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ASOKA PEDESTAL TO REPLACE BRITISH CROWN
IN NAVAL CRESTS

A decision of importance has been taken and is being implemented by Naval Headquarters to replace the designs of the Naval (Tudor) Crown and the Star of India by the Asoka Pedestal and the Lotus respectively in the badges and crests of Indian Naval ships and establishments.

Every crest has a central design which varies from ship to ship and a circular surround common to all crests. This surround formerly used to be the Star of India on which was surmounted the British Naval Crown.

In the new crests, the crown has been replaced by the Asoka Pedestal which is shown supporting an end-on view of an ancient Indian ship, flanked by two views of the same ship at fine inclination. The ship design taken from a bas-relief (7th or 8th century A.D.) found in Java has been regarded for centuries as a symbol of India's maritime traditions.

Similarly, the laurel of lotus buds that takes the place of the old Star of India has been India's national floral symbol for centuries. Also symbolising creation out of water, it is one of the most popular motifs used in ancient and modern Indian art.

Four new badges have now come into force in the case of two naval shore establishments at New Delhi and Bombay known as INS INDIA and INS ANGRE respectively and two ships, INS MAGAR and INS HATHI.

The design for INS INDIA consists of a Swastika

with each

with each of its arms ending in a circle enclosing a smaller Swastika. Taken from the ancient coins of Ujjayini (modern Ujjain) this motif represents universal well-being and good relationship. The symbol also represents the spirit of India and her international outlook.

Named after the famous Mahratta Admiral, Kanhoji Angre, the badge of the Bombay naval base represents Mount Sahyadri (Western Ghats) on which is planted a Trident which was a symbol of power worshipped at the time of the resurgence of Mahratta power under Shivaji.

A fish-tailed crocodile (Magar) the mythological vehicle of Varuna, Lord of the Ocean is adopted for the badge of IN ~~landing ship Tank~~. It is taken from a Mathura sculpture of the first century A.D.

A fish-tailed elephant, a composite marine motif of early Indian art taken from a railing cross bar from Mathura (1st century A.D.) forms the main part of the badge of the Ocean Going Tug INS Hathi.

For a long time now, Naval HQ have been working on the subject of designing suitable crests and badges as subsequent to India declaring herself a Republic, old crests of newly acquired ships and some of the existing ones had to be replaced by new ones. The work involved considerable research in ancient Indian history, art and culture.

An Internal Nomenclature Committee has been formed at Naval HQ with representatives from Ministries of Defence, Education (Dept. of Archaeology) and Transport. Its function is to choose suitable names for ships and establishments and to select badges and crests for them.

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