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1. Many first at the 73rd Republic Day 2022 (Jan. 27, 2022)

President Ram Nath Kovind led the nation in celebrating the 73rd Republic day 2022 celebration at the Raj Path in New Delhi.

This year republic day celebrations are part of the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" celebration of the Government of India to commemorate 75 years of Indian Independence.

Highlights of the Republic day ceremony 2022:

- There were no foreign guests at the ceremony like in 2021 due to the corona pandemic.
- From this year the Republic day celebration started on 23 and will end on 30 January. Earlier it started on 24 and ended on 29 January. 23 January is celebrated as Parakram Day on the birth anniversary of Subhash Chandra Bose and 30 January is the Martyr's day to mark the assassination of Gandhiji.
- This year construction workers, sanitation workers, frontline workers and auto rickshaw drivers were invited as a special guest.
- Eco-friendly invitation cards with seeds of medicinal plants such as Aloe Vera, Ashwagandha and Amla have also been sent to invitees
- For the first time 480 dancers performed on the Rajpath who have been selected through a nationwide Vande Bharatham dance competition.
- The parade saw the launch of '**Shaheedon Ko Shat Shat Naman**' programme by National Cadet and a display of ten scrolls each of 75 metres prepared during the 'Kala Kumbh' event.
- Due to Covid restriction only 21 tableaux were allowed at the parade. 12 tableaux were of State and Union Territories and nine of the Ministries and Department. The tableaux of Meghalaya, Gujarat, Goa, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra participated in the parade.
- Flight Lieutenant **Shivangi Singh**, the country's first Rafale pilot, was a part of the Indian Air Force (IAF) that featured in the Republic Day parade.
- The finale of the Republic day parade was the spectacular 75 aircraft fly past by the Indian Air Force. It included Rafale, Sukhoi-30s, Jaguars etc. fighter jets and helicopters of the Indian Air Force. **17 Jaguar fighter jets formed 75 formations to commemorate the 75th Independence Day of India.**
- **The military horse Virat retired after the parade.** It was the 13 and final appearance of the Virat on the rajpath as the commandant of the President Bodyguard cavalry. The President, Prime Minister and Defence Minister personally patted the horse as a mark of respect.
- The beating retreat ceremony will be held on 29 January which will feature 1000 drones developed by IIT Delhi startup " Botlab Dynamics", and supported by the Department of Science and Technology. **India will become the fourth country in the world after China, US and Russia to conduct a drone show on such a scale.**
- A number of new tunes have been added to the ceremony to celebrate 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. These include 'Kerala', 'Hind ki Sena' and 'Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon'. The event will come to a close with the ever-popular tune of 'Sare Jahan se Acha'.
- The parade was commanded by Parade Commander, Lieutenant General Vijay Kumar Mishra.

2. Amar Jawan Jyoti merged with National War Memorial Flame (Jan. 21, 2022)

After burning for 50 years, the eternal flame of Amar Jawan Jyoti at the India Gate lawns will be merged with the National War Memorial Flame forever. The decision was taken after it was found that the upkeep of two flames is becoming increasingly difficult.

- The torch was merged with the National War Memorial's torch at a programme on 21st January, 2022 days ahead of Republic Day.
- The ceremony was presided over by the Integrated Defence Staff chief, Air Marshal Balabhadra Radha Krishna.

National War Memorial

The National War Memorial was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February 2019.

- All military ceremonial events that took place at the India Gate were shifted there after the inauguration.
- The National War Memorial also has the names of all the Indian defence personnel who have lost their lives in different operations from the 1947-48 war with Pakistan to the clash with Chinese troops at Galwan valley.
- The eternal flame is positioned below the central 15.5 m obelisk.
- There are four concentric circles - the "Amar Chakra", "Veerta Chakra", "Tyag Chakra" and the "Rakshak Chakra", where the names of 25,942 soldiers are inscribed on granite tablets in golden letters.
- The memorial also includes six bronze murals depicting the famous battles fought by the Indian Army, Air Force and the Navy in a covered gallery in the Veerta Chakra.

