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<https://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2015/01/26/obama-at-indian-republic-day-live-blog/>

INDIA REAL TIME

Obama at India's Republic Day Parade as It Happened

By WSJ Staff

Jan 26, 2015 2:46 am IST



The Wall Street Journal live blogged India's Republic Day at which President Barack Obama was the chief guest in a show of solidarity between the world's two largest democracies in the face of an increasingly assertive China. Our team of journalists in New Delhi brought you live coverage of the military and cultural spectacle as it rolled down Raj Path in the heart of the capital to celebrate 65 years of the Republic of India.

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OLDEST

NEWEST

8:54 am

What Is Republic Day?

Republic Day celebrates the date on which the Indian constitution came into force in 1950 as the country's governing document. It is a national holiday. The main Republic Day celebration, a military and cultural parade, is held on Rajpath, the capital's main avenue, and is witnessed by the president of India, top government officials and the public.

If you want to get an idea of what it looks like, imagine a Soviet military march combined with Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade—and some camels.

Every year, the government invites a chief guest or guest of honor, who is normally a head of state or government. This year, in case you hadn't heard, the guest is U.S. President Barack Obama.

The first parade was held at Irwin stadium (now the national stadium) in 1950. Indonesian President Sukarno was the chief guest, who also witnessed Rajendra Prasad being sworn in as the India's first president. A 31-gun salute followed, together with a ceremonial parade by 3,000 officers from India's armed forces, according to local media reports. Four years before the Sino-Indian War in 1962, Marshal Ye Jianying, a senior Chinese military leader, was the guest of honor. Since then, no Chinese official has attended the parade as chief guest.

Pakistan's Food and Agriculture Minister Rana Abdul Hamid also attended the Republic Day celebrations months before the second Kashmir war in 1965. Bhutan has been the clear favorite, with its top leaders attending India's parade in 1954, 1984, 2005 and 2013.

by Rajesh Roy

8:58 am

Chief Guests We Have Known

The first Republic Day parade took place in 1950, but it wasn't until 1971 that it became an annual event in the country's capital.

The chief guest at the parade is indicative of India's desire to improve relations with that country.

During the Cold War, guests were mostly members of the Soviet bloc, such as Yugoslavia (invited twice) and smaller nations, like Tanzania.

President Barack Obama will be the first U.S. head of state to attend the celebrations.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

9:05 am

Party Like a Rock Star



REUTERS

The Republic Day Parade is President Barack Obama's most high-profile event during his three-day visit to India. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the U.S. last year, his biggest event was a rock star-like rally at Madison Square Garden in New York. In case you missed it, here's a little reminder.

by Eric Bellman

9:11 am

'I Want to See Modi and Obama Together'



SAURABH CHATURVEDI/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Ashish Kaushik, shown in the cap, is a software engineer. He says he's traveled 150 kilometers to attend the parade.

"One thing is clear to me: Republic Day is not a holiday. It's an Indian festival and we all should take part."

Ashok Mishra, shown wearing a muffler, is a business analyst, and it's the first time he's attended Republic Day. "I am very keen to see Narendra Modi and Barack Obama together."

"Guns, tanks and defense tech excite me. I am very excited that I would get to see some of the most sophisticated tech in the world."

by Saurabh Chaturvedi

9:12 am

Uh-Oh, Looks Like Rain on This Parade



New Delhi is sodden this morning. Shallow fog hangs in the air. So much for the Weather Underground's forecast of "0%" chance of precipitation. VIPs at the Republic Day parade will be sheltered. For the rest—many of whom will be walking to secure their place along Rajpath—umbrellas are verboten. Stay dry out there.

Above, a traffic cop stationed in the capital to manage the expected rush for the parade.

by Raymond Zhong

9:12 am

More British than Russian

Some describe the Republic Day event as a communist-style parade, but it predates India-Soviet relations. The parade's heritage is more British than Soviet. It's a combination of the Trooping of the Color in London, the Inauguration Day parade in Washington and the Victory Day parade in Moscow—all with an Indian touch, according to Tanvi Madan, director of the India Project at the Brookings Institution, a foreign policy think-tank in Washington, D.C.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

9:16 am

Cheap Tickets

Barack Obama received a personal invitation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the parade as chief guest, but most of the people attending had to buy a ticket. Ticket prices started at 10 rupees (or less than 20 cents) and only went as high as 300 rupees.

