

Param Vir Dirgha

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Governance

Why in news?

The President of India has inaugurated the 'Param Vir Dirgha' at Rashtrapati Bhavan on the occasion of 'Vijay Diwas'.

Vijay Diwas - Celebrated on **December 16**, to commemorate India's **victory over Pakistan in 1971** during the war for the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan.

- **Param Vir Dirgha** - Portraits of all 21 Param Vir Chakra awardees are now displayed **in Rashtrapati Bhavan**, replacing the previously displayed portraits of 96 British Aides-de-Camp (ADCs).
- **Purpose** -
 - To honour soldiers who displayed exceptional valour and self-sacrifice.
 - To educate visitors about India's national heroes.
 - To symbolise India's pride in its own heritage rather than colonial traditions.
- **Param Vir Chakra** - It is India's **highest military honour**, awarded for displaying the most exceptional acts of valour, courage and self-sacrifice during war.
- **Established in** - 1950, after India became a republic.
- **Recipients** - Only 21 soldiers have received the PVC since independence, across wars including 1947-48, 1965, 1971, and the Kargil War (1999).
- **Notable Awardees** -
 - Major Somnath Sharma (1947) - First recipient, for gallantry in Kashmir.
 - Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal (1971) - Honoured for bravery in the Battle of Basantar.
 - Captain Vikram Batra (1999) - Famous for his role in the Kargil War, remembered for the phrase "Yeh Dil Maange More!".

Broader Decolonisation Initiatives

- **Renaming of spaces** - Like Rajpath to Kartavya Path, Race Course Road (home to the Prime Minister's residence) to Lok Kalyan Marg, and Rashtrapati Bhavan's Mughal Garden into Amrit Udyan.
- **Military symbols** - Indian Navy's ensign has been redesigned, removing Saint George's Cross, adopting instead a design featuring the National Flag and a Navy blue-gold octagon dedicated to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

- **Ceremonial traditions** - The 2022 Republic Day Beating Retreat used Indian instruments (sitar, santoor, tabla).
- **Islands renamed** - Across India, including in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, colonial nomenclature has been replaced -
 - Ross Island - Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Dweep (2018)
 - Neil Island - Shaheed Dweep (2018)
 - Havelock Island - Swaraj Dweep (2018)
 - Port Blair - Sri Vijaya Puram (2024)

To know about other awards, click [here](#)

References

[The Hindu | President of India inaugurated the 'Param Vir Dirgha' at Rashtrapati Bhavan](#)