India Gate

The India Gate was built by the British government in the memory of the soldiers of the British Indian Army who died in the First World War between 1914 and 1921. In 1972, the Amar Jawan Jyoti was lit in memory of the Indian soldiers who died in the 1971 war with Pakistan.

3. Monumental National flag of Khadi was put along the India-Pakistan border at Longewala, Jaisalmer (Jan. 15, 2022)

The Monumental National Flag, which is the world's largest national flag made of Khadi fabric was put to a grand public display along the **India - Pakistan Border at Longewala in Jaisalmer** on the occasion of **74th Indian Army Day on 15th January 2022**. Longewala was the center stage of the historic battle between India and Pakistan in 1971.

- This is the 5th public display of the National flag since it's unveiling in Leh on 2nd October 2021.
- Earlier the khadi National flag was displayed in Hindon Airbase on the occasion of Air Force Day on 8th October 2021 and at Red Fort on 21st October 2021.
- On 4th October 2021, it was displayed at the Naval Dockyard near Gateway of India to celebrate Indian Navy Day.

The monumental national flag symbolizes the collective spirit of Indian-ness and the heritage artisanal craft of Khadi and is the brainchild of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) to celebrate 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav-75 Years of Independence'.

4. Indian Army to introduce climate-friendly combat uniform on Indian Army Day (Jan. 15, 2022)

Army Day in India is celebrated on 15th January, every year to pay homage to our gallant soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice to protect the sovereignty of our Motherland. This year's Army Day celebration has a new element. The Indian Army is all set to introduce a light and more climate-friendly combat uniform for its personnel.

All you need to know about the new Combat Uniform:

- The Indian Army has developed its new combat uniform with the help of the **National Institute of Fashion and Technology (NIFT)**.
- The new uniform's **digital disruptive pattern** will provide Army personnel with increased field camouflage.
- Some modifications have been done in order to make the new combat uniform more comfortable for women.

5. National News (Dec. 12, 2021)

1. Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates centennial year celebration of the PAC

- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the centennial year celebration of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in the Central Hall of Parliament on **4th December**. The PAC is one of the most powerful financial committees of Parliament.
- The Committee on Public Accounts is the oldest Parliamentary Committee and was first constituted in 1921.
- The Committee consists of 22 Members, 15 Members are elected by Lok Sabha and 7 Members of the Rajya Sabha are associated with it.

2. PM inaugurated Vyasi Hydroelectric Project

- The Prime Minister inaugurated the 120 MW Vyasi Hydroelectric Project, built over Yamuna river at the cost of over 1,700 crore rupees.
- Located in Dehradun district and **operated by Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited**, the Vyasi power project is a run-of-the-river scheme on the Yamuna.

3. India's first privately build Cryogenic Engine

- Hyderabad based Skyroot Aerospace successfully tested Dhawan1, thus making it country's first privately developed, fully cryogenic rocket engine.
- The Cryogenic engine has been named after Satish Dhawan, who was the third chairman of ISRO. He pioneered the development of advanced space launch capabilities of India.
- It runs on two high performance rocket propellants — liquid natural gas (LNG) and liquid oxygen (LoX).

4. 57th Raising Day of BSF held at Jaisalmer

- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah addressed the 57th Raising Day celebrations of the Border Security Force in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

5. Anemia in Children: leading to child growth failure

According to the 5th report of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) of 2019-2021, a higher proportion of children aged 6 to 59 months have been found to be anaemic compared to NFHS-4 (2015-2016).

Highlights:

- The share of anaemic children in NFHS-5 (2019-21) increased by 8.5% points compared to NFHS-4 (2015-16) and was closer to levels of NFHS-3 (2005-2006).
- In 30 out of 36 states/UT's one half the children in age group 6-59 months are found to be anaemic.
- Assam, Mizoram and Chattisgarh recorded the highest increases.
- Gujarat had the highest share of children (79.7%) who were anaemic.

