

Firsts in 70th Republic Day Celebrations 2019

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was the chief guest of 70th Republic Day of India

The theme of the 70th Republic Day parade was 'life of Gandhi' which is a tribute to the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary. A total of 22 tableaux in the parade showcased the Mahatma Gandhi theme.

70th Republic Day parade had the highest number of women officers participating in the celebrations with Lt. Bhavana Kasturi leading a contingent of 144 male personnel. This is the first time in the history of Indian Army that a woman lead the Army services corps.

An all-women contingent of Assam Rifles, India's oldest paramilitary force, participated for the first time. The contingent was opened for women in 2012 and competed to win the best marching contingent trophy.

The weapons which were showcased for the first time in a Republic day parade are M777 and K-9 Vajra ultra light howitzers along with the Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) missile of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Winners of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar children marched in open jeeps and various cultural items was showcased by school children on theme of Mahatma Gandhi.

For the first time in the Republic Day parade, **An-32 aircraft flyed using a mix of traditional and biofuel.** Using environment-friendly biofuel will help in reducing carbon footprint as well as lessen the import bill.

Four former Indian National Army (INA) soldiers participated for the first time in the parade. INA was an armed force formed by Indian nationalist Rash Behari Bose in 1942 in Southeast Asia during World War II.

'Sankhnaad', a martial tune created for the Indian armed forces, was played for the first time on the 70th Republic Day parade. Since Independence, the Indian defence forces have been playing 'martial tune' created by the Britishers. 'Sankhnaad' is based on Indian classical music.

After a gap of three years, **the railways showcased its tableau which showcased the parade's theme "Mohan se Mahatma" along with featuring yet-to-be-launched bullet train and Train 18.**

After a gap of 11 years, **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) presented its tableau at Rajpath.** The tableau aims at showcasing the multidimensional functioning of the force.