

The Indian Armed Forces Awards

From time immemorial, people have been honoured for their gallantry, excellence, outstanding service and achievements. In India, this recognition has indeed taken a number of forms, including awarding of medals and special honours.

To recognise and honour the service of the Indian defence forces, the **Indian Armed Forces awards** are given by the President of India. The conclusion of British Rule in India saw the end of the old institution of British honours and awards. The new Indian awards came into being with the dawn of the Republic on 26 January 1950.

For the purpose of classification, the Indian armed forces awards can be divided into two categories:

- **Gallantry awards**
- **Distinguished services awards**

Gallantry Awards

The prestigious 'gallantry awards' honour the deeds of gallantry and valour by members of Indian defence forces. These award can be categorised in the following manner:

- **Wartime gallantry awards**
 - Param Vir Chakra
 - Maha Vir Chakra
 - Vir Chakra
- **Peacetime gallantry awards**
 - Ashok Chakra Award
 - Kirti Chakra
 - Shaurya Chakra
- **Wartime/Peacetime service and gallantry awards**
 - Sena Medal
 - Nao Sena Medal
 - Vayusena Medal

Distinguished Service Awards

The 'distinguished service awards' enable us to honour the exceptional services rendered by our defence service personnel during war and peace times. These awards can be categorised as follows:

- **Wartime distinguished service awards**
 - Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal
 - Uttam Yudh Seva Medal
 - Yudh Seva Medal
- **Peacetime distinguished service awards**
 - Param Vishisht Seva Medal
 - Ati Vishisht Seva Medal
 - Vishisht Seva Medal

Gallantry Awards

Param Vir Chakra



Param Vir Chakra and its ribbon, the highest military decoration of India

Awarded for "Most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, in the presence of the enemy, whether on land, at sea, or in the air."



The three living recipients of the Param Vir Chakra Award: Yogendra Singh Yadav, Bana Singh and Sanjay Kumar

Design

The 'Param Vir Chakra' medal is a circular bronze disc 1.375 inches (3.49 cm) in diameter.

The state emblem appears in the center, on a raised circle. Surrounding this, lie four replicas of the 'Vajra', the all-powerful mythic weapon of Indra, the ancient Vedic King of Gods.

The motif symbolizes the sacrifice of Rishi Dadhichi, who had donated his bones to the Gods for making the 'Vajra' to kill demon Vritra.

On the rear, around a plain center, are two legends separated by lotus flowers. The words 'Param Vir Chakra' are written in Hindi and English.

A purple ribbon, 32 millimetres (1.3 in) long, holds the Param Vir Chakra.

Eligibility

Officers, men and women of all ranks of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, of any of the Reserve Forces, of the Territorial Army Militia and of any other lawfully constituted Armed Forces

Maha Vir Chakra



Maha Vir Chakra

Awarded for "... acts of gallantry in the presence of the enemy on land, at sea or in the air."

Design

The medal is made of standard silver and is circular in shape.

Embossed on the obverse is a five pointed heraldic star with circular center-piece bearing the gilded state emblem of India in the center.

The words "Mahavira Chakra" are embossed in Devanagari and English on the reverse with two lotus flowers in the middle.

The decoration is worn on the left chest with a half-white and half-orange ribbon about 3.2 cm in width, the orange being near the left shoulder.

Eligibility

Military personnel only

Vir Chakra



Vir Chakra and its ribbon, the third highest military decoration of India

Awarded for Acts of gallantry in the presence of the enemy, whether on land or at sea or in the air.

Design

The medal is a 1-3/8 inch circular silver medal.

It has a five pointed star, with the chakra in the center, and, on this, the domed gilded state emblem.

The decoration is named on the rim and suspended from a swiveling straight-bar suspender. The decoration is almost always named and dated on the edge.

Around a plain center, two legends separated by lotus flowers; above Vir Chakra in Hindi and in English.

The ribbon is 32 mm, half dark blue and half orange-saffron. Dark blue 16 mm, saffron 16 mm.

Eligibility

Military personnel only

Ashoka Chakra



Ashoka Chakra and its ribbon, the highest peacetime decoration of India

Awarded for Awarded for most conspicuous bravery, or some act of daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice otherwise than in the face of the enemy.

Design

The medal is gold-plated and circular in shape with a 1-3/8 inches diameter. In the center, it has the chakra (wheel) of Ashoka, surrounded by a lotus wreath and with an ornate edge. Suspended by a straight bar suspender. The medal is named on the edge.

On its reverse side, the medal has 'Ashoka Chakra' written in Hindi along the upper edge on the medal and the in English along the lower rim. On either side is a lotus design.

The ribbon is 32 mm in width, dark green with a 2 mm central saffron stripe.

Eligibility

- Officers, men and women of all ranks of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, of any of the Reserve Forces, of the Territorial Army, Militia and of any other lawfully constituted forces.
- Members of the Nursing Services of the Armed Forces.
- Civilian Citizens of either sex in all walks of life and members of Police Forces including Central Para-Military Forces and Railway protection Force.

Kirti Chakra



Kirti Chakra and its ribbon, the second highest peacetime decoration of India

Awarded for Awarded for conspicuous gallantry otherwise than in the face of the enemy.

Design

The medal is circular in shape and is made of standard silver, one and three eight inches in diameter. On the obverse of the medal is embossed with a replica of Ashoka Chakra in the centre, surrounded by a lotus wreath. On its reverse it is embossed the words 'Kirti Chakra', both in Hindi and in English, both the versions being separated by two lotus flowers.

