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## Current Affairs - 17 December 2025

### WHAT IS PARAM VIR CHAKRA?



- It is **India's highest military decoration**, awarded for displaying the most exceptional acts of valour, courage, and self-sacrifice during war.
- It was introduced on **January 26, 1950**, on the first Republic Day with retrospective effect from 15 August 1947.
- **Literally**, Param Vir Chakra means '**Wheel (or Cross) of the Ultimate Brave**'.
- It can be awarded to 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.
- It can be, and often has been, awarded **posthumously**.
- **Design:**
  - The medal was designed by Mrs. Savitri Khanolkar.
  - The medal is **cast in bronze** and **circular** in shape.
  - In the centre, on a raised circle, is the state emblem, surrounded by four replicas of Indra's Vajra, flanked by the sword of Shivaji.
  - On its reverse, it has embossed **Param Vir Chakra both in Hindi and English** with lotus flowers.
- **First winner: Major Somanth Sharma**, from the **Kumaon regiment**.
- **Till now, only 21 people** had been given the Param Vir Chakra award, of which 14 are posthumous.

### What are Gallantry Awards?

- They have been instituted by the Government of India to **honour the acts of bravery and sacrifice of the officers/personnel of the Armed Forces**, other lawfully constituted forces, and **civilians**.



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- They are **announced twice in a year** – first on the occasion of the **Republic Day** and then on the occasion of the **Independence Day**.
- All the gallantry awards **may be awarded posthumously**.
- India's Gallantry Awards in the **Order of Precedence**:
  - **Param Vir Chakra**
  - **Ashoka Chakra**
  - **Mahavir Chakra**
  - **Kirti Chakra**
  - **Vir Chakra**
  - **Shaurya Chakra**.
- The **President** awards the gallantry awards to the awardees or their next of kin at the **Defence Investiture Ceremony** held every year at the **Rashtrapati Bhawan**.
- However, the **Param Vir Chakra** and the **Ashoka Chakra** are conferred by the President to the awardees on the **occasion of the Republic Day Parade at the Rajpath**.

### WHAT IS NATYASHASTRA?



#### NATYASHASTRA

- It is an **ancient Sanskrit treatise on performing arts**.
- The **title** is a combination of two Sanskrit words – **Natya** and **Shastra**.
  - **Natya** refers to the technique of **dance and drama**, and **shastra** refers to **science**.
- It was **composed** by the sage **Bharata Muni**.
- It has been dated to between the **second century BCE** and the **second century CE**.
- It is the **earliest known treatise on performative arts in South Asia**.
- It comprises verses **detailing drama (natya), performance (abhinaya), music (sangita), emotions (bhava), and aesthetic experience (rasa)**.
- One of the text's most profound contributions is the articulation of the **concept of Rasa**, the essential emotional essence that lies at the heart of any great work of art.



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- Bharata Muni **identified eight primary Rasas** - Shringara (love), Hasya (humor), Karuna (compassion), Raudra (anger), Veera (heroism), Bhayanaka (fear), Bibhatsa (disgust), and Adbhuta (wonder).
- He also **explained how the skilled performer**, through the skillful deployment of bhava (emotional expression), **could evoke these sentiments in the audience**.
- **UNESCO added Natyashastra to its Memory of the World Register**, recognizing its global cultural significance.

### Key Facts about Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA):

- It was established as an **autonomous body** by the Government of India, under the **Ministry of Culture**.
  - **Mandate:**
    - **Document, preserve, conserve and disseminate the Indian arts and cultural heritage.**
    - **Train competent professionals** to work in the specialized field of culture.
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### NATIONAL DIGITAL LIVESTOCK MISSION



National Digital  
Livestock Mission

- It was launched by the **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying**, Government of India for creating a **digital database of livestock and related services** across the country.
- **Aims:** To enhance **livestock productivity and breed improvement**, strengthen disease surveillance and control, enable traceability of livestock products and create a farmer-centric **digital ecosystem for efficient service delivery**.
- It has been implemented **across all States in India**.
- **key objectives of the NDLM:**
  - **Improving breeding outcomes** suited to India's diverse agro-climatic conditions.
  - Enabling **real-time disease monitoring** and control, and establishing a **robust traceability mechanism** for livestock products.



