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# PM Modi calls for roadmap to develop Mangarh Dham as tribal destination

The Hindu Bureau

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**Given that the place's heritage is shared by the people of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the four States should work to develop it, says the Prime Minister**



**Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called for preparing a roadmap to develop Mangarh Dham in Rajasthan's Banswara district as a tribal destination with a prominent identity at the global level. Mangarh Dham, situated near the Rajasthan-Gujarat border, is known for massacre of tribals by the British Indian Army in 1913.**

Addressing a public meeting at Mangarh Dham to mark the anniversary of the incident and commemorate tribal leader and social reformer Govind Guru, Mr. Modi said the memorial raised at the place was a symbol of bravery and sacrifice of tribals. He said such an impactful event of the freedom struggle had not found its place in the history books because of “unfortunate circumstances”.

About 1,500 Bhil tribals and forest dwellers were killed at a hill in Mangarh on November 17, 1913, when the British Indian Army opened fire on the protesters demanding abolition of bonded labour system and relaxation in heavy agricultural taxes imposed by the rulers of princely states. The tribals in the southern Rajasthan region were led by Govind Guru.

Mr. Modi said since Mangarh Dham was a shared heritage of the people of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the governments of the four States could work together and prepare a roadmap to bring the memorial site on the world map. “The development of Mangarh Dham will make this area a place of inspiration for the new generation,” he said.

The Prime Minister refrained from declaring Mangarh Dham as a monument of national importance, the demand for which was raised by Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. Mr. Modi, who shared the dais with Mr. Gehlot as well as Chief Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan of Madhya Pradesh and Bhupendra Patel of Gujarat, said if the memorial was taken to a new height, it could be called a national monument or any other name could be given to it.

The elected representatives of the tribal-dominated areas in Banswara and Dungarpur districts have been demanding since long that Mangarh Dham be declared a monument of national importance. The Rajasthan government has twice written letters to the Centre in this regard, seeking initiation of action by the National Monuments Authority keeping in view the historical significance of the place.

## Celebrating tribal history

Mr. Modi affirmed that India’s past, history, present and future would not be complete without the tribal community, and said the nation would celebrate the *Janjatiya Guarav Diwas* on November 15 on the birth anniversary of tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda. He said special museums dedicated to tribal freedom fighters were being constructed across the country to take the history of tribal society to the masses.

“Great freedom fighters like Govind Guru were the representatives of India’s traditions and ideals,” Mr. Modi said, adding that Govind Guru had not only fought against the British for the rights of the tribal community, but had also campaigned against social ills and worked as a social reformer, spiritual leader and a saint.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Gehlot said Mr. Modi commanded respect during his visits abroad because he represented Mahatma Gandhi's country, where the roots of democracy were strong even after more than 70 years of Independence. He drew the Prime Minister's attention to the welfare measures taken in the State and sought their consideration for implementing similar schemes across the country.

The Prime Minister's push to bring Mangarh Dham to the limelight comes ahead of the Assembly election in Gujarat, where tribals comprise a significant section of the population. The tribal-dominated region in southern Rajasthan is also politically significant, as both the ruling Congress and the Opposition BJP face the challenge from Bharatiya Tribal Party wielding a considerable influence since the 2018 Assembly polls.

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