

Centre Pays Tribute to Missile Man with Life-Size Statue



A life-size statue of former President APJ Abdul Kalam was unveiled on Wednesday at Pei Karumbu near Rameswaram as a tribute to the 'Missile Man' on his first death anniversary. The Modi Government also announced inclusion of his hometown Rameswaram under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) by relaxing the eligibility norms under the Central scheme.

Union Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu unveiled the statue of Bharat Ratna Kalam at an event at Pei Karumbu which was attended by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and MoS Road Transport and Highways Pon Radhakrishnan among many other dignitaries.

Naidu said the Centre has decided to include Rameswaram in AMRUT by relaxing norms as a tribute to the 'People's President'.

Usually cities with a population of one lakh and above are included in the scheme, however, Prime Minister Modi included Rameswaram, with a population of 45,000, as a tribute to Kalam. The PM tweeted, "It's been a year since our beloved Dr APJ Abdul Kalam left us & created a void that is irreplaceable (sic). My tributes to this great personality."

Naidu said the Centre has approved projects worth `48 crore for Rameswaram under AMRUT. Of this, `45 crore would be used to improve sewerage networks and the rest on developing parks and open spaces.

"This is a token of the minimum we could do for the memory of Dr Kalam", he said.

Naidu said it was still difficult to believe that Kalam had passed away. "Dr Kalam will live forever in our minds and hearts. His thoughts continue to be with us all the time," he said.

Kalam passed away on July 27 last year after suffering a massive cardiac arrest while delivering a lecture at IIM- Shillong in Meghalaya.

Naidu thanked Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalitha for allotting the land to construct the memorial in memory of the former President. "When I met her last week, she assured me that whatever needs to be done for a befitting memorial would be done by the State Government," he said.

"The vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is federal cooperation where the Centre and States work in harmony. This memorial is an example of his vision. I thank the Chief Minister for her cooperation," Naidu said.

Recollecting Kalam's ascension to presidency, Naidu said as the then BJP chief he was associated with discussions when the NDA Government, led by AB Vajpayee considered the matter.

"Quite a few were not sure if a hardcore scientist with no experience of public life or even public interaction could be the right choice, but...Our decision in his favour, subsequently proved to be the best one. He emerged as the most loved president of our country," he said.

On the memorial, Naidu said it would be a grand monument to perpetuate the memory of Kalam "who lived not for himself but for all us and the country" and a small tribute to him.



Union Minister for Urban Development Venkaiah Naidu and Union Minister for Defence Manohar Parrikar pay homage to former President APJ Abdul Kalam in Rameswaram on Wednesday

PTI

A sand sculpture of the former president, depicting only his face, was unveiled by one of Kalam's family members. Naidu urged all political parties to cooperate and work towards completion of the memorial as Kalam "belonged to the nation and not any political party".

Parrikar, who laid a wreath as a tribute to the former president, recalled Kalam's visit to Goa when he was the Chief Minister of the State.

"When I was Chief Minister of Goa, he visited us. We had a very long discussion on his vision of India in 2020," he said.

On the memorial being set up by the DRDO, Parrikar said its design was in the final stage and the work was expected to commence in the coming months.

"The memorial will be completed in record time. The concept of completing a project in time was the highest priority of Dr Kalam", he said.

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley hailed Kalam as a true patriot. "Bharat Ratna Dr Kalam was a true patriot, scientist & statesman. We remember this son of India & pay our tribute on his death anniversary," he wrote on Twitter.

BJP president Amit Shah said, "Kalam was the epitome of simplicity, hard work and morality. His teachings and vision will continue to inspire generations to come."

Naval lab to develop optic-guided torpedoes

It will launch major projects during the next three or four years, says outgoing NSTL director



NSTL Director C.D. Malleswar explaining the firing of a torpedo from a ship in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday.

Having delivered heavyweight torpedo Varunastra to the Navy and anti-torpedo decoy system Mareech, the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL) here will now embark on the development of optic-guided heavyweight torpedoes and lightweight torpedoes with extended range.

“We are moving towards strategic domain taking up products for various advanced platforms, and the user confidence is high,” NSTL Director C.D. Malleswar said.

Long strides - The NSTL will see the launch of major projects every year during the next three or four years. The submarine variant of Varunastra would be test-fired in about two months and the optic-guided torpedo trials will begin by the year-

end, according to Mr. Malleswar, who held a press conference on Wednesday on the eve of 47th Lab Raising Day. The NSTL worked with BDL and BEL in concurrent engineering mode and once the Navy placed the orders, 73 Varunastra and 33 Mareechs, costing about Rs. 2,000 crore, will be made by them for deployment. Besides, he said, the NSTL has made long strides in fire-control system.

‘Agni’ award - It has developed Panchendriya for submarines, another system for helicopters. Its integrated anti-submarine warfare complex ‘MOD 0’ has been inducted on six Rajput Class ships.

ASW complex ‘MOD C’ has been designed for corvettes of Kolkata, Kamorta and Kochi Class and these are also ready for inducting Varunastra and Mareech.

International facility - The NSTL has been given ‘Agni’ award in self-reliance for fire-control systems, Mr. Malleswar said.

Door is also open for defence exports with requests from countries like Vietnam and Myanmar, he said.

He attributed the delay in developing Varunastra to the challenges under water. He recalled that during the trials in 2014, the torpedo recovery vessel sunk and the torpedo under trial was recovered from over 200 metre depth. It was the first time that a torpedo was recovered from such depths, he said.

Mr. Malleswar, who is laying down office this month-end, said the NSTL had an excellent international facility in hydrodynamic research with Seakeeping and Manoeuvring Basin inaugurated recently by the Defence Minister at which sea-keeping abilities of vessels are tested with models. The Cavitation tunnel identifies operational regimes for a ship or submarine. The recently installed propulsion system integration centre integrates engines and propellers. It also works on minimising signature of vessels to prevent detection by enemy ships.

“So we have total ship designing indigenously with weapons, propellers, fire control systems, mines and decoys,” Mr. Malleswar said.

“There is no looking back and we are confident of doing anything,” he said.