

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING)**  
**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**THE INDIAN NAVAL ENSIGN (FLAG)**

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The origin of the Indian Navy goes back to the days of the East India Company and thereafter to the days of the British Raj. As it grew from a small harbour police outfit to a sea going combatant force, its name was changed from the original Bombay Marine to Indian Marine and later to Royal Indian Marine and Royal Indian Navy. Finally, on 25 January 1950, with India becoming a Republic, the Navy of India became the "Indian Navy". The Navy Crest and Flags were duly "Indianised" but the latter (Ensign and Distinguishing Flags) retained a touch of the British legacy, namely, the Red St. George's Cross.

During the post-colonial period whilst other ex-colonial Navies discarded this symbol in their newly adopted ensigns and Flags, the Indian Navy retained it until now. The desire for change has thus been very strong amongst the rank and file of the Navy, for several years. With the dawn of the new millennium, it was decided to Indianise the very spirit of the Indian Navy by changing the Ensign and Distinguishing Flags. 15 Aug 2001 was kept as the target date and necessary approvals were obtained with Presidential assent accorded on 30 Apr 2001. The Indian Navy is now all set to adorn its ships, submarines and establishments with the new "Indianised" Ensign and Flags.

The present design of the ensign was evolved over several months keeping in mind simplicity, commonality (with Flags of the Indian Army and Air Force) and the use of traditional colours associated with the Navy, i.e., White and Navy Blue. As in the case of the new Navy Ensign, the new distinguishing flags of senior officers will no longer display the Red St. George's Cross but in lieu will have the Navy Crest and the appropriate number of stars depicting the rank of the senior officer.

It is commonly acknowledged in Navy circles that the original idea to change the Navy's ensign came from Vice Admiral Vivian Barboza in the early 1970s. Admiral VEC Barboza retired from the Indian Navy as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command and presently lives in Bangalore.

RG/KY

New Flags available on nti [armedforces.nic.in/navy](http://armedforces.nic.in/navy)  
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