

# Raksha Mantri Lights Victory Flame to Mark 20 Years of Kargil War

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This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the successful culmination of Operation Vijay wherein brave soldiers of the Indian Army overcame seemingly insurmountable odds, hostile terrain, weather, and a determined enemy occupying dominating heights, to win the Kargil war. On this momentous occasion, the Indian Army is celebrating this victory in memory of its brave martyrs with events covering a myriad spectrum.

One of the major events planned during the celebrations is the relay of a Victory Flame from National War Memorial (NMW) in New Delhi to Kargil War Memorial at Dras. Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh handed over the Flame to ace army shooter Subedar Jitu Rai who represented India as the first torch bearer, at the NMW here today. Before that Chief of the Army Staff General Bipin Rawat ignited the mashaal from the eternal flame of the NMW. Victory Flame symbolises the coalescence of the souls of the Kargil War martyrs.

The Victory Flame will be carried by Indian Army's outstanding sportsmen and war heroes. It will pass through nine major towns/cities of North India and finally culminate at the Karambhoomi of the martyrs at the Kargil War Memorial located at Dras on July 26, 2019, where it will be received by the COAS. All along the journey, Indian Army personnel will be paying homage to the heroes who fought valiantly for the Nation.

The design of the Victory Torch has been inspired by the grit, guts and glory displayed by the immortals who made the supreme sacrifice for the motherland in the finest tradition of the Indian Army. The Torch is made of copper, brass and wood which symbolises the tenacity and determination of our fallen heroes. The upper portion of the Torch has a metal etching of the Amar Jawan, epitomizing the fallen Unknown soldiers. The lower wooden portion of the Torch has 20 gold embossed inscriptions of the Amar Jawan exemplifying 20 glorious years of the Kargil Victory.

This Victory Flame and the journey of the eternal flame from the National War Memorial to the Kargil War Memorial brings alive the theme of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kargil Vijay Diwas - 'Remember, Rejoice and Renew'. We 'remember' our martyrs by revisiting their sacrifices, we 'rejoice' by celebrating the victory in Kargil and we 'renew' our resolve to safeguard the honour of the Tricolour.

The event was also attended by Lt Gen Ranbir Singh, GOC-in-C Northern command; Lt Gen Y K Joshi, GOC, Fire and Fury Corps; Subedar Sanjay Kumar and a large number of other dignitaries.

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**Nampi/DK**

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