

# Beating Retreat Ceremony

January 30, 2023

**In news**— The Beating Retreat ceremony, which marks the formal end of Republic Day celebrations, was held at Vijay Chowk in the national capital Delhi.

## A brief history of the ceremony-

- Also called 'Beating the Retreat' and **earlier termed the ceremony traces its origin in India to the early 1950s** when Major Roberts of the Indian Army indigenously developed the unique ceremony of display by the massed bands.
- The idea marks a **centuries-old military tradition when the troops ceased fighting**, sheathed their arms and withdrew from the battlefield to return to their camps at sunset at the sound of the Retreat.
- It would be accompanied by certain protocols, such as the lowering of flags.
- **The earliest origin may have been in 17th century England, when King James II ordered his troops to beat drums**, lower flags and organise a parade to announce the end of a day of combat.
- **The ceremony was then called 'watch setting'** and took place at sunset after firing a single round from the evening gun.
- Every year the ceremony is attended by the President of India, who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Prime Minister and Defence Minister.
- In the 2023 event United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) president, Csaba Korosi of Hungary was present at the ceremony.
- The President of India arrives in a cavalry unit escorted by the 'President's Bodyguards' (PBG). "When the President arrives, the PBG commander asks the unit to give the National Salute, which is followed by the

playing of the Indian National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana

### Who plays the music at the ceremony?

- The bands are a unique feature, and in the 2023 event 29 Indian tunes were played by the music bands of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the State Police and the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF).
- The bands play these songs and the national flag is unfurled.
- Military Bands, Pipes and Drums Bands, Buglers and Trumpeters from various Army Regiments perform during the ceremony.
- Besides, there are bands from the Navy and Air Force. Most of the tunes being played by the Army's Military Bands are based on Indian tunes.
- Notably, **in the 2022 event, an English hymn called *Abide With Me* was dropped**( the hymn was replaced by the popular patriotic song ***Aye Mere Watan Ke Logon***).
- ***Abide With Me* was written by Henry Francis Lyte**, a Scottish Anglican minister and son of a naval captain, **the hymn was a favourite of Mahatma Gandhi** and has been played in the Indian Beating Retreat ceremony since 1950.
- Since 2016, there have been more Indian tunes in the programme, including popular cinema music.
- A version of A R Rahman's Bharat Humko Jaan Se Pyaara Hai, Ma Tujhe Salaam, and Dil Diya Hai Jaan Bhi Denge were experimented with.
- It was always the last piece to be played by the brass bands before the troops receded up Raisina Hill to the tune of poet Allama Iqbal Saare jahan se achha.

Further

reading:

<https://journalsofindia.com/abide-with-me-hymn/>