by Eric Bellman

9:19 am

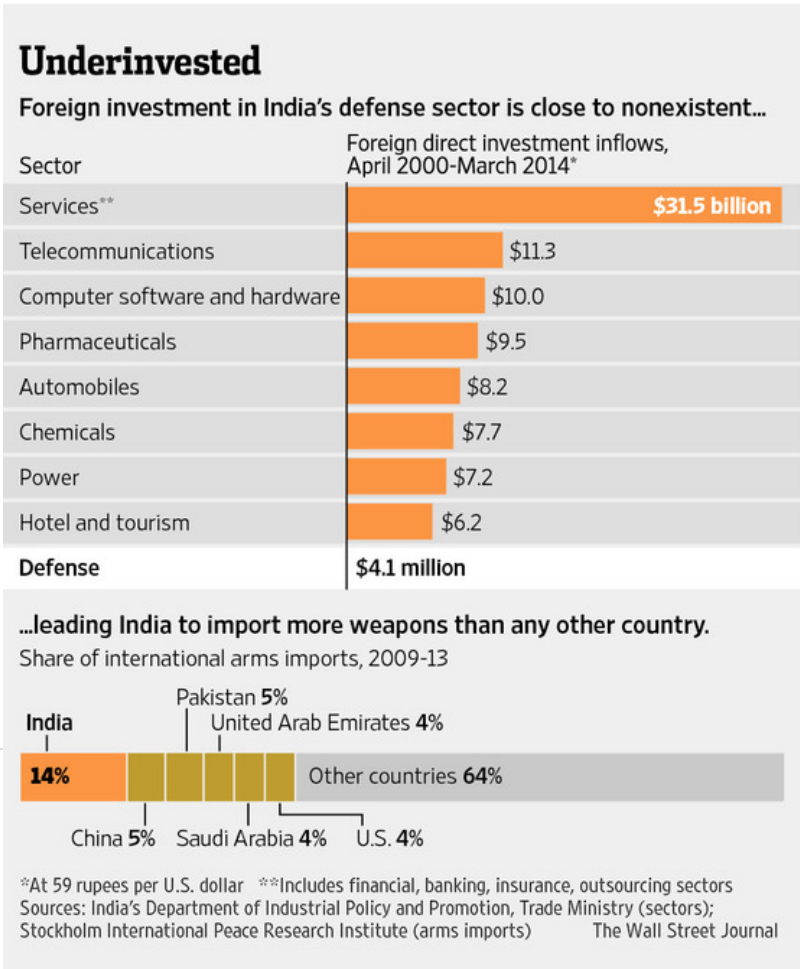
No Tech Allowed

Spectators were told to leave their gadgets at home. Cellphones, cameras and even remote-controlled car keys were not allowed near the Republic Day parade, police said. Lighters, matches, books and food are also barred from the area.

by Eric Bellman

9:21 am

Defense Investment



India has become the world's biggest arms importer in recent years and the United States is hoping to help it modernize its military. Restrictions on foreign investment, however, have discouraged much foreign direct investment in the sector, which has attracted less than \$5 million in FDI. The telecommunications industry alone has attracted more than \$11 billion.

by Eric Bellman

9:23 am

"Vande Mataram"

To celebrate Republic Day, India's national TV channel Doordarshan is playing renditions of India's national song "Vande Mataram," which means "I Bow to Thee, Mother." Former President Rajendra Prasad has given the song, written by poet Bankim Chandra Chatterji, equal status to India's national anthem, "Jana Gana Mana." The song "has played a historic part in the struggle for Indian freedom," Dr. Prasad said in 1950. Grammy award-winner A.R. Rahman has also made a version of the song, titled "Ma Tujhe Salaam," or "Mother, We Salute You."

by Shefali Anand

9:25 am

Young Minds



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL Akshat,14, is going for the republic day parade in New Delhi only to see President Barack Obama.

“My friends and family members tell me that Obama is the most powerful man in the world. I am going for the parade just to see him,” said Akshat, a 14-year old student from Noida on his way to the parade. “Mr. and Mrs. Obama have caught my imagination.”

by Saurabh Chaturvedi

9:34 am

First for the Fallen

The 66th Republic Day parade ceremony begins with Prime Minister Narendra Modi laying a wreath at Amar Jawan Jyoti at India Gate to pay homage to the Indian soldiers who died in the service of the country. The Amar Jawan memorial is a sculpture of a rifle standing on its barrel topped with a soldier's helmet.

by Santanu Choudhury

9:34 am

Mr. O Dominates India Twitter Trends

President Obama's visit and Republic Day-related themes are among the “most trending” topics on Twitter India today, with hashtags like #NamastePOTUS and #ObamaInIndia leading the list. #ModiNukePush is another popular Twitter trend this morning, probably referring to some progress in discussions on nuclear issues between the two leaders.

by Shefali Anand

9:37 am

Founding Mother

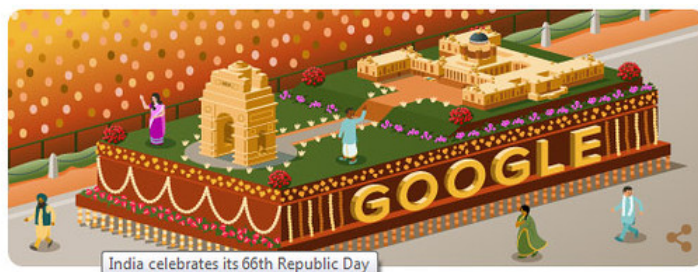
Like the U.S., India has a group of founding fathers who wrote the constitution. Unlike the U.S., there were 292 members in the constituent assembly that drafted the document, including nine women.

Among them was Sarojini Naidu, a famous poet and trailblazer for women in Indian politics. Born Feb. 13, 1879, Ms. Naidu was one of the first women to join the independence movement, the first female president of the Congress party and the first female governor of a state, holding the post in Uttar Pradesh until her death in 1949.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

9:40 am

Google Celebrates Republic Day with a Doodle



GOOGLE

.0.

