

Topic of the week for discussion: 22nd to 28th Jan 2015

Topic: 66th Republic Day: Highlights

Republic Day

- In India, **Republic Day** honours the date on which the Constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950 replacing the Government of India Act (1935) as the governing document of India.

Chief Guest: Barack Obama

- In a major diplomatic victory for the NDA government and a massive boost to Indo-American ties, US President Barack Obama accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invite to be the chief guest at India's 66th Republic Day Parade on January 26 2015. *This visit will mark the first time a U.S. president will have the honor of attending Republic Day, which commemorates the adoption of India's constitution. The President will meet with the Prime Minister and Indian officials to strengthen and expand the US-India strategic partnership.*
- Apart from flying in vehicles, equipment, oil tankers, choppers and thousands of American security personnel, US security agencies have decided to transport air from the US for the President's breathing needs during his stay in Delhi as the chief guest for India's Republic Day celebrations. The decision was taken after an advance team of US secret service agents who had landed in Delhi last week to oversee security preparations developed severe respiratory disorders after spending three days outdoors. As per plans, 20,000 gallons of breathable air will be brought by an American Navy ship to the Mumbai port from where it will be transported to Delhi via a highly-guarded tanker.

Motto: Nari Shakti

- As armed forces prepare to showcase "Nari Shakti" at the Republic Day parade on January 26, the Navy is working on a policy to allow women officer's on-board warships in the next few years. For the first time in history, all women contingents from the Navy, Air Force and the Army will march down the Raj path this Republic Day following a suggestion from Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself. While all the three wings of the armed forces have women officers on the roll, combat duties are not extended to them. "The living conditions in ships are entirely different. So now, we are modifying the ships and designing them as per the conditions required for women officers," Commodore B.K. Munjal, who is in-charge of the Navy's women contingent at Republic Day parade said.

Topic
Introduction

What to expect from Obama's Visit?

Terrorism has been common cause of concern for India and the US and both the countries have been cooperating with each other for a long time. Also Circulation of fake Indian currency notes (FICN) has been a worrying issue for India and it has been looking for the US' cooperation in checking it. India and the US are working on firming up agreements on counter-terror information sharing, cooperation in checking fake currency and easy visa facility for businessmen with the possibility of signing these during the visit of President Barack Obama. Official sources said "conversations" have been going on between Indian and American officials over the last two months on the three issues and there is a possibility agreements being signed. FICN mostly originates from Pakistan and are circulated by Pakistanis based abroad, they said. Easy access to visa for businessmen of both the countries is another key issue on which the two sides are looking at signing a pact.

Read further:

<http://www.theunrealtimes.com/2015/01/18/us-to-transport-20000-gallons-of-breathable-air-for-obamas-visit-to-delhi-for-republic-day/>

http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/barack-obama-accepts-pm-modis-invite-to-be-chief-guest-at-republic-day-celebrations_1502766.html

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/navy-working-on-policy-to-allow-women-onboard-warships/article6805293.ece>