

PM Narendra Modi to open ICC today, plant a Rudraskh sapling in Varanasi

Rajeev Dikshit / TNN / Updated: Jul 15, 2021, 05:56 IST



An illuminated Rudraksh Convention Centre on the eve of PM's visit on Thursday in Kashi. PM tweeted that he will inaugurate the centre

VARANASI: Constructed as a symbol of India-Japan friendship, the Rs 186 crore Rudraksh International Convention Centre will get a few more memories added to it after inauguration and planting of a Rudraksh sapling on its campus by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday.

"To take part in the inauguration ceremony of Rudraksh, Japanese ambassador Satoshi Suzuki along with his wife and seven other delegation members, including Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) officials reached here on Wednesday," said district magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma.

"The PM will formally inaugurate Rudraksh on Thursday afternoon," said Sharma adding, "To mark its inauguration, the PM will plant a sapling of Rudraksh tree, which had already been brought here from Kolkata."

This plantation will add another memory of Modi's close attachment with this project. Records show that a few months after becoming PM, Modi had visited Kyoto in Japan in August 2014 when a Kashi-Kyoto partnership agreement aimed at retaining Varanasi's ancient heritage was signed.

After PM's Kyoto visit in August 2014, then Japanese PM Shinzo Abe had a first-hand experience of Varanasi's illustrious glory in December 2015. On September 15, 2017 JICA signed a grant agreement for the construction of ICC. Later, CPWD was engaged to handle the project, which was executed by a Japanese company.

The Varanasi Municipal Corporation (VMC) spared its Tilak auditorium building, which also had the house of elected mayor and corporators as well as a parking zone for solid waste management fleet of garbage carriers, to provide space for the ICC.

"Built in a shape of 'Shivlinga', this world class auditorium has advance light and sound systems and 1,200 seating capacity, where mega literary, cultural events including music concerts, exhibition and conventions will be hosted," said Smart City Varanasi Limited chairman and divisional commissioner Deepak Agrawal.

SCVL chief executive officer Gaurang Rathi said, "The main hall has a seating capacity of 1,200 people and it can be divided into two parts according to the number of people. Built in 2.87 hectares of land, this fully air-conditioned ICC is equipped with modern building management systems. In addition to the large hall, a meeting hall with a capacity of 150 people has also been created, which can also be conveniently divided into two parts."

He added, "Apart from this, a VIP room, four green rooms have been constructed here. Requirements for people with disabilities and all the criteria like ramps, wheelchairs have also been fulfilled."

"Rudraksh also has Japanese-style garden and landscaping," said Rathi adding, "A parking facility for 120 vehicles has also been arranged in the basement."

"The entire campus is under CCTV surveillance. Along with conventional electricity, solar power has also been arranged to meet power supply requirements. The environment-friendly building is fit for Level 3 of Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA)," he added.

The Rudraksh ICC had been formally taken over by SCVL from CPWD on May 31, said Agrawal adding that modalities to run it were also finalised by roping in a company, Indian Sanitization Ward Boy and Horticulture Contractor (ISWHC) for its operations and maintenance for 10 years through a tender process.