

Events commence for bicentennial of Greek War of Independence



Events and commemorations marking the bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence began on Wednesday, ahead of Thursday's March 25 anniversary.

The bitter war of liberation from our Ottoman Muslim rule began in early 1821, with March 25 traditionally commemorated as the commencement of the struggle, as the day falls on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, one of the most reverent dates on the Orthodox ecclesiastical calendar.

The rallying cries of the revolutionaries, "Liberty or Death", and "Struggle for Faith and Homeland", continue to resonate today wherever Hellenism exists, and continues to inspire freedom-loving people.

Celebrations and observations of the bicentennial will be held in various corners of the world, with Athens, Greece, as expected, being the focal point.

On Thursday, events will begin with the daily raising of the Greek flag atop the Acropolis and the singing of the national anthem.

A Doxology memorial service will be conducted at the Athens Metropolitan Cathedral, in the presence of Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Ieronymos, and attended by the country's top state, government and military leadership.

Among the dignitaries who arrived to represent their respective countries in the commemorations are the Prince of Wales Charles and his spouse, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and French Defense Minister Florence Parly – representing the three major powers – the United Kingdom, France and Russia – that intervened to ensure the victory of the revolutionaries and the creation of the modern Greek state.

Days ahead of the commemorations on Thursday, what's being billed as the largest Greek flag in the world – at 1,500 square meters – will to be raised on the iconic island of Santorini.

A massive Greek flag has also been placed on the slope of Mt. Hymettus, overlooking the greater Athens area from the east.

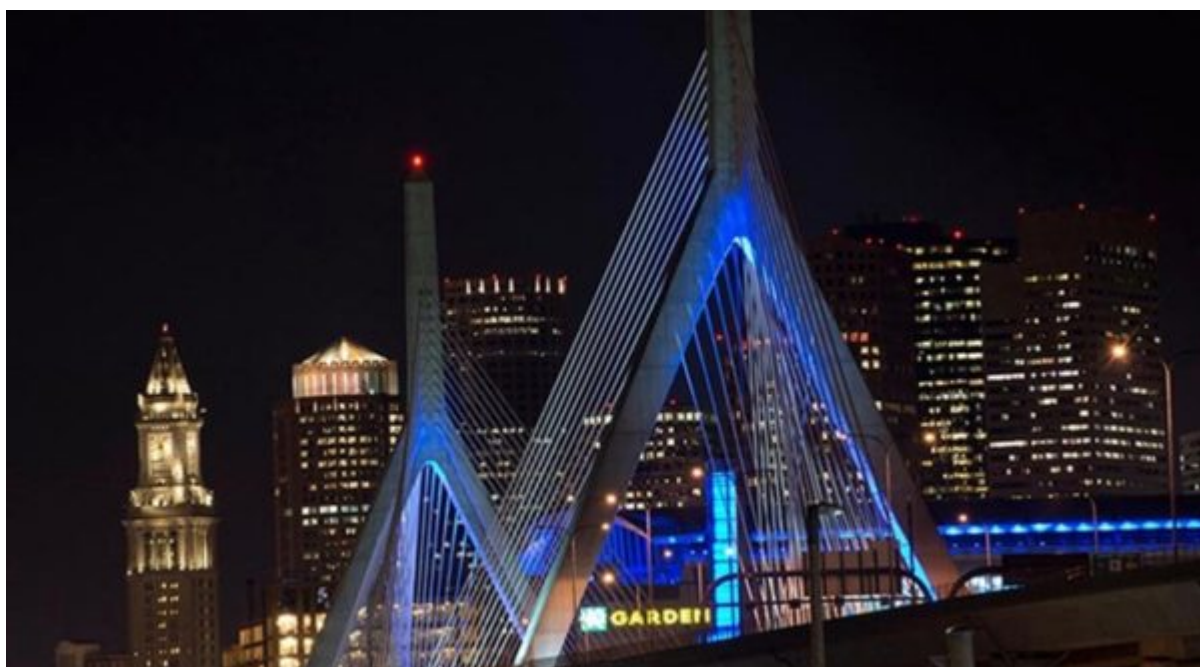
American and French warplanes will also fly in formation over Athens during Thursday's military parade through central Athens, while a Russian warship has docked at the port of Piraeus.

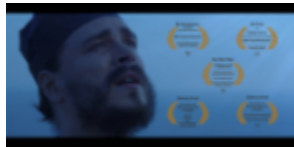
In a related development, France has loaned the brilliant "School of Athens" tapestry, based on the painting by late Renaissance master Raphael, as part of the bicentennial commemoration.

The tapestry has hung in the French National Assembly since the late 19th century.

Greek President of the Republic Katerina Sakellariopoulou will host a reception for the dignitaries, which also include Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades, at the recently renovated National Art Gallery on Thursday evening.

Emblematic and historic buildings and structures around the world, along with Greek Orthodox cathedrals, will also be illuminated in white and blue, Greece's national colors – from the Sydney Opera House to Niagara Falls to the San Francisco's Town Hall.





Saint Joseph the Hesychast

Documentary



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