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

