



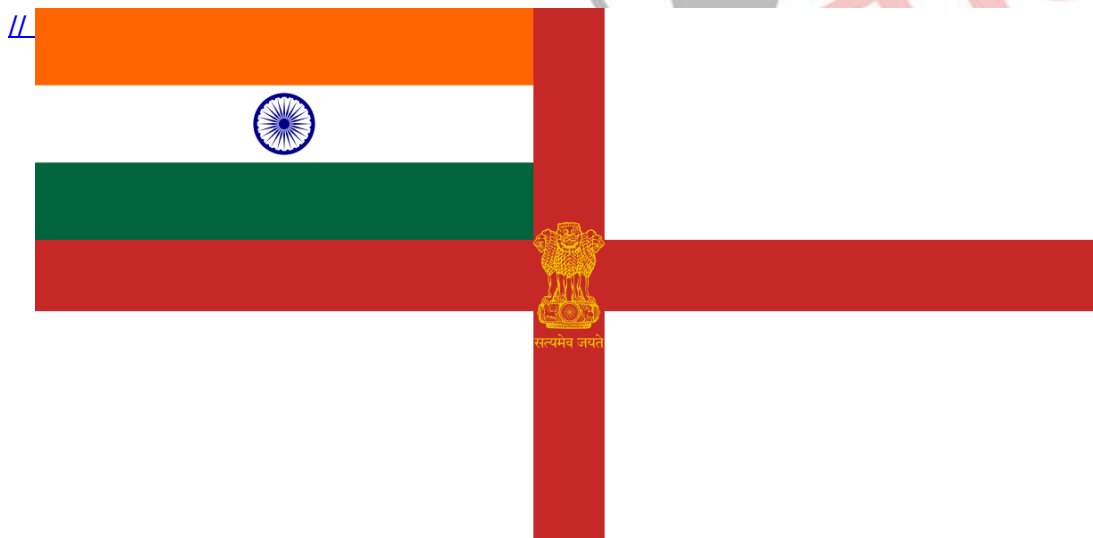
# Indian Navy Ensign

## Why in News?

The [Prime Minister](#) will unveil the new **Ensign (flag)** of the [Indian Navy](#) in Kochi to mark the launch of **India's first aircraft carrier, [INS Vikrant](#)**.

## What is Ensign?

- **About:**
  - **An Ensign** is a national flag which is displayed on ships and aircraft, often with the special insignia of a branch or unit of the armed forces.
- **Present Ensign of Indian Navy:**
  - The present ensign carries the Saint George's Cross with the Tricolour in the canton (top left corner of flag).



## What was the Need for Changing Ensign?

- **Long Pending Demand:**
  - There had been a **long pending demand for a change in the naval ensign**.
    - The original suggestion for change came from **Vice Admiral VEC Barboza who retired from the Navy as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Naval Command**.
- **To Replace the Colonial Past:**
  - The present ensign is essentially a **successor to the pre-Independence ensign of the Indian Navy which had the red George's Cross on a white background** with the Union Jack of the United Kingdom on the top left corner.
  - After Independence, on August 15, 1947, the Indian defence forces continued with the British colonial flags and badges and **it was only on Jan 26, 1950** that a changeover to Indianised pattern was made.

- The Navy crest and flag were changed but the only difference made to the flag was that **the Union Jack was replaced with the Tricolour, and George's Cross was retained.**

## How Many Times Has the Naval Ensign Changed?

- The change in naval ensign was made in 2001 when the **George's Cross was replaced with the naval crest in the middle of the white flag while the Tricolour retained its place on the top left corner.**
- Further, in 2004, **the ensign was again changed back to the Red George's Cross as there were complaints that the new flag was indistinguishable because the blue of the Navy crest merged with the skies and the sea.**
  - A change was made in the flag and the red George's Cross now had the **state emblem derived from the Lion Capital of Ashoka in the middle.**
- In 2014, yet another change was made when the words **'Satyamev Jayate' were included on the flag below the Ashoka emblem in the Devanagiri script.**



## What is Saint George's cross?

- **About:**
  - The red cross on a white background is known as the Saint George's Cross and is named after a **Christian Warrior Saint who is believed to have been a crusader during the third crusade.**
  - This cross also serves as the flag of England which is a constituent of the United Kingdom.
    - It was adopted by England and the city of London in 1190 to identify English ships entering the Mediterranean.
    - Most Commonwealth **countries retained the Red George's Cross at time of their independence**, but several have done away with it on their respective naval ensigns over the years.
      - Prominent among them are Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

[Source: IE](#)

