



R-DAY SPECIAL

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2022

THE NATIONAL PLEDGE: The National Pledge 'India is my country...' was written in Telugu by Pydimarri Venkata Subba Rao in 1962. The Central Advisory Board on Education directed that the pledge be sung in schools and that this practice be introduced by January 26, 1965. It is commonly recited by Indians in unison at public events, especially in schools, and during the Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations.

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As our Republic matures, here's a look at the laws that have made it into one - from the basic laws passed initially to the recent more evolved amendments and judgements. These are the landmark legislations the young generation needs to know and be proud of

10 Laws & Legislations that shaped the Indian Republic

The Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 - Made untouchability a crime

Even after India became an independent nation, it took the country five years to abolish untouchability with this law that penalises various manifestations of untouchability. It was though confined to instances of caste prejudice and discrimination, so the Rajiv Gandhi government came up with the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 to deal with the more violent caste-driven offences.

THE SIGNIFICANCE: The enactment of two untouchability-related laws, besides its practical benefits, had a symbolic value for a caste-driven country like India. These laws also gave India the respectability it wanted in the international arena.



Child Marriage Act of 2006 - Made child marriage a criminal offence

The Indian Government enacted the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2006 by replacing the earlier legislation of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, to ensure that child marriage is eradicated from the society. The object of the Act is to prohibit solemnisation of child marriage - that has been a common practice in many parts of India, especially in rural and semi-rural areas. It's been a gamechanger for the girl child in the country.

THE SIGNIFICANCE: This Act is armed with enabling provisions to prohibit child marriages and provide relief to victims and enhance punishment for those who abet, promote or solemnise such marriages.

73rd Constitutional Amendment - Brought panchayati raj

The Gandhian dream of Gram Swaraj or Panchayati Raj (village self-governance) became a reality in 1992 when the Narasimha Rao government made the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. **THE SIGNIFICANCE:** Panchayati Raj was always around but was bereft of real powers and funds. With this amendment, it acquired constitutional trappings and became a force to reckon with.

RTI Act 2005 - Led to substantial transparency

Besides specifying the limited organisations and categories of information exempted from its purview, RTI provides for independent appellate bodies and penalties for errant officials. **THE SIGNIFICANCE:** RTI has even made top government positions answerable for their actions!



Right to NOTA - Gave more agency to the voter

The Supreme Court, in 2013, ruled the right to register a 'none of the above' vote in elections to enable voters to exercise their right to reject all the electoral candidates. The ruling came about in the famous People's Union of Civil Liberties vs Union of India case that had challenged the validity of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961. **THE SIGNIFICANCE:** This legislation was empowering for voters and gave them the choice to 'reject all'.



The Hindu Marriage Act 1955 - Abolished polygamy

The Hindu Marriage Act 1955 was revolutionary in that day and age as it outlawed polygamy and introduced the concept of divorce. **THE STORY:** The debate for Hindu Code Bill in February 1951 led to bitter opposition. In 1952, the Nehru government revived the reform agenda and passed this act.



7th Constitutional Amendment - Introduced UT

The 7th Constitutional amendment enacted in 1956 introduced the concept of linguistic states and Union territories (UT). **THE STORY:** The push for this amendment came from the hunger strike of Potti Sreeramulu in 1952 for carving out Andhra state from the Telugu-speaking districts of Madras.



End of Article 377 - Decriminalised same sex relationships

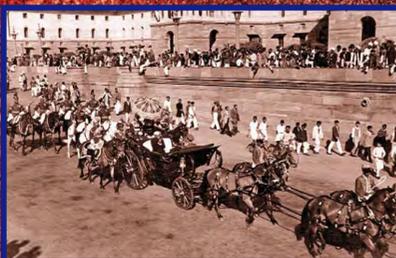
On July 2009, the Delhi High Court decriminalised sex between consenting adults of the same gender. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that criminalised homosexuality was introduced in 1861 during

the British rule in India. **THE SIGNIFICANCE:** This much-awaited judgement is historic and one that truly steered India towards modernity, making it a more inclusive Republic!