Google is celebrating India's 66th Republic Day with a doodle that showcases the grandeur of Rajpath, which runs from the Rashtrapati Bhavan through India Gate, where U.S. President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will witness the military parade with hosts of other dignitaries. This year, 25 floats from different provinces and government departments will showcase India's heritage and culture on the Rajpath.

by Rajesh Roy

9:42 am

Best-Dressed Prime Minister Ever?

The colorful Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become an unlikely fashion leader in India. He has experimented with everything from bright-colored turbans to pocket squares. He's also not been shy about using local attire—outrageous headgear in particular—to grab local attention and votes.



Photo courtesy: AFP/Getty Images

by Eric Bellman

9:49 am

The President's Bodyguards

The president of India will arrive at the parade venue escorted by 46 bodyguards mounted on horses. Called the President's Guard, the team is the oldest and senior-most regiment of the Indian Army.

The personnel of the regiment are all handpicked, each of them at least six feet tall.

by Aditi Malhotra

9:50 am

Constitutional Ties



SAUL LOEB/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

It took almost three years for India's constitution to come together. The constituent assembly met for the first time on Dec. 9, 1946 but the constitution did not come together until Jan. 26, 1950.

On the first day of the assembly, where 207 members including nine women met, Sachchidananda Sinha, the acting chair of the assembly, read out goodwill messages from around the world, according to the official Indian Parliament website.

Among these was a telegram sent from the U.S.

One of America's most-famous secretaries of state, Dean Acheson, sent a message: "India has a great contribution to make to the peace, stability and cultural advancement of mankind," he wrote.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Modi presented President Obama with a copy of that telegram underscoring the shared history between the two countries.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

9:51 am

A Bollywood Song from Bachchan

To celebrate India's 66th Republic Day, Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan has released a special version of India's national anthem—"Jana Gana Mana"—written by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

"The National Anthem sung by me at Jorasanko, Thakur Badi, Kolkata, residence of Tagore," Mr. Bachchan tweeted this morning.

Mr. Bachchan has lent his voice to many Bollywood songs in the past but this will be a special rendition of the national anthem and likely to be a part of many official functions in India from now.

On Sunday, Mr. Bachchan was conferred the Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian award, for his contribution to the world of art.

by Anirban Roy

9:51 am

Mumbai celebrates R-Day

Large tricolor balloons adorn a main road in the business district of Bandra-Kurla Complex in Mumbai.

by Shefali Anand



9:52 am

The Voices at This Year's Parade

The parade is also accompanied by a voice-over. The commentary team this year, taking the crowds through details of the movement on Raj Path, is six-member strong, and will deliver a patriotic explanation of the troops, camels, floats and motorcycle stunt riders taking part in the parade.

Click here to watch a video of the motorcycle Dare Devils.

by Aditi Malhotra

9:53 am

As Proud As a Peacock



SCREEN GRAB FROM DOORDARSHAN

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived at the Republic Day parade wearing a turban with a nod to his Gujarati heritage. The red, green and orange hand-tied turban, speckled

with white dots, is a tie-dye technique called Bandhani that is practiced mostly in the western Indian states of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Mr. Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat for more than a decade.

There's little chance that U.S. President Barack Obama or First Lady Michelle Obama can top this, unless perhaps Mr. Obama dons a speckled turban, too.

Mr. Modi also sent a sartorial message when Mr. Obama arrived on Sunday, wearing a saffron shawl with an intricately embroidered paisley border.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

9:56 am

Ambassador of Hope

While Mr. Modi is traveling in a BMW and Mr. Obama in his "Beast," India's defense minister arrived in the traditional car of choice of India's elite bureaucracy—the Hindustan Motors Ambassador. With few buyers other than bureaucrats and taxi drivers, the company halted production of the classic last year.

by Eric Bellman

9:58 am

Gloomy Weather Won't Affect Armed Forces Fly-By

Indian armed forces will continue their scheduled fly-by for the Republic Day parade despite downcast weather in the national capital, an air force spokeswoman said. The capital has been struck by unseasonal rains since the weekend.

A total of 33 planes and helicopters will take part in this year's parade. Twenty-seven aircraft belong to the air force, accompanied by three apiece from the navy and army. The aircraft will include Sukhoi Su-30MKI and Jaguar fighter jets, Mi-17 V5 helicopters and the maiden display of the P-8I maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare jet and MiG-29K fighter jet of the Indian Navy.

by Santanu Choudhury

10:02 am

Obama Arrives at Parade



by WSJ Staff

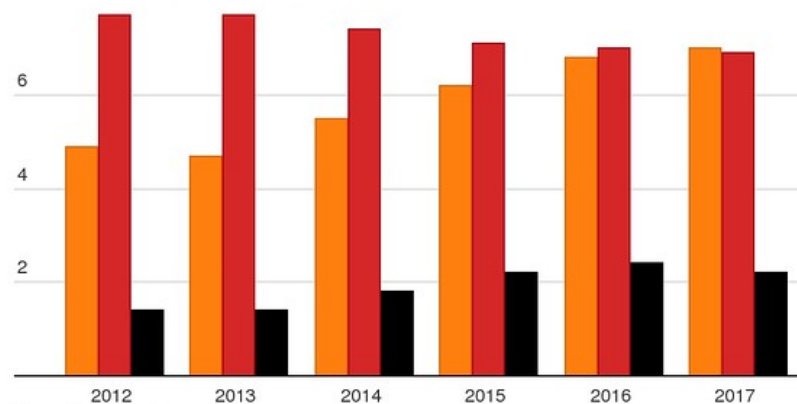
10:03 am

Headed to the Top

India Taking the Lead

Percentage GDP growth.