6. Russian President Visit to India

Russian President **Vladimir Putin visited India on 6th December for the 21st India - Russia Annual summit with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.**

- first in-person meeting between Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi after their meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Brasilia in November 2019.
- After their meeting in New Delhi both the **country issued a Joint Declaration titled “India-Russia: Partnership for Peace, Progress and Prosperity”**
- The two countries signed **28 agreements, including 9 government-to-government agreements** and those that spanned areas of defence, space, finance, power, culture, scientific research, education and health among others.

7. Maitri Diwas

India and Bangladesh celebrate 6 December as Maitri diwas to commemorate the recognition of the day when India recognised Bangladesh as an Independent country.

- The war to liberate Bangladesh began on December 3, 1971 and ended with the signing of the Instrument of Surrender by Pakistani General A.A.K. Niazi on December 16.

8. India Crosses Covid Vaccination Milestone

- Half of the eligible population(18 Years and above) in the country is now fully vaccinated against COVID.
- In total, 85% of the eligible adult population has now received the first dose, while 50.35% are fully vaccinated.

9. Government has constituted Tribal Advisory Council in all states having Scheduled Areas

Tribes Advisory Council (TAC) have been constituted in 10(Ten) states having Scheduled Areas there namely Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.

10. India adds Ghana and Tanzania in the list of “at-risk” countries

Countries in Europe, including the U.K., and South Africa, Brazil, Botswana, China, Ghana, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Hong Kong, Singapore, Tanzania and Israel have been placed in the “at risk” category.

- Passengers from “**at-risk**” countries have to follow additional COVID-19 testing and quarantine measures.

11. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and 12 others killed in Chopper Crash

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India’s first **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Laxman Singh Rawat, his wife Madhulika Rawat, an army Brigadier, Lieutenant, Wing Commander, Squadron Leader and 7 others were killed in a chopper crash in Coonoor, Tamil Nadu.**

- The helicopter Mi-17-V5 had taken off from Sulur Air Force base in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu to the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Tamil Nadu to address the faculty and student officers of the ‘Staff Course’.

IAF has ordered tri-service investigation into chopper crash

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has ordered a tri-service investigation led by Air Marshal Manavendra Singh, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Training Command, in the Mi 17 V5 chopper crash in Tamil Nadu.

Black box of the ill-fated chopper has been recovered by the investigation team.

12. Cabinet Nod for Ken-Betwa River Linking Project

The Union Cabinet approved the funding and implementation of the Ken-Betwa river interlinking project. It is the first out of the 30 projects of the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers.

Highlights-

- Benefit Water Starved Districts of the Bundelkhand region of MP and UP like Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri and Raisen of Madhya Pradesh, and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi and Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh,
- The total cost of the project Rs 44,605 crore at the 2020-21 price level. The Centre would fund Rs 39,317 crore for the project, with Rs 36,290 crore as a grant and Rs 3,027 crore as a loan.
- The project is slated to irrigate 10.62 lakh hectares annually, provide drinking water supply to 62 lakh people and generate 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar power.
- The project will partly submerge the Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh and affect the habitat of vultures and jackals, which is the major environmental and wildlife concern hindering the progress of the project for all these years.
- The two states signed a tripartite agreement with the Centre on World Water Day (22nd March) to finally implement this ambitious project.

13. Human Rights Violation Data by Ministry of Home Affairs

According to data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs to the Rajya Sabha on 8th December 2021, around **40% of human rights violation cases** lodged annually by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in the past three financial years till this October 31 **were from Uttar Pradesh.**

- ***Current Chairman of the NHRC : Justice Arun Kumar Mishra***

14. Bills on Assisted Reproductive Technology, surrogacy passed

- The Rajya Sabha passed two Bills to regulate and supervise assisted reproductive technology clinics and surrogacy on December 8.
- The Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021 was passed by the Lok Sabha on December 1. It was passed by a voice vote in the Upper House

15. Only 56% Funds of Poshan Abhiyaan Used

- State Governments and Union Territories utilized only 56% of the total funds released under the Poshan Abhiyan or Nutrition Mission in the past three years.
- Out of a total amount of Rs, 5,312 crores disbursed by the Centre between financial years 2019 to 2021, a sum of Rs 2,985 crores was utilized.

