

NAVY'S ENSIGN PAYS TRIBUTE TO SHIVAJI

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Flying high: The new naval ensign on INS Vikrant in Kochi on Friday. THULASI KAKKAT

Moving away from the colonial past, the Indian Navy on Friday adopted a new ensign inspired by the seal of *Maratha* king Chhatrapati Shivaji. It was unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the commissioning of aircraft carrier *INS Vikrant* here.

"The President of India has approved the introduction of the new designs of the naval ensign, as also the distinguishing flags, masthead pennants and car flags for the Indian Navy," the Navy said in a statement. "Formations, ships and establishments of the Indian Navy would be adopting the new naval ensign, as also the new distinguishing flags, car flags and masthead pennants."

Devanagari script

This is the fourth time the naval ensign has been changed since 1950.

The earlier ensign had the national flag in the upper left canton, red vertical and horizontal stripes and a golden-yellow National Emblem superimposed on the intersection of the red stripes. The national motto ' *Satyamev Jayate* ' engraved in Devanagari script, was included underneath the emblem.

The statement said that resonant to the ongoing national endeavour to move away from the colonial past, the need was felt to transition to a new design that drew inspiration from the country's history.

The white ensign identified nationwide with the Navy, now comprises two main constituents — the national flag in the upper left canton and a navy blue-gold octagon at the centre of the fly side (away from the staff), it stated.

The octagon is with twin golden octagonal borders encompassing the golden National Emblem (Lion Capital of Ashoka — under scribed with ' *Satyamev Jayate* ' in blue Devanagari script) resting atop an anchor; and superimposed on a shield. Below the shield, within the octagon, in a golden-bordered ribbon on a navy blue background, is inscribed the motto of the Indian Navy ' *Sam No Varunah* ' in golden Devanagari script.

"The twin octagonal borders draw their inspiration from Shivaji Maharaj's *rajmudra* or the seal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, one of the prominent Indian kings with a visionary maritime outlook, who built a credible naval fleet that earned grudging admiration from European navies operating in the region at the time," the Navy said.

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