India China World



Source: World Bank

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MADE USING DATAWRAPPER

The charismatic Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited President Barak Obama as chief guest at the Republic Day Parade in part to demonstrate the new confidence the country has since Mr. Modi took office in May. Economists at the World Bank recently suggested that the prime minister's economic revamping could put India on course to at last outpace China in terms of annual economic expansion, possibly making India the fastest-growing big economy in 2017.

by Eric Bellman

10:05 am

No Speech

The Republic Day parade is perhaps the biggest government-sponsored event not to have a speech. India celebrates its Independence day on Aug. 15 with a speech by its prime minister, often an hour long, but the Republic Day ceremony is all about showcasing India's military might and diverse cultural heritage. It is led by its president and the supreme commander of its armed forces, President Pranab Mukherjee.

The guest of honor at this year's parade is U.S. President Barack Obama. He arrived at Rajpath, the venue of the celebrations, in his official vehicle, the Beast, rather than in the Indian president's vehicle, as usual protocol dictates.

by Anirban Roy

10:06 am

The Commentary Book Gets a Facelift

Special invitees including Mr. Obama will receive a commentary book to help them understand what they are watching.



ADITI MALHOTRA/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Compiling and editing the book as well as writing the script for the commentary has been the responsibility of the Directorate of Public Relations under India's defense ministry. And the book seems to have undergone a facelift and looks a much slicker production than last year's version.

Adding a little Modi touch on the cover's top right corner is the logo of the prime minister's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, or Clean India Campaign.

Flip the book around and there's a black-and-white archival photograph of India's first Republic Day parade. Taken in 1951, the photo shows thousands of people lined along the street, some sitting atop the white columned buildings in Connaught Place in Delhi's heart, as they watch the contingents of troops march by.

by Aditi Malhotra

10:06 am

The parade starts

Pranab Mukherjee and Narendra Modi walk to the dais, or viewing platform, protected by bulletproof glass, grinning and waving at the cheering crowds. The national anthem plays

accompanied by cannon fire.

by Sean McLain

10:09 am

Local News Has it Covered

Some Indian news channels are celebrating the Republic Day parade with U.S. President Barack Obama with their classic screens full of arguing experts. India News had no fewer than five panelists on its screen Monday, each in a different window, “Brady Bunch”-style.

by Eric Bellman

10:14 am

Seeking Shelter

Obama, Modi and the rest of the VIPs sitting on the viewing platform are handed their programs. They might actually peruse them, unlike many in the crowd who seem to be using the large laminated books as rain hats.

by Sean McLain

10:15 am

Bravery awards for Fallen Indian Soldiers

Awards for military bravery are being handed out at the Republic Day parade. The Ashok Chakra is one of the highest military honors awarded during peacetime. Most are being received by the widows of Indian soldiers who died in the line of fire. There is a brief description of the soldier's bravery and an emotional moment for the families.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

10:17 am

Commanding the Parade

Leading the parade is Lt. Gen. Subroto Mitra, who took over command of the army in Delhi in Sept. 2012. He was commissioned as an officer of the Indian army in 1975 and has served several appointments including leading counter-terrorism operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

He is traveling in an open top jeep down Rajpath leading the parade.

by Aditi Malhotra

10:18 am

More Horses

The first contingent trotting towards the saluting dais is the 61st cavalry. The regiment's motto is "Ashva Shakti Yashobal," or "Horse Power Forever Supreme." While the president's bodyguard performs ceremonial duties, the 61st cavalry regiment is nonceremonial. Members of the regiment have won 10 Arjuna Awards, India's highest award for sportsmen, for polo and other sports.

by Aditi Malhotra

10:18 am

Obama Picks the Beast Over the Mercedes

Barack Obama arrived for the Republic Day parade in the "Beast"—his own armored car—breaking with the tradition for parade guests of honor accompanying Indian President Pranab Mukherjee, who arrived in a separate Mercedes-Benz S600 Pullman Guard sedan. After concerns raised by U.S. security agencies, India left it to the U.S. president to decide whether he wanted to travel in his own vehicle or in the vehicle of the Indian president.

by Santanu Choudhury

10:20 am

Trading Partners

The United States is hoping to boost its trade with India through military exports. As India's economy has grown in the past decade, China has replaced the United States as India's largest trading partner, largely because it makes more of the things that Indian consumers and companies want to buy at a price they can afford. Still, India and the U.S. are hoping to increase their total trade from around \$100 billion a year today to \$500 billion a year in an unspecified time frame.