R-DAY PARADE IN 1950s

Photos: Rashtrapati Bhawan

The Republic Day has always been a celebration of the goods, glory and grandeur the nation has acquired and achieved. Check out these sepia-toned moments from the celebrations in the 50s



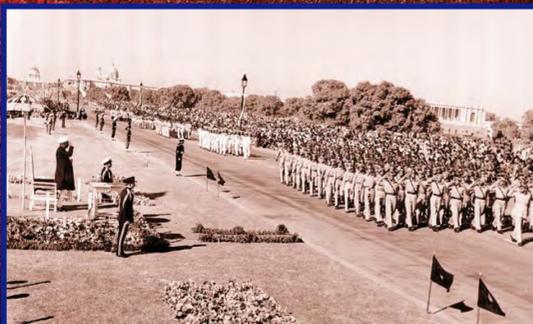
1953

When the newly-independent nation had modest arms and artillery for the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force



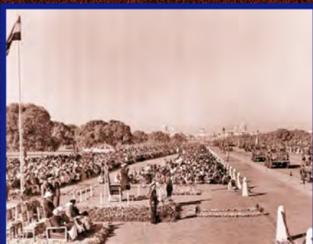
1957

The custom of offering the Gallantry Awards to children was started for the first time on R-Day by the Government of India in 1957



1954

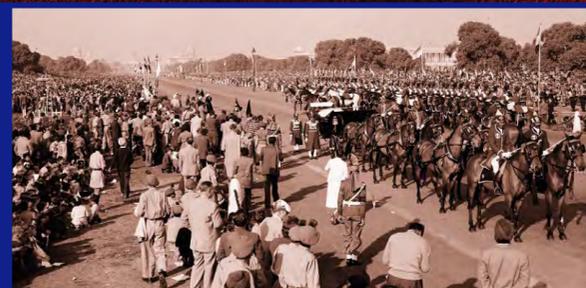
The then President of India Rajendra Prasad saluting one of the police battalions on the R-Day. It was a progressive year for the nation



1955

This year saw R-Day parade from the first time at Rajpath (that continues till date). Earlier years saw the parade at other venues like Ramliila Maidan, etc

1959
The Chief Guest on the Republic Day this year was Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, UK. He was the guest of honour, who praised India's progress as a developing nation



The Right to Education Act - Made education a fundamental right

The Right to Education Act 2009, prescribes minimum norms for elementary schools, prohibits unrecognised schools from practice and advocates against donation fees and interviews of children at the time of admission. **THE SIGNIFICANCE:** It made India one of the 135 countries to make education fundamental for every child.



The Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014 - Recognised transgenders

This is a proposed Act that seeks to end the discrimination faced by transgender people. The Bill was passed by the upper house Rajya Sabha on April 24, 2015, and Supreme Court officially recognised transgenders as a separate gender. **THE SIGNIFICANCE:** Marginalised for long, transgenders can now gain admissions and jobs based on their categorisation as Other Backward Castes (OBC).



Petrol @ 30 Paise, 10 gm gold for ₹88 but life expectancy was 27 years!

India...then and Now

January 26, 1950, seems like a long time ago...it indeed was. Seven-and-a-half decades later, let's take a quick glance at what it was back then and how the narrative has shaped in the recent years

Average Per Capita Income

What was it then: Minoo Masani wrote in his book 'Our India', "A man with a family has to live on much less than ₹27." That was the overall average income. **The narrative now:** The Economic Times reported that the average salary of a family per month now is ₹32,800.

Life span

What was it then: A per capita income of ₹27 per month and a life expectancy

of 27 years was by and large the norm back then. Although life expectancy increased to 32 years by the time India became a republic in 1950, but that 32 years was for the new India, 27 was for undivided India.

The narrative now: The life expectancy at birth in 2019 was 69.5 years for men and 72 years for women. It has dropped by two years since Covid-19 hit.

Literacy rate

What was it then: Census of 1951, with In-

dia geographically defined as it is now, only 18.3% of people were literate out of which male literacy was 27.2% and female literacy was 8.9%.

The narrative now: According to National Statistical Office (NSO) data, India's average literacy rate is 77.70%. male literacy at the India level in 2021 stands at 84.70% and female literacy is 70.30%.

Infant mortality rate

What was it then: The infant mortality rate was 146 for every 1000 live births.

The narrative now: The infant mortality rate for India in 2022 is 27.695 deaths per 1000 live births, a 3.74% decline from 2021.