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- The mission also focuses on **empowering farmers by providing easy access to information on government schemes and livestock-related services.**
  - The digital backbone of the mission is the **‘Bharat Pashudhan’ platform.**
    - **Bharat Pashudhan’ platform** includes mobile and web-based applications used by field workers **to record livestock-related activities.**
    - Under this each animal is assigned a **unique 12-digit bar-coded ear tag**, which serves as its digital identity.
    - Using this system, field workers **capture data on animal registration**, artificial insemination and breeding, ownership changes, vaccinations, disease reporting, milk recording, ration balancing and e-prescriptions.
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### EKAM AI AND SAMBHAV



#### About Ekam AI:

- It is a fully **indigenous and secure artificial intelligence platform** designed for sensitive environments.
- **Features of Ekam AI:**
  - It enables users to **analyse information, manage documents**, and support decision-making without dependence on foreign software or external cloud systems.
  - It allows personnel at different levels to **leverage AI-enabled support** without requiring specialised technical expertise.
- **Significance:** It ensures **complete data security and sovereignty**. It also marks a significant step towards building trusted national digital systems.

#### About SAMBHAV:

- It is a **portable communication system** that provides **mobile connectivity using satellite support.**



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- **Features:** The system can be **deployed quickly in remote or disaster-affected areas**, improving communication for both soldiers and civilians.
- **Significance:** The project highlights how defence innovation can also strengthen national communication infrastructure.

### What is Vijay Diwas?

- Vijay Diwas is commemorated on **December 16 every year** to honor the victory of the Indian armed forces **over Pakistan in the 1971 war** which led to the **liberation of Bangladesh**.



### DHRUV64

- It is a **fully indigenously developed microprocessor**.
- It is developed by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** under the **Microprocessor Development Programme (MDP)**.
- **Key Features of DHRUV64:**
  - **Processor Core & Speed:** It is a **64-bit dual-core processor running at 1.0 GHz**, giving it the ability to handle multiple tasks smoothly.
  - **Execution Method:** It uses **superscalar execution**, which allows the processor to start more than one instruction in the same moment for better speed.
  - **Instruction Handling:** It supports **out-of-order processing**, meaning it can complete instructions that are ready first, improving overall efficiency.
  - **Packaging & Integration:** It includes **built-in communication** and control functions inside an advanced **FCBGA package**, making the chip **compact and ready for use in many systems**.
- **Potential application of DHRUV64:**
  - It is capable of supporting **strategic and commercial applications**.
  - It is suitable for sectors such as **5G infrastructure, automotive systems, consumer electronics, industrial automation and the Internet of Things (IoT)**.
  - It **supports prototype development** for new system architectures at lower cost.



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### SABKA BIMA SABKI RAKSHA BILL 2025 - STRENGTHENING INSURANCE REGULATION

- India's insurance sector plays a critical role in financial security, risk mitigation, and long-term savings.
- Despite steady growth in insurance penetration, the sector has faced persistent challenges such as mis-selling of policies, opaque commission structures, weak enforcement against intermediaries, and delays in grievance redressal.
- The new Bill seeks to address these gaps by strengthening IRDAI's legal authority and enforcement mechanisms.

#### Overview of the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha Bill, 2025

- The Bill proposes amendments to existing insurance laws to give IRDAI **stronger supervisory, investigative, and enforcement powers**.
- It marks a shift from a largely compliance-based regulatory model to a more proactive enforcement-driven framework.
- The proposed changes apply not only to insurance companies but also to a wide range of **insurance intermediaries**, including agents, brokers, corporate agents (such as banks and NBFCs), web aggregators, third-party administrators (TPAs), surveyors, and insurance marketing firms.

#### Expanded Search and Seizure Powers

- A key feature of the Bill is granting the **IRDAI Chairperson the authority to order searches, seizures, and inspections**.
- These powers can be exercised when there is reason to believe that regulated entities are:
  - Withholding or concealing information,
  - Failing to produce the required documents, or
  - Attempting to tamper with or destroy records.
- The Chairperson may authorise senior officers to enter premises, inspect documents, seize records, and even break open locks if keys are unavailable.



