

Abu Dhabi temple will be a medium of identity: PM

Temple Committee members meet Narendra Modi and Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated a project for the construction of the first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi, describing it as a “catalytic agent” of humanity and harmony that would become a medium of India’s identity.

He laid the foundation stone for the Swaminarayan temple of the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha through videoconferencing from the Dubai Opera House, where he addressed the members of the Indian community.

“I would like to request all those associated with the construction of the temple that the rulers here have shown so much respect for India. They have been proud of India’s cultural history. Now, it is our responsibility to ensure that there is no mistake on our part,” he said to applause. Mr. Modi asked the people involved in the construction of the temple and the worshippers not to cause harm to others. “This is my expectation from you,” he said.

He thanked Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on behalf of the 125 crore Indians for the construction of the temple. “People were surprised when Abu Dhabi’s Crown Prince took forward the talks on building a temple in Abu Dhabi. I wholeheartedly thank his Highness on behalf of all 125 crore Indians.” He said the temple would become a “medium of India’s identity”. “We have grown in a culture where temples are a medium of humanity ... Holy place is a catalytic agent of humanity and harmony,” he said.

“I believe this temple will be unique in architecture and splendour and will give a message of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* to the people across the world,” he said.

The temple committee members presented the temple literature to Mr. Modi and Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

2020 deadline

The temple will come up on 55,000 square metres of land. The structure will be hand-carved by Indian artisans and assembled in the UAE. It will be completed by 2020 and open to people of all religious backgrounds.

It will be the first traditional Hindu stone temple in West Asia, said a spokesperson of the Sanstha, a socio-spiritual Hindu organisation set up in 1907. It runs over 1,100 temples and cultural centres around the world.

The temple will be a replica of the one in New Delhi and another under construction in New Jersey.

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END