Fort William

Why in News?

Recently, Fort William was renamed Vijay Durg.

- **Historical background** – It was built by the British in *1781* and named after ***King William III*** of England.
- **Located in** – Eastern bank of the river *Hoogly in Kolkata*, West Bengal.
- Robert Clive started the new structure in 1758 CE and the 1st phase of construction was completed by 1781 CE.
- **Area coverage** – Present day structure consists More than 170 acres and houses many colonial and modern-day structures together.
- **Composition** – It comprises the largest urban park of the city and is popularly referred to as the ***Lungs of Kolkata***.
- **Structure** – It was built in brick and mortar as an irregular octagon and designed as a *star-shaped fort*, including structures inspired by Georgian and Gothic styles.
- The walls and defenses of the fort were structured to defend against cannon firing (as per the need of the times) rather than explosive shelling.
- **Gates -** Chowringhee, Plassey, Calcutta, Water Gate, St. George and Treasury gates.
- The Granary Barracks inside the fort complex were built by Governor-General Warren Hastings (1772–1785 CE).
- In 1856 CE the Dalhousie Barrack (named after Lord Dalhousie, 1848-1856), a 4-storey building, was built as an army garrison to accommodate soldiers.
- The Kitchener's House, initially built as a blockhouse for the Fortress Assault Company in 1771 CE, was converted into an official residence for the Commander-in-Chief of the British Indian Army in 1784 CE.
- Fort William soon emerged as the official governing base for British India.



Sir Charles Eyre *was the 1st President and Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal.*

- **Commanding center** – After Independence, it is the headquarters of the Eastern Command of

the Indian Army.

- The Indian Army has gradually opened to allowing access to selected areas of the fort complex to the general public.
- **Vijay Durg** – It is derived from the oldest fort along the Sindhudurg coast in Maharashtra and served as a naval base for the Marathas under Chhatrapati Shivaji.
- **Gulami Ki Mansikta Se Mukti** – It is an initiative termed as freedom from the mentality of slavery.
- It aims at removing vestiges of the colonial era and "Indianising" military traditions and customs.
- Additionally, Kitchener House inside Fort William has been renamed Manekshaw House, and South gate, formerly known as St. George's Gate, is now Shivaji Gate.

On the occasion of the 48th Vijay Diwas, 16th Dec 2019, it was announced that the Vijay Smarak in Fort William would be open to everyone on sundays and public holidays.

References

1. The Hindu| Fort William renamed Vijay Durg
2. Indian Culture| Fort William

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