

MAHATMA'S FAVOURITE HYMN OUT OF BEATING RETREAT LIST

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The hymn is played by the 'Massed Bands' at the end of the ceremony.

The traditional Christian hymn *Abide with me*, believed to have been a favourite of Mahatma Gandhi, has been dropped from the list of tunes for this year's Beating Retreat ceremony. The tune had been played at the annual ceremony every year since 1950.

Abide with me is played by the 'Massed Bands' at the end of the ceremony, and this year, there are three tunes without it instead of the four tunes played last year, including the hymn.

The three tunes to be played by massed bands this year are *Kadam kadam badhaye ja*, *Drummers call*, and *Ae mere watan ke logon*. In contrast, the four tunes last year were *Bharat ke jawan* (new composition), *Kadam kadam badhaye ja*, *Drummers call*, and *Abide with me*.

In 2020 too, the tune was initially dropped from the list but was subsequently restored in the final list after protests from a cross-section of the public on social media. In addition, the national song *Vande Mataram* was played for the first time in 2020.

Beating Retreat is a centuries-old military tradition going back to the days when troops disengaged from battle at sunset. As soon as the buglers sounded the 'retreat', troops ceased fighting and withdrew from the battlefield.

Beating Retreat is performed every year on the evening of January 29 at Vijay Chowk in the national capital, and marks the end of the Republic Day celebrations.

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