Number of schools and colleges

What was it then: There were 2.10 lakh primary schools in 1950-51, 13600 middle schools and high and higher secondary schools were 7,416. There were 27 universities and 498 colleges in the country. **The narrative now:** As per the latest Central Government record, 14,94,052 schools in India including government, govt aided and private schools. As of October 2021, there are around 1,013 universities.

Petrol price

What was it then: It was less than 30 paise per litre. **What is the narrative now:** Petrol rate in New Delhi is around ₹96 for a litre.

Other costs

What was it then: A newspaper used to cost 13 paise, a movie ticket was priced at 30 paise, milk was for 12 paise but a raincoat was for ₹4. **What is the narrative now:** A newspaper costs ₹4 on an average, movie ticket is priced at ₹250, milk costs ₹45 and raincoat is worth ₹250.

Phone and connectivity

What was it then: There were fewer than 1,20,000 telephones in all of India at the time of independence. In other words, there were just 300 phones per million people. **The narrative now:** Today, there are 9,00,000 phones per million people!

Price of a ticket in Air India flight

What was it then: If someone wanted to fly from Mumbai to Delhi in 1950, he/she would have paid ₹140 for an Air India flight.

The Narrative now: The average cost of flying from Mumbai to Delhi in an Air India flight ticket ranges between ₹3,000 to ₹21,000.





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How is the chief guest selected?

The chief guest, who is always the head of state/ government from a country, is selected based on India's ties with that country. Factors include political, economic, and commercial relations, neighbourhood, military cooperation, prominence in regional groupings, or past association with the Non-Aligned Movement. The process begins 6 months ahead of Jan 26.



What happens after options are zeroed in?

The ministry of external affairs, after deliberations, seeks the Prime Minister's approval, after which the clearance of Rashtrapati Bhavan is sought. Thereafter, India's ambassadors in the concerned countries try to ascertain discreetly the potential chief guests' programme and availability for the Republic Day.



Who was the first foreign guest?

Indonesian President Sukarno was the first foreign guest. India and Indonesia had cultural relations dating back centuries, but Sukarno and Nehru shared similar ideals of anti-imperialism and secularism, and a deep friendship. Also, India played a key role in Indonesian National Revolution to suppress the Dutch attack.



Has there been any guest who has been invited more than once?

Former French President Jacques Chirac, the fourth King of Bhutan Jigme Singye Wangchuk, and the former Yugoslavian President Josip Tito are the three people who have been invited twice to the Republic Day as chief guest.



TEENNS

Take REPUBLIC Route, Trace The Root

Four teenagers, **DONNING THE TIMES NIE REPORTER HATS**, decide to take the parade route virtually, and trace the journey that made India a powerful Republic over a span of 72 years – with 'Made in India' military equipment to diplomatic dominance in Asia, and of course, a colourful extravaganza of unity in diversity. Meet **AADI, SUSHIANA, ADVIKA AND INAYA**, who take you on the Republic Day parade route, posing questions and seeking answers on how India strengthened its Republic roots

FORMER KINGSWAY

Starting from 1955, Rajpath became the permanent venue for the 26th January parade. Rajpath was known by the name 'Kingsway' at that time



R-DAY 1950-1954

During these years, the parade was held at Irwin Stadium (now National Stadium), Kingsway, Red Fort, and Ramleela Maidan, respectively

1967: A FIRST

Prez S Radhakrishnan couldn't take the salute due to ill-health. Guest Md Zahir Shah, the king of Afghanistan, then arrived on Jan 28



Did you know

Four times, in 1952, 1953, 1966 and 2021, India had no foreign chief guests for R-Day. In 1966, India's former PM Lal Bahadur Shastri had passed away on Jan 11; In 2021, due to Covid-19, UK PM Boris Johnson cancelled trip

The 'Royal' prefix was dropped from the Indian Air Force on the Republic Day in 1950. More than 100 aircraft took part in the first parade



The Indian Constitution is the longest one to be written in the world, with 444 articles divided into 22 parts and 12 schedules



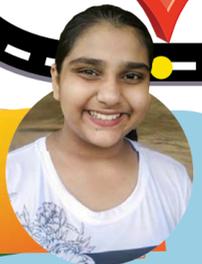
It took 166 days spread over 2 years, 11 months and 18 days to finish writing the Constitution. The work was headed by Dr BR Ambedkar



There are just two original handwritten copies of the Constitution, one in Hindi and the other in English. It has been preserved in helium-filled cases in Parliament



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What is the selection process of a tableau?

