

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE FLAGGING OFF CEREMONY OF "RUN FOR UNITY" RASHTRIYA EKTA DIWAS (NATIONAL UNITY DAY) ON 31ST OCTOBER, 2017 AT THE MAIN STADIUM, KHUMAN LAMPAK SPORTS COMPLEX, IMPHAL EAST.

Shri N. Biren Singh ji, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Manipur,

Shri Letpao Haokip ji, Hon'ble Minister (YAS), Manipur,

Friends from Electronic and Print Media,

All the Participants,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not only a pleasure for me, but a real privilege to get a platform to reiterate my solidarity with the cause of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) which I have been doing throughout my life. Today, I am happy to participate in the 'Run For Unity' to commemorate the Birth Anniversary of Sadar Vallabhbhai Patel. It is my pleasure to extend good wishes to all the participants and all those who are involved with this maiden observance.

Observance of the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas in this manner will surely spread the message of unity far and wide and infuse the sense of nationalism and patriotism in all our countrymen with renewed vigour. I express my thanks for inviting me to this function which is of great significance.

As we observe the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas our mind goes to our forefathers who fought for the freedom of the country and remained committed to the unity of the country. We also owe our gratitude to those activists and volunteers who continue to work for unity building at various levels.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel fought throughout his life for the unity of the country. Therefore, in order to fulfill his aspiration, we should all continue with the efforts for keeping the country united. The day gives us an

opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the cause of the nation. India is a great country of unity in diversity. Diversity is our strength. We should not lose faith in this belief. Manipur is also a Mini-India inhabited by a large number of different communities. We should all live in harmony and work for the development of the state.

India guided by the vision of leaders like Gandhiji and Nehruji has always worked for unity and good understanding between nations. My great grand father Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was also another such leader in the country. When we talk of unity, there is no other better example before us than our beloved Father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji had shown the whole world the power of non-violence and unity in driving the mighty British from our soil. It is a great honour for the Mahatma and the millions of Indians when the United Nations declared to observe 2nd October, the Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi as the “International Day of Non-violence”. It is also a great honour shown to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to commemorate his Birth Anniversary as National Unity Day for his selfless dedication to bring unity in the country.

Promotion of unity starts first with the family. For children and youth, the family must be perceived as a place of close relationship of mutual concern. If the culture of unity is developed at the family level, then it develops more effectively at the community and village level and upwards. Beyond the family, School can become a platform to understand the concept and practice of unity in curriculum, classroom, etc.

With these few words, it gives me great pleasure to flag off the “Run for Unity” - Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) and wish the observance a grand success.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.