by Eric Bellman

10:22 am

All living winners of Ashoka Chakra and Param Vir Chakra—the two highest bravery awards in India—are following the parade commander.

by Shefali Anand

10:24 am

Tanks and Missiles on Raj Path

That's the T-72 tank used to clear minefields in enemy territory. Following is the Pinaka rocket-launcher system. Pinaka is the mythological name of the divine bow of Lord Shiva.

by Aditi Malhotra

10:27 am

Floating Up

The first float of many is a big white mountain representing the first women officers from the Indian Armed Forces to climb Mount Everest.

by WSJ Staff

10:27 am

Buying Spree

While for most of its history, India's main supplier of military equipment has been the Soviet Union and then Russia, in recent years, the United States has become its biggest supplier. Among the many military deals that have recently been discussed between the U.S. and India are billion-dollar orders for helicopters.

by Eric Bellman

Defense Dealing

Some military purchases that may be discussed during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to the U.S.



India’s planned purchases	Suppliers	Estimated cost
22 Apache attack helicopters	Boeing	\$1.4 billion
15 Chinook heavy-lift helicopters	Boeing	1.0
16 multi-role helicopters	Sikorsky/N H Industries*	1.0
Javelin anti-tank missile production program	Raytheon/Lockheed Martin	1.0
24 Harpoon anti-ship missiles	Boeing	0.2
*both are bidding		
Source: people familiar with India’s plans; Agence France-Presse (photo)		The Wall Street Journal

10:27 am

Battle of the Hats



It’s not’s just Mr. Modi with headgear. The hats and umbrellas are out. Everyone is trying to beat the rain, including Indian President Pranab Mukherjee, who seems to wearing an oversized grey fur hat, and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in a smart, dark-colored beret.

Amit Shah, an Indian politician from the state of Gujarat and the president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, is making do with an umbrella.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

10:27 am

The Opposition in Attendance

Sonia Gandhi, who has served as the president of the opposition Congress party, is also in attendance, holding an umbrella and wearing a red, white and cream-colored sari and a dark overcoat.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

10:28 am

Woman Power at This Year's Parade

The leading marching contingent is creating history. It's the Indian army's all-women contingent, the first ever since the parade became an annual ceremony.

The female troops have been grouped together by the armed forces after a decision by Mr. Modi to make "Nari Shakti," or "Woman Power," the theme for this year's parade.

There are two more from the Indian air force and the navy, which will make their debut as the parade advances.

by Aditi Malhotra

10:29 am

Outdated Equipment

India has been spending billions of dollars each year to modernize its military hardware. Much of what its military uses today are outdated arms, some imported from the former Soviet Union decades ago. The navy has had a deadly string of accidents in recent years as it rushes to upgrade its ships and submarines.

by Eric Bellman

10:36 am

Sequence of parade

The Indian armed forces showcase their arms and marching contingents in a standard sequence. The parade has begun with the Indian army and will be followed by contingents of the Indian navy and air force. Indian police and paramilitary forces will follow them.

by Shefali Anand

10:39 am

India's Aviators On the Ground

India's air force is now marching on Rajpath. Following the second all-women contingent from India's armed forces is an air-force band with as many as 72 musicians and another marching contingent with 144 officers from the Indian air force.

by Aditi Malhotra

10:40 am

Building Up Your Missiles

The Akash—which means Sky in Hindi—surface-to-air missile has a range of up to 25 kilometers and reaches a speed of up to Mach 2. India has dubbed it an air-defense system. It is being inducted into use by the air force and will also being added to the army's weaponry.

by Santanu Choudhury

10:41 am

Russian-Made Tanks, Weapons Appear in India Parade



The Indian Army's Russian-made tanks—the latest laser-guided missile capability T-90 “Bheeshma” tank, infantry combat vehicle BMP II (Sarath) and the T-72 tank with a trawl—are part of the parade. The tanks are followed by the Pinaka Multiple Barrel Launcher System, which was developed by India's state-run Defense Research &

Development Organization.

Although India has in recent years become the largest customer for U.S. arms, the Indian army's arsenal is dominated by weapons produced under license from Russia.

The army is also displaying the Mobile Autonomous Launcher for the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile system—a milestone joint venture between India and Russia—as well as a

tactical control radar, satellite-communication platform and rapidly deployable satellite terminal.

by Santanu Choudhury

10:42 am

No Umbrellas Please



Spectators cover themselves with plastic and newspapers at the parade. Cellphones, cameras and even umbrellas are prohibited at the celebrations.

10:46 am

Camels!



Here come the camels. The Border Security Force has a 36-piece brass band mounted on camels, thought to be the only one of its kind in the world. The BSF uses the camels to patrol the vast Thar desert in the state of Rajasthan, which borders Pakistan.

All personnel in the Camel Contingent are more than

six feet tall and sport similar mustaches. Camels in the Border Security Force are about 5 years old when they are inducted into the force and typically serve the force for about 15 years.

by Santanu Chodhury and Aditi Malhotra

10:50 am

Obamodi

After their jovial chats on Sunday, President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi seem to be enjoying the Republic Day parade in respectful silence. Mr. Obama could take the chance to tell Mr. Modi how the U.S. has better arms for sale than the tanks and artillery on display.