The ministry of defence constitutes a panel of distinguished persons from various fields of arts to help shortlist the proposals. The state governments and UTs have to send conceptualised proposals to the ministry by September-end. The ministry recommends that the tableau represents a historical event/ heritage/ development programmes/environment as themes.

If I were to design a tableau, what would be the criteria for the sketch?

The sketch design drawn on a scale of 1:1" should be simple, colourful, easy to comprehend and should avoid statistical data and unnecessary details. Writing or use of logos on tableaux is not allowed, except the name of state/ UT/ ministry/ department in Hindi, English and regional language.

And what if the sketch is approved and a model has to be prepared?

After the approval of the proposed sketch/design by the expert committee in its preliminary meetings, a three-dimensional model of the proposed tableau has to be prepared on the lines of the suggestions given by the panel. Final approval would be accorded only after the models are finally shortlisted by the committee.

What are the parameters based on which tableaux are approved?

The panel takes six or seven rounds of meeting at each phase – from sketch to final development – in deciding the final shortlist. It is based on factors such as visual appeal, impact on masses, idea, detailing, performance accompanying the tableau etc.



1 How arduous was India's journey to be a Republic?

It was difficult. Although India officially gained independence from the British on August 15, 1947, it remained a constitutional monarchy under King George VI, represented by Lord Mountbatten. To move forward as a republic, India needed to draft its own Constitution. It took three years for the Constituent Assembly to ratify it on Nov 26, 1949. The Assembly waited till Jan 26, 1950, to put it into effect.

Sushiana Sondhi
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New Delhi



2 Why was the date January 26 chosen?

During India's struggle for freedom, the Indian National Congress party voted for total independence (purna swaraj) from British rule, and this declaration was formally made on January 26, 1929. Hence, the date was a commemorative one.

3 Has Pakistan ever been invited?

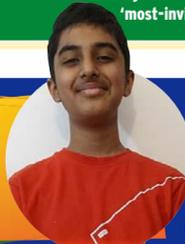
Pakistan has been invited twice. Governor General of Pakistan Malik Ghulam Muhammad in 1955, Rana Abdul Hamid, minister of food and agriculture, in 1965 were chief guests at the R-Day parade.

4 How many women guests have been invited?

Queen Elizabeth in 1961, Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in 2012, and Aung San Suu Kyi, State Chancellor of Myanmar, in 2018, have been invited as guests for the R Day.

WHICH IS THE MOST-INVITED NATION FOR R DAY?
French President Francois Hollande has been the fifth head of state to have been invited from France making the country the 'most-invited' nation.

Aadi Vasudevan
class IX, Sardar Patel
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WHEN DID THE BEATING RETREAT START?

In 1961, PM Nehru asked Maj G A Roberts to do 'something spectacular' in honour of Queen Elizabeth II & Prince Phillip's first visit post Independence.

HOW FAR ARE OUR WEAPONS INDIGENOUS?

In 2021, India showcased the progress made in indigenous defence technologies with the display of the Main Battle Tank, the T-90 Bhisma, Infantry Combat Vehicle Ballway Machine Pikate, etc

HOW LONG IS THE PARADE ROUTE?

For rehearsals, each group covers a distance of 12 km, but on Jan 26, they cover a distance of 9 km only

HOW MANY CONTINGENTS FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES HAVE TAKEN PART SO FAR?

Last year, the Bangladeshi contingent marched down the ceremonial boulevard on January 26, 2021. The members of the contingent were drawn mostly from units raised during the 1971 War, and several other units were raised before it. This was the third time that a contingent from a foreign country was taking part – the other two times being France (2016) and the UAE (2017).



The parade on Jan 26 begins with the arrival of the President. First, the cavalier bodyguards of the President salute the National Flag, and during this time, the National Anthem is played and 21 Guns Salute is also given. But do you know that firing is not done with 21 canons? Instead, 7-canons of the Indian Army, known as '25- Ponders' are used for firing in 3 rounds



Source: Government of India circulars, ministry of defence website, Wikipedia, TNM, ET, ministry of tourism, Delhi govt DOE