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### Stronger Enforcement and Penalty Framework

- The Bill also empowers IRDAI to **disgorge wrongful gains** made by insurers or intermediaries through illegal practices such as excess commissions, rebates, or mis-selling.
- Further, IRDAI will have enhanced authority to issue binding directions to insurers in the public interest.
- These directions may be aimed at protecting policyholders, preventing mismanagement, or ensuring sound corporate governance.
- While insurers will be given an opportunity to be heard, compliance with such directions will be mandatory.

### Regulation of Commissions and Intermediaries

- Another significant provision relates to tighter control over **commissions and remuneration** paid to agents and intermediaries. IRDAI will be empowered to:
  - Prescribe commission limits,
  - Mandate disclosure norms, and
  - Regulate payment structures.
- The objective is to curb mis-selling driven by high commissions and ensure that policyholder interests remain central to insurance distribution.
- This is particularly important in the context of growing digital and fintech-led insurance platforms.

### Challenges and Way Forward

- While the Bill strengthens regulation, concerns may arise regarding **excessive concentration of powers** and the need for safeguards against arbitrary use.
- Effective implementation will depend on transparency, due process, and institutional capacity within IRDAI.
- Going forward, regulatory reforms must be complemented by consumer awareness, digital literacy, and faster dispute resolution mechanisms to ensure inclusive insurance growth.



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### INDIA AND THE U.S.: 2005 VERSUS 2025

- The trajectory of India–United States relations over the past two decades reflects a fundamental shift in American strategic thinking.
- In 2005, the relationship was **anchored in confidence**, optimism, and a belief that the rise of responsible powers strengthened the global order.
- By contrast, the 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) reveals a more inward-looking America, focused on minimising burdens and reassuring itself of relevance.
- This transformation carries significant **implications for India’s strategic choices** and expectations.

### **India Reframed: From Strategic End to Tactical Means**

- This intellectual shift is most visible in the treatment of India. Cooperation remains important, but it is **explicitly instrumental**.
- India is framed less as a civilisational power with intrinsic value and more as a **component of America’s China-balancing strategy**, particularly within the Indo-Pacific and the Quad framework.
- **In 2005, India’s rise was a strategic objective; in 2025, it is a strategic function.** This narrowing reflects a broader retreat from internationalist confidence.
- The assertion of unilateral autonomy and hemispheric exclusivity highlights an irony: **strategic autonomy** once questioned when articulated by India is now embraced by the U.S. and labelled realism.

### **Conclusion**

- **The era of widening horizons** that enabled the civil nuclear breakthrough has given way to contracting American ambition and expanding Indian responsibility.
- India’s emergence as a major world power will depend not on external sponsorship but on **its own strategic confidence and material capacity** in a fragmented global order.
- India’s challenge is not to fill a vacuum but **to craft a role aligned with its scale, interests, and civilisational temperament.**



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### KEY FACTS ABOUT AH-64E APACHE ATTACK HELICOPTER



- It is the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopter.
  - It is widely used for advanced reconnaissance, precision strikes, and close air support missions globally.
  - **Country of Origin: United States of America**
  - **Manufacturer: Boeing**
  - It is also known as the **Apache Guardian**.
  - The AH-64E attack helicopter is the **latest version of the Apache used by the US Army**.
  - **Other purchasers: India, Egypt, Greece, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Kuwait, Netherlands, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, UAE, and UK.**
  - **Apache for Indian defence forces: The Indian Air Force has a fleet of 22 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters.**
  - **Features:**
    - Max Speed: 300 kph
    - It is a **heavily armed, twin-engine ground-attack helicopter**.
    - Armed with **Hellfire missiles**, chain gun, the helicopter can **engage tanks, vehicles, troop concentrations, communications** and logistics centres, etc.
    - It can also fire **short-range air-to-air missiles like the Stinger**.
    - The AH-64E includes a new **integrated infrared laser** that allows for **easier target designation** and enhanced infrared imagery that blends infrared and **night vision capabilities**.
    - It can track up to 128 targets per minute and prioritise threat levels.
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