

CDS General Bipin Rawat delivers Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture 2021

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As part of Prasar Bharati's celebrations marking the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 31st October, 2021, All India Radio's prestigious Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture was delivered by India's first Chief of Defence Staff, **General Bipin Rawat** PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, ADC, wherein he dwelled on '**The Role of Indian Armed Forces in Nation Building**'.

While recounting India's great history and tracing the genesis of India as a federation of intricately linked smaller kingdoms under the aegis of Mauryan Empire, General Bipin Rawat mentioned that our nation is a fascinating and complex amalgam of many cultures; 22 scheduled languages, over 200 dialects, a dozen ethnic groups, seven religious communities with several sects and sub-sects and 68 socio-cultural sub regions. He emphasised the role of Sardar Patel in envisioning an Indian Nation that is united in diversity; resolute and determined to emerge as a power, capable of rising to any challenge, based on intrinsic strength.

Eloquent in his praise for Sardar Patel's mission and the herculean task of integrating 565 princely states into a sovereign India, General Rawat said that the pillars of nation building could be surmised as security, justice, economic development and democratic polity and acknowledged the tireless efforts of Sardar Patel in assembling a consensus with the princely states while judiciously employing stratagem prevalent since the age of Chanakya.

General Rawat highlighted that in consonance with the Bhagwad Gita which says, "Considering your own duty, you should not waiver", all cadets of Indian Military Academy, before conclusion of their training, pledge allegiance to the oath that emphasizes that the safety, honour and welfare of the nation is sacrosanct, followed by the honour, welfare and comfort of the men under command whereas individual ease, comfort and safety comes last, always and every time at the moment of reckoning.

General Rawat asserted that inculcation of secularism, discipline, integrity, loyalty, esprit-de-corps along with the novel concept of loyalty to the constitutionally elected government has made the Indian armed forces contribute to the political stability of the nation. The laudatory contribution of BRO (Border Roads Organisation) NCC (National Cadet Corps) coupled with the succor and relief brought by Armed forces during man made or natural disasters have been sterling examples of its resolute service to the nation.

Elaborating further, General Rawat said that deployment of the armed forces in the remote areas through cantonments and military stations in inaccessible areas have contributed to the local economy through developmental projects. The contribution of Indian armed forces to UN peace-keeping missions since the mid 50s till date and defence cooperation offered by India in present world has emerged as an important diplomatic endeavour.

The Chief of Defence Staff of India General Bipin Rawat concluded the Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture-2021 by reiterating that India's unity in diversity shall remain intact due to the virtues of sacrifice, loyalty and discipline of the Indian Armed forces.

Sardar Patel Memorial Lectures since 1955 are an annual feature organized by All India Radio commemorating the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, known as the "Iron Man of India". Sardar Patel, one of the key integrating forces of the nascent nation and an integral part of India's Independence Movement was also free India's first Minister of Information and Broadcasting.

A galaxy of luminaries including Dr. C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Dr.

Karan Singh, Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Shri Ajit Doval, Dr. S. Jaishankar has adorned this podium in the past to deliver this annual lecture.

Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture 2021 delivered by General Bipin Rawat was broadcast on All India Radio network on 31st October, 2021 at 9:30 PM. The visual version was broadcast on DD National at 10 PM on the same day. The lecture is now available on All India Radio's YouTube channel 'akashvaniair'.

Saurabh Singh

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