Key Debuts in 77th Republic Day Parade

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Polity & Governance*

Why in News?

The 77th Republic Day Parade on January 26 will also feature many other firsts.

- **77th Republic Day Parade (2026)** – It will feature several historic firsts, including the debut of the indigenous Suryastra rocket launcher system and the newly raised Bhairav Light Commando Battalion.
- These additions highlight India's growing military innovation, cultural diversity, and jointness among the armed forces.
- **Parade Duration** – Approximately 90 minutes, with 18 marching contingents and 13 military bands.

Chief Guests for 77th Republic Day *– Ursula von der Leyen (European Commission President) and Antonio Costa (Prime Minister of Portugal), this dual guests reflect India's strengthening ties with the European Union.*

- **Key Military Debuts include**
  - **Suryastra Rocket Launcher System** – Indigenous universal rocket launcher with deep-strike, surface-to-surface capability up to 300 km, which highlights India's push for homegrown, long-range firepower.
  - **Bhairav Light Commando Battalion** – Newly raised unit specialising in rapid deployment and light combat operations, with an emphasis on flexible, modern warfare tactics.
  - **Shaktiban Regiment (Artillery)** – It is a newly raised regiment equipped with drones, counter-drone systems, and loiter munitions.
  - **Other Defence Assets** – Includes BrahMos missile system, Akash, Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM), Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS), Dhanush artillery gun and Static drone displays.
- **Unique Animal Contingents** – Animals described as "silent warriors" and force multipliers for the Army.
  - **Bactrian Camels** (two-humped, adapted to cold deserts).
  - **Zanskar Ponies** (native to Ladakh, hardy mountain animals).
  - **Army Dogs and raptors** (kites) are also included.
- It will be led by Captain Harshita Raghav of the Remount & Veterinary Corps, showcasing India's diverse ecosystems and military adaptability.

- **Flypast** – Rafale jets, Apache helicopters, and other advanced aircraft.
- **Mixed Scouts Contingent** – Debut appearance in heavy thermal gear, symbolising resilience in extreme climates.
- **Cultural tableaux** – Celebrating 150 years of “Vande Mataram”, with vibrant state and ministry displays.

Reference

The Hindu | Republic Day Parade to see many firsts

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