IIT-B Set to Start Work on Dandi March Memorial

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The efforts for a national memorial dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March finally seems to be gathering pace as IIT Bombay, which is entrusted with the responsibility of design coordination and implementation of the same, is set to inaugurate the project at its Powai campus next week.

The memorial, a project of the Ministry of Culture, was announced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2005 to mark the 75th anniversary of the march. But the design was approved only this year and the same will be flagged off from November 7.

The memorial will be built over 15 acres opposite Saifee Villa, the house at Dandi in Gujarat where Gandhi stayed on the night of April 5, 1930, at the end of his march to protest against the imposition of tax on salt.

IIT Bombay has announced two workshops, from November 7 to 24 and from December 7 to 22, during which life-size sculptures of all 80 marchers who participated in the famous march will be created at the institute's campus.

Around 40 sculptors and students from different parts of the world have been selected to be part of IIT Bombay's national design team. They will work in two groups of 20 members each.

The memorial will be 70-metre high, with two stainless steel arms, which will be lit by solar panels.

According to officials of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD), which is responsible for the project's execution, the memorial will have a statue of Gandhi leading the protesters and satyagrahis. The hands of the sculpture will be raised upwards, holding a handful of artificial salt crystals.

According to CPWD officials, the actual design concept includes gradual illumination of the structure as the Sun goes down. A small lake will be constructed at the memorial complex as a symbolic representation of the seaside where the Dandi March took place. The water body will create reflections of the memorial from all sides, according to the design proposal.