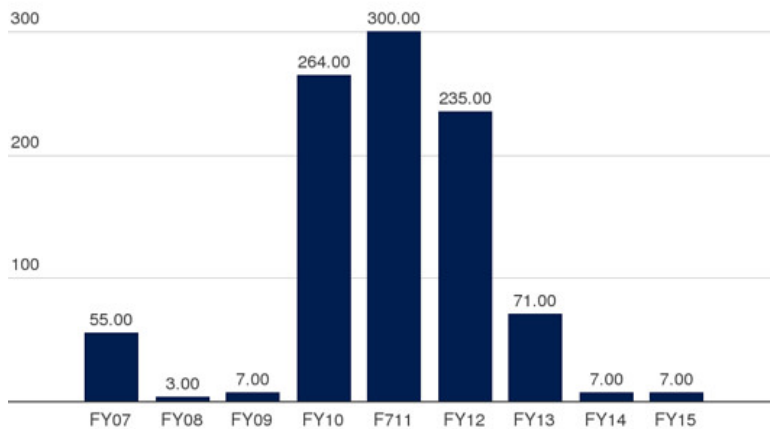
by Eric Bellman

10:51 am

Migration Nation

Visa Power

The number of days it took for the U.S. to hit its H-1B visa ceiling



One of America's biggest exports to India is bombs and other arms. One of India's biggest exports to the U.S. is brains, in the form of computer programmers and engineers. India's outsourcing industry wants to export more manpower to the U.S. but is stopped by the ceiling on the number of H-1B visas allowed each year. The industry is hoping Mr.

Obama will include higher visa caps in his plans to reform America's immigration laws. This chart shows how many days it takes for the maximum number of H-1B visas to be issued. It is proof of the huge and growing demand there is for Indian talent.

by Eric Bellman

10:52 am

Cash for Mustaches

The parade is a good place to see many an elaborate mustache on the faces of Indian soldiers. In some Indian army units, soldiers are given incentives or cash awards to maintain a good-quality mustache, which is thick and twirled and reaches the ears if possible. In the parade, the best-mustachioed soldiers are kept closest to the dais to provide the best view to the VIPs.

by Shefali Anand

10:52 am

Paramilitary Power

In addition to the representatives of the standard branches of the armed forces, the Republic Day parade has people from all sorts of paramilitary and civil forces. The Indian Coast Guard, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, the Railway Protection Force, the Delhi Police and others will all be represented.

by Santanu Choudhury

10:58 am

Obama Digs the Beat



Barack Obama seems to be having a good time, nodding his head along to the drum beat of the martial bands.

It's hard not to feel upbeat. India's military uniforms are vibrant and colorful, and the bands are playing almost danceable tunes. Even in the rain.

by Sean McLain

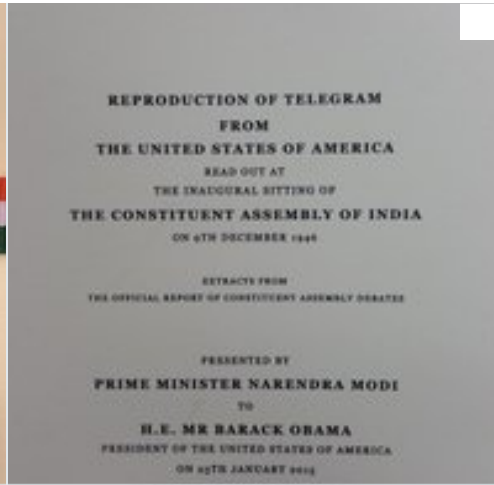
10:59 am

In Full Bloom

The month of January is perhaps the perfect time to go over-the-top with floral decorations. New Delhi's markets this time of the year are brimming with flowers mostly for the Indian wedding season that runs from November to March. The dais on which Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indian President Pranab Mukherjee and U.S. President Barack Obama are sitting is surrounded by blooms. White gladioli, orange marigolds, red daisies and purple orchids have been used extensively over the parade grounds. And today, the rain is certainly keeping them fresh.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

11:00 am



Raveesh Kumar

@MEAIndia

1st Republic Day memorabilia. Stamp issued on 26 Jan, 1950 adorns back cover

of 1st US Telegram gifted 2 US Prez by PM

8:44 AM - Jan 26, 2015

332 370 people are talking about this

by MEA

11:01 am

Incredible India

Colorful floats from across India represent the country's different cultures and its history. The float from Sikkim, for example, is about cardamom cultivation.

by Santanu Choudhury

11:02 am





PIB India
@PIB_India

#RepublicDay : another aerial view of the marching contingents

11:00 AM - Jan 26, 2015

67 69 people are talking about this

11:02 am

Tunes of the Parade



The marching contingents are interspersed with bands playing several military tunes. Some of the popular ones are “Saare Jahan Se Accha, Hindustan Hamara” (“Our India Is Better Than the Whole World”) and “Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja, Khushi Ke Geet Gaye Ja” (“Move Forward Step-by-Step and Sing Songs of Joy”).

by Shefali Anand

11:04 am

U.S. Delegation at the parade



Members of the U.S. delegation who accompanied President Barack Obama to India on his official three-day visit to India were spotted at India's Republic Day parade. Susan Rice, U.S. national security advisor, was all smiles when the state-owned television station Doordarshan panned over the crowds.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

11:05 am

**PIB India**

@PIB_India

#RepublicDay : Now the tableaux start...Karnataka leads ..

