

INAUGURATION OF STATUE OF UNITY

Govt plans to take out 'Ekta Yatras' on 200 chariots in 10,000 villages

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AHEAD OF the launch of the Statue of Unity on October 31, the Gujarat government is planning to take out Ekta Yatras in 10,000 villages across the state in around 200 chariots before and after the inauguration of the statue.

Chief Minister Vijay Rupani launched a website for the yatra — ektayatra.com — here on Friday. The yatra will be spreading Sardar Patel's message of unity and sovereignty of India.

The yatra will be carried out in two phases in October and November. The first phase will be between October 20 and 29, and the second phase between November 12 and 21.

An official release said that the yatra has been organised to ensure that the inauguration of Statue of Unity — the statue of Vallabhbhai Patel — becomes a memorable event for the people of Gujarat. During the yatra, various programmes will be organised in the villages that include essay competition on Sardar Patel, quiz competition, discussions and exhibition of videos, enactment of plays on Sardar Patel, screening of films on patriotism, among others.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) A M Tiwari has been appointed to oversee the entire planning and execution of the Ekta Yatra. At the same time, various district administrations are expected to make the arrangements for the yatra at the village level.

In July last year, Gujarat government had organised similar Narmada Rath Yatra to mark the completion of Sardar Sarovar Dam project. At that time also, the state government had planned to target 10,000 villages across the state. That yatra preceded the Assembly elections in December last year.

Another important yatra on Swami Vivekanand was carried out by the Gujarat government in 2012 when Narendra Modi was the chief minister of the state. The yatra was called Vivekanand Yuva Vikas Yatra to mark 150 years of Swami Vivekanand's historic Chicago speech. Modi had begun his election campaign for 2012 Assembly elections through this month-long yatra in September 2012.