India Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on October 31, 2023. The 1.5 km run was flagged off by the Raksha Mantri from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Pratima, Hazratganj and it culminated at KD Singh Babu Stadium. Thousands of people, including school children, NCC cadets, sportspersons & running enthusiasts, and HAL personnel participated in the run.

Shri Rajnath Singh also paid floral tributes at the statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and administered the ‘National Unity Day’ pledge to the people present on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, he termed National Unity Day as an occasion to remember those who contributed to independence and nation-building. “National Unity Day gives us an opportunity to pledge ourselves to the unity of the nation and work towards building ‘*Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat*’,” he said.

The Raksha Mantri highlighted the role of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in nation-building post-independence, applauding his vision & diplomatic skills in ensuring the integration of princely states with the Republic of India and other contributions such as building the steel frame of the Indian Civil Services. “Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s efforts ensured the unity and integrity of India. His role was not given due credit until our government came to power in 2014 and decided to celebrate his birth anniversary as National Unity Day,” he said.

On the 'Mera Yuva Bharat Abhiyan' being launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the occasion, Shri Rajnath Singh said the initiative will provide the youth with an opportunity to come forward and take part in nation-building efforts. He called upon the people to come forward for this programme and work for national unity & integration.

The Raksha Mantri lauded Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's initiative of establishing the Statue of Unity, the world's largest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, at Kevadia in Gujarat. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel symbolises the unity of India and his efforts are an inspiration to the youth to take forward the message of national integration, he said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Yogi Adityanath, Deputy Chief Ministers Shri Keshav Prasad Maurya & Shri Brajesh Pathak, Cabinet Ministers and Ministers of State of Uttar Pradesh government, Chairman & Managing Director, HAL Shri CB Ananthkrishnan and other officials of HAL and Central & state governments also attended the event.

Various departments under Ministry of Defence, including Department of Defence Production, Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), Border Roads Organisation (BRO), Indian Coast Guard (ICG), NCC, Directorate General Defence Estates as well as the three Services organised 'Run for Unity' and administered the 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' pledge at over 160 locations across the country, as part of the National Unity Day celebrations.

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