

PM Modi to lead nation in paying tributes to Dr Kalam at Rameswaram

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the nation in paying tributes to former President APJ Abdul Kalam at Rameswaram, the latter's birthplace on the second death anniversary of India's Missile Man.

Modi is flying down to Rameswaram, described as the Temple Town of Tamil Nadu on Thursday and would dedicate to the nation the majestic looking Kalam Memorial at Peykarambu where the scientist-turned former President was laid to rest.

The Prime Minister will also flag off "Kalam 2020 Science Vehicle", a digital based mobile museum made by APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation. The vehicle showcases Kalam's scientific achievements as a student and his tenure as scientist in the Indian Space Research Organisation and the DRDO.

The vehicle will travel through several States like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh before reaching Rashtrapathi Bhavan on October 15, the birthday of Kalam.

As a mark of respect to the late President, who was the most popular personality in the country even after his presidential days, the Prime Minister will flag off a new weekly express train from Rameswaram to Faizabad via Ayodhya.

The Prime Minister will flag off the weekly express train by video conferencing from Rameswaram. The inaugural train leaves Rameswaram station at 12 30 pm on Thursday and will reach Faizabad on Saturday at 23.30 hrs.

A release by Southern Railway said regular services of the 16793/16794 weekly express train will commence from Rameswaram on August 6 and from Faizabad on August 9.

The train which covers 2,921 km would have stops at Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur, Chennai Egmore, Gudur, Vijayawada, Warangal, Balharshah, Nagpur, Itarsi, Jabalpur, Satna, Allahabad and Ayodhya.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made in Rameswaram and the surrounding areas in the backdrop of the arrest of a Pakistani citizen at the temple town who infiltrated into the country from Sri Lanka without any travel documents.

The Prime Minister will be accompanied by Governor of Tamil Nadu C Vidyasagar Rao, Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy, union minister Pon Radhakrishnan and the vice-presidential candidate of the NDA, M Venkiah Naidu.

THE ASIAN AGE

Agni replica at Abdul Kalam memorial

Kalam always admired the attributes of fire, says A.P.J.M.S. Nagoor Roja, the late President's grand niece.

Bengaluru: India's most powerful long-range missile, Agni, which was among the favourite projects of late President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, will form part of the national memorial scheduled for inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his second death anniversary, July 27, in Rameswaram.

The missile, a museum with personal collections of Dr Kalam and a library enclosed within a green canopy of 1,000 plants constitute phase-I of the Rs 50-crore Abdul Kalam memorial in the temple town where the late President spent his formative years. "I thank DRDO for providing a full scale model of Agni missile, an organisation which has been very dear to all of us," says A.P.J.M.S. Nagoor Roja, the late President's grand niece, adding that Dr Kalam always admired the attributes of fire (Agni).

“Fire can burn down impurities of any type (evil forces) so Vappappa (grandfather in Tamil) liked Agni and often called me Agni Kunju (firebrand girl),” she added.

Interestingly, both her parents are related to Dr Kalam. While her late father A.P.J.M. Shahul Hamid is the son of Dr Kalam’s brother A.P.J. Mohamed Muthu Meera Maraikayer, her mother Mahboob Begum is the daughter of the late President’s sister, late A.P.J. Azeem Zohara Ammal. Dr Kalam held late Azeem Zohara Ammal in high esteem for she pledged her gold bangles to fund his education at the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT).

Ms Nagoor Roja, who has been practicing law in Bengaluru for a decade, treasures various books on law which were gifted to her by Dr Kalam along with a foot-long, gold plated Veena instrument, and a Shruthi box used while learning Carnatic music, and anklets. “He used to call me many times but always advised me not to take calls while driving. He was so fond of me that he mentioned me while addressing various gatherings, either as a student, a girl and a young advocate. He told me once that I was very lucky as I was living in the world’s best city (Bengaluru),” she reminisced during an interview with The Asian Age.

One of the Trustees of APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation, she said 112 programmes have been launched since July 21 to encourage and motivate students particularly those who are under-privileged. “We are launching a mobile Science lab, organizing blood donation camps, competitions of different types for school children, and two marathons-from Madurai to Rameswaram and another from Karikkal engineering college to Rameswaram, to mark his second death anniversary,” she added.