

Run, protests mark I-Day in London

Indian High Commission organises run at midnight to mark occasion

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India's Independence day was marked by celebrations and protests in London on Tuesday. Several hundred members of the Indian diaspora gathered in central London late on Monday night to participate in the first "Freedom run" at midnight, while a number of social justice and rights groups planned protests for the evening over the death of children at the BRD hospital in Gorakhpur, the recent mob lynchings and treatment of minority groups in India.

The freedom run – along a mile-long track from the the Mahatma Gandhi Statue on Parliament Square to India Place – was organised by the Indian High Commission, which hopes to continue the event in the coming years.

Around 500 participants, including young children,

carried flashing torches with the colours of the flag, as they walked or jogged along the waterfront to India Place, some shouting 'Jai Hind', 'Vande Mataram' and other slogans.

Given the security concerns, the High Commission approached community organisations from across religions to participate. "We never thought we'd get this level of interest for an event at midnight," said Deputy High Commissioner Dinesh Patnaik.

"We wanted to do something that was different this time" he said.

Johnson's greetings

Britain's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, who is due to participate in events related to the Independence Day on Tuesday evening, extended his "warmest wishes" to the people of India and the diaspora in Britain.