The ribbon is 30 mm in width, dark green with two 2 mm saffron stripes.

Eligibility

- Officers, men and women of all ranks of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, of any of the Reserve Forces, of the Territorial Army, Militia and of any other lawfully constituted forces.
- Members of the Nursing Services of the Armed Forces.
- Civilian Citizens of either sex in all walks of life and members of Police Forces including Central Para-Military Forces and Railway protection Force.

Shaurya Chakra



Shaurya Chakra and its ribbon, the third highest peacetime decoration of India

Awarded for Awarded for gallantry otherwise than in the face of the enemy.

Design

The medal is made of bronze and is circular in shape with 1-3/8 inches in diameter. In the centre, the chakra (wheel) of Ashoka is surrounded by a lotus wreath, with an ornate edge. The medal is suspended by a straight bar suspender. On the reverse side, the medal is named on the edge as 'Shaurya Chakra' in Hindi and English.

The ribbon is 30 mm in width, dark green with three 2 mm orange stripes.

Eligibility

- Officers, men and women of all ranks of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, of any of the Reserve Forces, of the Territorial Army, Militia and of any other lawfully constituted forces.
- Members of the Nursing Services of the Armed Forces.
- Civilian Citizens of either sex in all walks of life and members of Police Forces including Central Para-Military Forces and Railway protection Force.

Sena Medal



Sena Medal and its ribbon

Awarded for "Awarded for such individual acts of exceptional devotion to duty or courage as have special significance for the Army."

Design

The medal is made of silver and is circular in shape. On the obverse side, it has a bayonet, pointing upwards.

On the reverse side, it has a standing soldier with the legend in Hindi 'Sena Medal' above. The medal is suspended by a straight-bar suspender and is named on the edge. The medal is also often dated on the edge as well.

The ribbon is 32 mm in width, red, with a 2 mm white central stripe.

Eligibility

All ranks of the army.

Nausena Medal



Medal and its ribbon

Awarded for "Awarded for such individual acts of exceptional devotion to duty or courage as have special significance for the Navy."

Design

The medal is a 35-mm circular silver medal with the naval crest (a naval crown) on the obverse. The medal is suspended by an ornate straight-bar and is named and usually dated on the edge.

On the reverse side, the medal has crossed anchors, partially surrounded by a chain cable, with 'Nao Sena Medal' written in Hindi.

The ribbon is 32 mm in width, dark blue with a 2 mm white central strips.

Eligibility

All ranks of the Navy.

Vayu Sena Medal



Medal and its ribbon

Awarded for Awarded for such individual acts of exceptional devotion to duty or courage as have special significance for the Air Force.

Design

The medal is a four-armed silver star with the points shaped like lotus blooms. In the centre, lies the national emblem. The medal is suspended by a straight bar suspender and normally named and dated on the edge.

On the reverse side, the medal has a Himalayan Eagle with its wings spread, and the legend, above and below, in Hindi 'Vayu Sena Medal' or 'Air Force Medal'.

The ribbon is 30 mm in width, with alternating 2 mm diagonal (lower left to upper right) stripes of grey and orange-saffron. The ribbon has an overall "woven" appearance.

Eligibility

All ranks of the Air Force.

Distinguished Services Awards



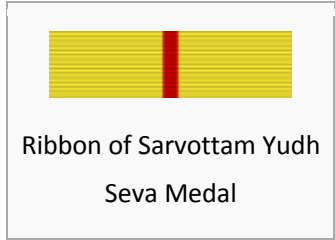
**Sarvottam Yudh
Seva Medal**



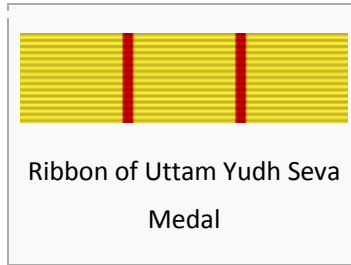
**Uttam Yudh
Seva Medal**



**Yudh Seva
Medal**



Ribbon of Sarvottam Yudh
Seva Medal



Ribbon of Uttam Yudh Seva
Medal



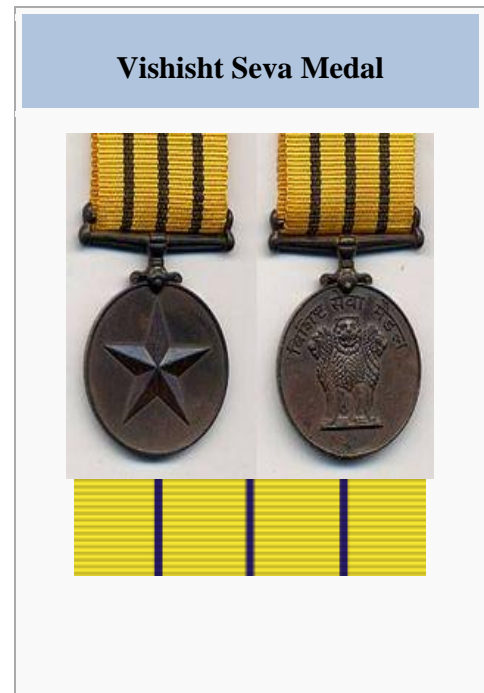
Ribbon of Yudh Seva
Medal



Param Vishisht Seva Medal



Ati Vishisht Seva Medal



Vishisht Seva Medal