11:02 AM - Jan 26, 2015

58 52 people are talking about this

11:05 am

Now Comes the Fun Bit

Following the military display, now comes the soft power segment of the Republic Day parade. Each state has a decorated float showcasing the state's unique culture, surrounded by dancers and the display has an atmosphere reminiscent of Mardi Gras.

by Sean McLain

11:12 am

U.S. First Lady at the Parade



DOORDARSHAN/YOUTUBE

U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama spotted deep in conversation with Salma Ansari, wife of Indian Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari.

Mrs. Obama arrived wearing a buttoned long black coat with a tucked-in red scarf.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

11:13 am

CoBRA Commandos



The Central Reserve Police Force showcased for the first time its elite commando force, called CoBRA, in full battle gear. CRPF's CoBRA commandos are the lead counterinsurgency force for operations against Naxalites in the country.

CRPF says the commandos, who are specially trained in jungle warfare, are taking

part in this year's parade "in view of the great importance which has been attached with the Naxal problem in the current internal security scenario." The commandos are carrying Israeli-made MTAR-21 or X-95 assault rifles and machetes. They will be wearing "Marine Pattern" combat fatigues and jackboots.

by Santanu Choudhury

11:15 am



The decorated float showcasing the unique culture of the state of Goa.

by WSJ Staff

11:16 am

One of the Only Tweets from the Parade Ground



Susan Rice -Archived
@AmbRice44

Honored to be with President Obama, the first U.S. President to be [#India's](#) Republic Day Chief Guest

10:08 AM - Jan 26, 2015

422 462 people are talking about this

11:18 am

Modi's Patel Admiration Brought to the Parade



Ever since he's taken charge, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been laying foundations (literally) to construct a big statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's first home minister, who is also known as the "iron man of India." In 2012, when he was chief minister of Gujarat, he laid a

foundation stone for a statue of Mr. Patel, which he dubbed the Statue of Unity.

Today, a replica of the statue—set to be twice the height of the Statue of Liberty—made an appearance on the float from Gujarat, Mr. Modi's home state.

by Aditi Malhotra

11:18 am

Obama's National Security Council Impressed



Obama NSC- Archived

@NSC44

Impressive display by [#India](#)'s all-women military contingent in the Republic Day parade.

10:30 AM - Jan 26, 2015

532 886 people are talking about this

11:19 am

Jammu and Kashmir Float

by WSJ Staff



11:22 am

Make in India -The Modi Float

Here comes the float representing the “Make in India” campaign of India's Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion.

The float depicts a mechanized lion, set against the backdrop of a smart city. The message is supposed to be that India has the purpose, resources and momentum required to



transform the country into a global manufacturing hub. The front part of the float is the lion, depicting the various sectors identified for investment. India aims to become an economic powerhouse by growing its manufacturing sector to 25% of GDP from only 15% today.

by Rajesh Roy

11:23 am

Is This Modi's Favorite Float?



Prime Minister Modi is an ardent follower of yoga. He made the Ayurveda and yoga department, previously part of India's health ministry, a separate ministry in November.

Ayush is short for Ayurveda, yoga and naturopathy, unani, siddha and homeopathy, all alternative therapies with a focus on

herbal remedies. The float from the ministry of Ayush is currently running down Rajpath with models of bottles containing homeopathic medicines and food items recommended in Naturopathy.

It appears that a small child is being treated from a jar that says "Sulphur." Also, two people are doing yoga.

by Aditi Malhotra

11:23 am

Birds of a Different Feather

Haryana's state float is showcasing the Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary. Where other states played folk music, the state's float plays canned birdsong and has dancers dressed in bird



costumes.

by Sean McLain

11:29 am



PIB India
@PIB_India

[#RepublicDay](#) : the Gujarat Tableaux...featuring the Iron man, Sardar Patel

11:24 AM - Jan 26, 2015

70 71 people are talking about this

11:31 am

Ministers Cheer on Their Home-State Floats

Indian political ministers are seen applauding and cheering on floats from their respective states. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was seen explaining the Gujarat float to U.S. President Barack Obama. Mr. Modi was chief minister of the western Indian Gujarat state

for more than a decade before he led the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to victory in the national election in May.

India's Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar cheered on the float from Goa, his home state. The Goan float is considered the one of the most popular with its music and projection of bonhomie from the beachside resort state.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

11:31 am

Child's Play



A group of more than 1,000 children from schools in Delhi are doing dance performances commemorating India's successful launching of a satellite into the orbit of Mars as well as a dance program on "Swachh Bharat"—the "Clean India" initiative started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

by Santanu Choudhury

11:34 am

How Do You Portray, 'Open a Bank Account'?



