

TOKYO, Feb 3: Shortly after midnight on December 23, 1948, Japan's wartime Prime Minister, Hideki Tojo, another former Premier and five army generals were hanged as war criminals in a Tokyo prison, reports Reuter.

The prison, Sugamo, was demolished many years ago, but the site of the gallows is being turned into a walled park where visitors will be able to view a granite monument emblazoned with the words "for the sake of eternal peace."

A local Council decision to erect the two metre (6.5 foot) monument, seen as a least a partial triumph for extreme rightists, has angered many people who fear that it will glorify war criminals and lead to a revival of Japanese militarism.

The decision has also embarrassed the central government which never refers specifically to the responsibility of General Tojo and other leaders sentenced by an allied tribunal.

In 1964, the Cabinet decided to preserve the execution site following a strong recommendation from the then Justice Minister, Okinori Kaya, who had been Finance Minister in Tojo's Cabinet.

The late Mr Kaya, a class "A" war criminal sentenced originally by the tribunal to life imprisonment, had the

## Controversy over Sugamo monument

backing of associations formed to mourn war dead.

Several weeks ago, the Toshima Ward Council in northeast Tokyo, which includes the prison site, agreed that the monument should be erected despite outcries from pacifists, Christians and other groups.

The monument will be placed next May in the park, the only area of the former prison that has not been redeveloped. The rest of the site, called "Sunshine City", includes a 60-storey building, a hotel and a culture hall.

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Emeritus Professor Seijiro Takigawa, who defended an admiral at the tribunal recalled in his book "trial of

the Tokyo Tribunal" that all criminals had agreed to be class "A" war criminals had agreed to behave peacefully and not embarrass Emperor Hirohito.

Some members of the victorious allied forces had demanded shortly after the war ended that the Emperor, Supreme Commander of the Imperial Army and Navy, should also be tried as a war criminal.

Since 1948, right and left-wing activists have questioned the legitimacy of the tribunal, but their views of Japanese war leaders are split. Victored leaders as war victims who sacrificed themselves for the greater glory of the state, while leftists regret that the Japanese people failed to root out all of the country's wartime leaders.

Leftists and moral rearmament groups believe the planned monument on the gallows' site will glorify war criminals and lead to a revival of militarism.

ma ward committee in deciding to erect the monument,

A specially formed Toshi rejected petitions from Christians, pacifists and leftwingers. But at the same time, it refused a right-wing demand to etch the words "war victims" (meaning executed war criminals) into the granite.