

# LASER SHOW TO BRIGHTEN UP R-DAY

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In tandem: The BSF's camel contingent after rehearsal for the Republic Day parade in New Delhi. Shiv Kumar Pushpakar SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

A laser projection on the walls of North and South Block and a show by 1,000 swarm drones during 'Beating The Retreat' ceremony this year are among several new events at the Republic Day celebrations this year to commemorate the 75th year of Independence. However, the number of attendees at the parade will be significantly reduced, due to the COVID situation, to anywhere between 5,000 to 8,000, according to a senior defence official.

"A novel 'Drone Show' has been conceptualised, designed, produced and choreographed within the country. This 'Make in India' initiative has been organised by a startup 'Botlab Dynamics', supported by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi and Department of Science & Technology," the official said. "The show would be of 10 minutes duration involving around 1,000 drones fabricated through indigenous technology."

## Week-long events

From this year onwards the Republic Day celebrations will be week-long from January 23 to 30 every year instead of January 24. January 23 is the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Last year the first wave was ebbing and there were 25,000 visitors at the Parade last year. But with COVID cases on the rise this time, the number of visitors is going to be curtailed significantly and the numbers are still being worked out, the official said. Also this year the Parade would begin half an hour later at 10:30 a.m. to ensure that the flypast can start when the winter fog clears up.

Coinciding with the *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, several new events have been conceptualized by the Defence Ministry.

The Parade usually begins with the Prime Minister paying tributes and laying a floral wreath at the National War Memorial. This year simultaneously Next of Kin (NOK) of approximately 5,000 fallen heroes will be presented with the Plaque of Gratitude by NCC cadets all over the country under a nationwide programme '*Shaheedon Ko Shat Shat Naman*', the official said.

Similarly, the MoD in collaboration with Ministry of Culture has organised an event *Kala Kumbh*.

Under this the National Gallery of Modern Arts organised the painting of 10 huge scrolls in two phases at Bhubaneswar and Chandigarh in December and early January. Ten scrolls each of 75 metres in length and 15 feet in height were prepared and would be showcased.

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