

PIB MUMBAI



India united due to strategic wisdom of Sardar Patel: PM

In Mann ki Baat, Modi invokes *Time* magazine's 1947 report on Patel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

DAYS AFTER accusing the Congress of insulting Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel by its remarks on the Statue of Unity project, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in Mann ki Baat on Sunday that the *Time* magazine had in 1947 observed that if there was anyone who possessed the capability to unite India amid a plethora of problems, it was Patel.

The Prime Minister will unveil the Statue of Unity on Patel's birth anniversary, October 31. The day is also the death anniversary of former PM Indira Gandhi, to whom Modi paid tributes during his monthly radio address.

Dedicating a large part of his address to Patel, the Prime Minister recalled that on January 27, 1947, *Time* had a photograph of Patel on its cover.

"In their lead story, they had depicted a map of India; it was nowhere close to what the map looks like now. It was the map of an India that was divided into myriad fragments. There existed over 550 princely states. The English had lost interest in India; they wanted to leave India fragmented into pieces. *Time* magazine had opined that hovering over India then were the dangers of problems like partition, violence, food scarcity, price rise and power-politics. The magazine further observed that amidst that plethora of problems, if there was



Following the protest ahead of Statue of Unity's unveiling, in which several Ekta Yatra posters with photos of the PM and Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani were damaged, new ones featuring tribal leader Birsa Munda were put up on way to the statue. Police have been deployed to protect these. *Bhupendra Rana*

anyone who possessed the capability to unite the country and heal wounds, it was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel," he said.

"...Gandhiji considered Sardar Patel as the only one capable of finding a lasting solution to the vexed issue of the states and asked him to act. Sardar Patel formulated solutions one by one, weaving the warp and weft of unity on the axis of a single thread. He ensured the merger of all princely states with the Dominion of India...if we are able to see a United India now, it was entirely on account of the sagacity and strategic wisdom of Sardar Patel," the Prime Minister said.

He said October 31 will be spe-

cial as on that day the Statue of Unity will be dedicated to the nation as a true tribute to Patel. Highlighting that it is the world's tallest statue, the Prime Minister said, "Sardar Patel, a true son of the soil, will adorn our skies too."

He said today, the whole world, especially western countries, are discussing about environment protection. "...we only have to look inward, to look into our glorious past and our rich traditions... To live in consonance and closed co-ordination with the nature has been an integral part of our tribal communities," he said and referred to the Bhil tribes of Central India, especially in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, which

worship Peepal and Arjun trees.

"...the tribal community believes in very peaceful and harmonious co-existence but, if somebody tries to harm and cause damage to their natural resources, they do not shy away from fighting for their rights. There is no wonder that our foremost freedom fighters were the brave people from our tribal communities. Who can forget Bhagwan Birsa Munda who struggled hard against the British Empire to save their own forest land."

The Prime Minister said that for India, November 11 this year has a special significance because on that day a hundred years ago, the World War I ended. "Rightly speaking we had no direct connection with that war. Despite this, our soldiers fought bravely and played a very big role and made the supreme sacrifice... There has just been a single objective behind it — restoration of peace. The world witnessed a dance of death and devastation during World War I... This made the whole world realise and understand the importance of peace. The definition of peace has changed in the last hundred years," he said, adding that today, peace does not only mean "no war".

"There is a need to work unitedly to address issues such as terrorism, climate change, economic development to social justice through universal cooperation and co-ordination. Development of the poorest of the poor is the real indicator of peace," he said.