

AMAR JAWAN JYOTI, WAR MEMORIAL MERGED: GOVT.

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India Gate was a “symbol of our colonial past” as it has only some of those who fought for the British in the First World War and the Anglo Afghan War, the source noted. “It is ironic that people who did not make an NWM for seven decades are now making a hue and cry when a permanent and fitting tribute is being made to our martyrs.”

Mr. Modi said on social media: “At a time when the entire nation is marking the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, I am glad to share that his grand statue, made of granite, will be installed at India Gate. This would be a symbol of India’s indebtedness to him.”

“Till the grand statue of Netaji Bose is completed, a hologram statue of his would be present at the same place. I will unveil the hologram statue on 23rd January, Netaji’s birth anniversary,” Mr. Modi noted.

Earlier in the day, speaking at the inauguration of a New Circuit House at Somnath in Gujarat, Mr. Modi said: “After Independence, new things were constructed only for a few families from Delhi, but we are building monuments of national importance.”

India Gate, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was unveiled by Lord Irwin on February 12, 1931. It was built to honour the over 83,000 soldiers of British India who died from 1914 to 1921. The AJJ was set up to pay homage for the soldiers who laid down their lives in the 1971 war. The memorial of the unknown soldier, an inverted bayonet with a helmet structure, along with the AJJ was inaugurated under the arch of India Gate by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on January 26, 1972 to commemorate India’s victory in the 1971 war, in which 93,000 Pakistani prisoners of war surrendered and saw the birth of Bangladesh.

Social media was abuzz with responses from the veteran community, with some calling it a “natural thing” while some calling for both flames to be kept alive. Former Army Chief Gen. Ved Malik said, “A natural thing to do now that the National War Memorial has been established and all ceremonies... are being held there.”

Stating that symbols have an intangible value in nation building, Air Vice Marshal Manmohan Bahadur (retd.) said the ‘Eternal Flame’ at India Gate was iconic. “A generation grew up around the ’71 war and the next had goosebumps hearing and seeing the last post on TV and in person. We all will lose a part of our lives,” he said.

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