SCREENGRAB FROM DOORDARSHAN/YOUTUBE

Some government ministries have to try harder than others. While the homeopathy ministry has people performing yoga, the finance ministry's float uses mimes and dancers to try to illustrate its efforts to get more Indians to open bank accounts.

by Sean McLain

11:34 am

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by WSJ Staff

11:38 am

More Dancing



11:40 am

India Shining

More than one hour into the parade and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is still wearing dark glasses despite the rain. Maybe for Mr. Modi, India is always shining.

by Eric Bellman



11:40 am

No Power Cuts in Delhi on Republic Day



SAJJAD HUSSAIN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES Indian pedestrians walk on a street under electric wires in the old quarters New Delhi.

New Delhi's private electricity-distribution companies, which serve most parts of the city, say they have postponed today's plans to cut electricity supplies in the capital. Many parts of Delhi still face long power cuts, which officials mainly blame on rickety electricity infrastructure. But since today is a national holiday, the companies have postponed the planned shutdowns so that people can watch the big parade live on TV. India's new government has promised to provide round-the-clock electricity to its all citizens in the next few years.

by Saurabh Chaturvedi

11:43 am

Getting the U.S. Delegation (and Secret Service's) Attention



SCREENGAB FROM DOORDARSHAN/YOUTUBE

Children from a school in New Delhi's Janakpuri neighborhood got U.S. Senator Mark Warner's attention, who was seen looking up from his phone when billowing horns indicated the start of their dance program. The children—dressed in costumes of purple, red and white—danced and formed geometric shapes.

Meanwhile, a secret service gentleman behind President Obama just yawned. We suppose it takes more than lovely, dancing children to keep them engaged.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya

11:45 am

Dare Devils



Motorcycle stunt teams often make an appearance in the Republic Day parade. This year, the team is from the paramilitary Border Security Force. It will be performing its "Peacock" stunt where seven men dressed in teal bodysuits pile onto one Enfield motorcycle. Read more about the team—called Janbaz or Dare Devils—in this story from The Wall

Street Journal.

by Eric Bellman

11:49 am

Is This The Mars Float?



Children dressed in colors of India's national flag sing "My Mars Mission" in unison. The celebration commemorates India's maiden mission to Mars last year, which was the cheapest the world over.

by Preetika Rana

11:51 am

High Fliers

A total of 33 planes and helicopters will be part of the Republic Day event, including the Russia-made Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jets, which form the cornerstone of India's air force, as well as the Boeing P-8I maritime patrol aircraft and the C-130J transport plane, made by Lockheed Martin.

by Santanu Choudhury

11:51 am

Powerful Planes

India has ordered six Lockheed C-130J planes for its special forces. The planes are equipped with infrared detection sensors which help with long-range navigation and surveillance. In 2013, India landed one of the planes on an airstrip on the world's highest air strip to showcase its capabilities.

by Santanu Choudhury

11:53 am

The Obamas Love the Motorcycle Team



Judging by their faces, the Obamas favorite bit of the parade was ours, the Janbaz Dare Devil motorcycle team. Michelle Obama seemed be suppressing a smile and clapped as the peacock team rolled by. Barack Obama was openly grinning at the displays of daring and gave a thumbs up after Janbaz passed.

by Sean McLain

12:00 pm

Toil, Tears, Iron Will

The commentator says: It's such an honor to have President and Mrs. Obama here on Republic Day to honor the generations of Indians who built the nation through toil, tears and iron will.

by Joanna Sugden

12:01 pm

All Rise



Now the national anthem of India.

by WSJ Staff

12:03 pm

The Janbaz Dare Devil motorcycle team

by WSJ Staff



12:06 pm

'We Heart Obama'

Some enterprising fans managed to smuggle past security a yellow banner that said, “We heart Obama.” They hoisted the poster just after the fly past of the Indian air force planes ended. It was displayed alongside the Indian flag held up by a group of smiling, young men who were seated in the bleachers.

by Suryatapa Bhattacharya



12:24 pm

Cloudy Ending



Gloomy weather didn't prevent the Indian air force from showing off the capabilities of its aircraft at the Republic Day parade. However the thousands of spectators watching it live in New Delhi—including chief guest Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle—had to strain their eyes to see what was happening up in the clouds.

The parade ended with three Russian-made Sukhoi jets performing the usually stunning Trishul formation, in which jets shoot straight up. This year it was hard to make out the *trishul*, or trident, formed by their contrails.

by Santanu Choudhury

12:30 pm

The Chief Guest Leaves



DOORDASHAN

1:06 pm

And Now Everyone Goes for Lunch



DOORDASHAN

President Obama is now headed to a reception at Indian President Pranab Mukherjee's residence, Rashtrapati Bhavan. Here's what's on Mr. Obama's agenda for the rest of the day.

by Sean McLain

1:13 pm

Show's Over

That's it, the parade's over. Thanks for reading our live blog as India celebrated its 66th Republic Day with missiles, camels and motorcycle stunt riders in front of U.S. President Barack Obama. We hope you enjoyed the show.



For breaking news and updates from the rest of Mr. Obama's visit to India, follow India Real Time here and on WSJ India's Facebook page.

by WSJ Staff

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