**Syllabus subtopic:** Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

**Prelims and Mains focus:** about the national war memorial; significance of the republic day

**News:** In a first, homage will be paid to the fallen soldiers during the Republic Day parade this year at the National War Memorial. The ceremony had so far been conducted at India Gate.

**About the National War Memorial**

- The National War Memorial is located at the ‘C’ Hexagon near India Gate. It was built in memory of 22,500 Indian soldiers who had laid down their lives for the country after Independence.

- A new Amar Jawan Jyoti was also established there.

- Since its inauguration in February last year, the National War Memorial has been the venue for the guard of honour at all national events. The Amar Jawan Jyoti will be used for regimental events.

**Republic Day parade 2020**

- A major attraction at the parade will be the antisatellite missile tested under Mission Shakti by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

- The Army will showcase the recently inducted 155 mm Dhanush towed howitzer.

- There are 16 marching contingents this year, including six from the Army and 22 tableaux from various States and departments.

- The Army would be represented by a mounted column of 61 cavalry, eight
mechanised columns, six marching contingents and a flypast by the Rudra and Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopters of Army Aviation.

- The traditional Christian hymn “Abide with me”, believed to have been a favourite of Mahatma Gandhi, is back on the list of tunes for this year’s Beating Retreat ceremony.

- Additionally, the national song Vande Mataram will be played for the first time at the Beating Retreat this year.

**Why is 26th January celebrated as the Republic Day of India?**

- The Constitution came into effect on January 26, 1950, a date specially chosen to coincide with the anniversary of ‘Purna Swaraj Diwas’. January 26, 1930 was marked as ‘Purna Swaraj Diwas’, or the day the nation would attain complete freedom from its colonisers by the Congress.

- The members of the drafting committee felt that the birth of the constitution should be observed on a day that held some significance in their fight for independence. When India was ultimately granted freedom by the British in 1947, but on August 15 and not January 26, the date was instead assigned to celebrating India’s Republic Day.

- This was the day the Indian Independence Act was consequently repealed and India was established as a democratic republic, no longer a dominion of the British Crown.

**About Mission Shakti**

- Mission Shakti is a joint programme of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

- As part of the mission, an anti-satellite (A-SAT) weapon was launched and targeted an Indian satellite which had been decommissioned. Mission Shakti
was carried out from DRDO’s testing range in Odisha’s Balasore.