16. International flights to be resumed after 31st Jan. 2022

Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced on 09th December that full resumption of international flights stands postponed at least till January 31, 2022.\

17. Government of India extends PMGAY-G till March 2024

The Government of India has extended the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin(PMAY-G) beyond March 2021 till March 2024 so as to provide financial assistance for the construction of the remaining 155.75 lakh houses under the scheme.

18. Rajya Sabha passes Pharma Education Bill

Rajya Sabha passed the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021 which amends the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research Act, 1998.

19. No proposal under consideration to scrap Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)

Stating the Government of India position ,Law Minister Kiren Rijju informed the Lok Sabha that the section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code(IPC) 1860 which deals with sedition in sub -judice before the Supreme Court and the government has no intention of scrapping the section.

20. India co-chairs Global Methane Initiative Steering Leadership Meeting

A Steering Leadership meeting of Global Methane Initiative (GMI) has been held virtually in which the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal, V.K. Tiwari as the Vice Chairman of this global initiative informed the participants about the work being carried out by India to mitigate the emission of methane.

6. President Kovind presents Vir Chakra, Kirti Chakra and Shaurya Chakra: (Nov. 23, 2021)

Why in the news?

Recently, President Ram Nath Kovind presented Gallantry Awards and Distinguished Service Decorations in Defence Investiture Ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Key highlights:

- Gallantry Awards have been instituted by the Government of India to honour the acts of bravery and sacrifice of the officers/personnel of the Armed Forces as well as other lawfully constituted forces and civilians.
- The order of precedence of these awards is **Vir Chakra, Kirti Chakra and Shaurya Chakra**.
- These gallantry awards are announced twice in a year, first on the occasion of the Republic Day and on the occasion of the Independence Day.
- During the awards ceremony, President Kovind accorded several gallantry awards like the Shaurya Chakra, Kirti Chakra and the Vir Chakra.
- The Vir Chakra was conferred to Balakot Airstrike hero Indian Air Force **Wing Commander (now Group Captain) Abhinandan Varthaman**.
- President Kovind accorded the Shaurya Chakra (posthumously) to **Naib Subedar Sombir for killing an A++ category** terrorist during an operation in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Major Vibhuti Shankar Dhoundiyal** was also accorded the Shaurya Chakra (posthumously).
- President Ram Nath Kovind accorded the second-highest peacetime gallantry award Kirti Chakra (posthumously) to **Sapper Prakash Jadhav from the Corps of Engineers**.
- President Kovind also conferred the Shaurya Chakra gallantry award to **Major Maheshkumar Bhure** who is an alumnus of Sainik School Satara.

Param Vir Chakra:

- Param Vir Chakra or PVC is India's highest military decoration which is awarded for most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, in the presence of an enemy, whether on land, at sea or in the air.
- It was introduced on **26 January, 1950** on the first Republic Day.
- This award may be given posthumously.
- 'Param Vir Chakra'. In Sanskrit, **Param means Ultimate, Vir (Pronounced as Veer) which means Brave and Chakra means wheel**.
- **First awarded: to Maj.Somnath Sharma**.

'Kirti Chakra:

- It is an Indian military decoration awarded for bravery, self-sacrifice away from the field of battle.
- Kirti Chakra may be awarded to civilians as well, in addition to the military personnel.
- Kirti Chakra is the second-highest peacetime decoration of India and is equivalent to Maha Vir Chakra.
- **On January 4, 1952**, Kirti Chakra was established as the '**Ashoka Chakra, Class II**' by the then President of India, w.e.f. from August 15, 1947. **On January 27, 1967, the decoration was renamed as 'Kirti Chakra'**.

Shaurya Chakra:

- It is an Indian military decoration awarded for gallantry, otherwise than in the face of the enemy.
- It may be awarded to civilians, also as military personnel, sometimes posthumously.
- **On 4 January, 1952**, it was established as the Ashoka Chakra, Class III by the Government of India, with effect from **15 August, 1947**.

On 27 January, 1967, the decoration was renamed as 'Shaurya Chakra' awarded for gallantry.