

Veer Gatha 2.0 Felicitation Ceremony on 25 January 2023

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh felicitated the 25 winners of Veer Gatha 2.0 at an event organised in New Delhi on 25 January 2023. Shri Rajnath Singh gave the winners a cash prize of Rs 10,000, a medal and a certificate. The event was attended by top dignities from various ministries and defence forces. Minister of Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Ajay Bhatt along with Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, PVSM AVSM VM ADC, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar, VSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Pande, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, and Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane were also present. Over 100 NCC cadets and students from Army Public Schools & Cantonment Boards were in attendance, with students and teachers from over 500 schools joining virtually. The event was also attended by the Gallantry Awards Portal (GAP) Project team from the USI.

Veer Gatha 2.0 is the second edition of project Veer Gatha. The Government of India launched "Veer Gatha Project" as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav under which government has been introducing several events to mark 75th year of India's independence. The project was envisioned to disseminate the acts of bravery and the life stories of the Gallantry Awards Winners among the students and instill among them a spirit of patriotism and pride in the sacrifices of our valiant awardees.

The Ministry of Defence in conjunction with the Ministry of Education initiated the project where the school students are motivated to do projects/activities based on gallantry award winners. In pursuance of the Veergatha the students undertook different projects on these gallantry award winners and the best projects were awarded nationally by MoD and Ministry of Education on the occasion. In the second edition of the Veer Gatha 19,53,676 number of students, and 14472 number of schools participated.

The Veer Gatha initiative flows from the gallantry awards portal of the Ministry of Defence which is presently maintained by the Centre For Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS) at the USI. This is an online portal dedicated to the gallantry award winners bestowed since independence and was launched by the PM of India in 2017. The PM had articulated the vision of the govt as nation building where every individual is involved. As a diverse country with multi ethnicity and culture the essence of plurality in India is bound by the thread of nationalism. The vision statement is identified is to transform India into a strong nation by enhancing patriotic and civic consciousness of our citizen using digital technology. This project was handed over to the USI in December 2021 and was given impetus by Shri Ajay Kumar, the former Defence Secretary.

The primary responsibility of the USI GAP team is content generations in the forms of write-ups on wars, battles and operations, profiles of awardees, graphic plates, audio-visual contents and handling the GAP social media platforms. The project researchers have compiled comprehensive data on major wars and conflicts fought by India since its independence. The details have been verified from published sources such as citations, military history accounts, regimental histories as well as personal interactions with the individuals and their families in order to create a rich online repository that caters as a source for scholars working in the field of military history as well as an informative platform that is accessible to everyone. The GAP

project acts as a technology and content partner for transforming the portal. It has developed and managed the portal to celebrate valour of Armed Forces in India and provides a wholesome experience to the users. It involves in creating holistic data bank of easy to access audio visual content. Most importantly, it identifies and engages various stakeholders including Bal and Yuva Shakti, Veterans, War Heroes, and their Kin as well as research and media community.

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri commended their bravery, zeal and creativity, and expressed confidence that the young generation will provide a new and better direction not only to themselves but also to the society and the Nation. Applauding the role of Veer Gatha in inspiring values of patriotism in the young students, Shri Rajnath Singh said, such projects will play a crucial role in infusing values of morality and bravery along with education among students. In the recent past, the Government has taken several steps, which will help in the all-round development of our children in the coming times, he added.

Highlighting the growing popularity of Veer Gatha, Shri Rajnath Singh said, in such a short span of time this project has gained immense popularity, and has become a movement in itself.

Thanking the Ministry of Defence for conceptualizing the Veer Gatha project, Minister of Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan emphasized that the joint efforts of both the ministries are moving in the right direction, as it has generated immense interest amongst students of all age groups across the country.

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan said the Veer Gatha project is perfectly in tune with the aims and aspirations of the National Educational Policy 2020 and has been re-emphasized by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi himself through Panch Prann – to take pride in our history and culture. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan also called for integrating the stories of gallantry award winners in the school curriculum to inspire students.

On the occasion, Param Vir Chakra Awardee Subedar Major Sanjay Kumar narrated his real-life story of the Kargil war where he overcame all odds and played a crucial role in India's historic victory. He encouraged the children to take inspiration from the courageous soldiers who selflessly serve the motherland without caring for personal safety.



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