



Red Fort: Venue for the India's Independence Day Celebration

For Prelims: Red Fort, [1857 Rebellion](#), Indian National Army, National flag, Tryst with Destiny, [Archaeological Survey of India](#), [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#).

For Mains: Significance of Red Fort, Symbolic Elements of Indian Heritage.

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

As India proudly celebrated its **77th Independence Day**, the spotlight once again fell upon the **iconic Red Fort in Delhi**.

What are the Series of Events Associated with Red Fort?

▪ Historical Significance of Red Fort:

- **Under the [Delhi Sultanate](#):** Delhi emerged as a pivotal capital during the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1506).
 - **Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty**, termed **Delhi** the 'capital of all Hindustan' in the 16th century.
 - Despite brief relocations (**Akbar** shifted his capital to Agra) the **Mughals, under Shah Jahan, reestablished Delhi as their capital with Shahjahanabad in 1648**, known today as **Old Delhi**.
 - Shah Jahan laid the **foundation of his citadel, Lal-Qila or Red Fort**.
- **Symbolic Significance of the Mughal Emperor:** By the 18th century, the **Mughal Empire had lost most of its territories and power**.
 - They were still regarded as symbolic rulers of India by some sections of society, **especially by those who opposed British colonialism**.
 - The [1857 Rebellion](#) epitomized this connection, when people marched towards Red fort and **declared the aged Bahadur Shah Zafar as their leader**.

▪ British Imperial Rule and Transformation of the Red Fort:

- **British Capture of Delhi:** After subduing the 1857 Rebellion, the British intended to **erase the Mughal legacy by demolishing Shahjahanabad**.
 - While sparing the Red Fort, they stripped it of its grandeur, looted artworks, and replaced inner structures with British buildings.
 - This transformation left an indelible mark of British imperial authority on the Red Fort.
- **Utilizing Symbolic Authority:** Britishers recognized Delhi's symbolic power.
 - The **Delhi Durbar ceremonies** reinforced British dominance and proclaimed the monarch as the Emperor of India.
 - In 1911, the **British moved their capital to Delhi**, constructing a new city that

embodied the Indian ethos and centralized authority.

How Red Fort Became Venue for India's Independence Day Celebration ?

- The [Indian National Army's](#) trials at the Red Fort in the 1940s elevated its **symbolism**. These trials sparked sympathy for the INA and **intensified nationalist sentiments against British rule**, reinforcing the Red Fort's role as a symbol of defiance.
- As India approached independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, **decided to hoist the [national flag at the Red Fort](#)**.
 - On August 15, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted the National flag "Tiranga" at **Princess Park**, followed by his historic "**Tryst with Destiny**" **speech at the Red Fort on August 16, 1947**.
 - This was a **symbolic gesture of reclaiming the fort from British colonial rule and asserting India's sovereignty and identity**. It also marked the culmination of India's long and arduous struggle for freedom.
- **Since then**, every year on 15th August, the Prime Minister of India hoists the national flag and addresses the nation from the Red Fort.
 - This tradition has become an integral part of India's Independence Day celebrations and reflects its pride and patriotism.

About Red Fort

- The Red Fort, so called because of the **red colour of the stone** largely used in it, is **octagonal on plan**, with two longer sides on the east and west.
- The fort is a masterpiece of Mughal architecture and a symbol of their cultural and artistic achievements. It was **designated as a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) in 2007**.
 - Also, the fort is depicted on the reverse side of the new 500 rupee note.
- It is **currently under the management of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**, which is responsible for its conservation and maintenance.
 - The ASI has also installed various facilities for visitors, such as **museums, galleries, audio guides, light and sound shows, etc.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. In the context of Colonial India, Shah Nawaz Khan, Prem Kumar Sehgal and Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon are remembered as (2021)

- (a) leaders of Swadeshi and Boycott Movement
- (b) members of the Interim Government in 1946
- (c) members of the Drafting Committee in the Constituent Assembly
- (d) officers of the Indian National Army

Ans: (d)

- Prem Kumar Sehgal, Shah Nawaz Khan and Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon were the second-tier commanders of the Indian National Army (INA). **They underwent court-martial procedure by the British at Red Fort in 1945 and were sentenced to death**. However, following the widespread protests and unrest in India, they had to be released. **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q. With reference to the cultural history of India, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. White marble was used in making Buland Darwaza and Khankah at Fatehpur Sikri.
2. Red sandstone and marble were used in making Bara Imambara and Rumi Darwaza at Lucknow.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a)** 1 only
- (b)** 2 only
- (c)** Both 1 and 2
- (d)** Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

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