Republic Day Parade

How big is the tableau?

One such design guidelines stated by the Ministry of Defence is the following:

7. Dimensions

While preparing the sketches and subsequently, three dimensional models, the following approximate dimensions of the trailers and tractors, which will be supplied to them for the fabrication of the tableau, may be kept in view:

Trailer
Length   :   24' 8"
Width   :   8'
Height   :   4' 2"
Load carrying capacity   :   10 tons

The length, breadth and height of a single tableau should not exceed 45', 14' and 16' (from the ground level) respectively. If it is proposed to use any other vehicles under own arrangements, particulars thereof should be indicated in the proposal.

1. What do you notice? What do you wonder?
2. With the given design specification, what could be the maximum height of the tableau fabrication on top of the trailer/tractor?

Fast or slow?

During rehearsals, each group **covers a distance of 12 kilometres**, while the actual parade on January 26 is 9 kilometres long. The colorful tableaux, representing India's states and ministries, move at a **speed of 5 km/h.**

1. What can you tell about the ratio of the distance covered in rehearsal to that on the parade?
2. At the given rate, how long will it take to cover the distance of actual parade route?

Cost(ly)?

The cost of organizing the parade has increased significantly. For example, in 2001, it cost around Rs.145 crore, but by 2014, this rose to approximately Rs.320 crore.

1. By how much has the cost increased?
2. What percentage of the original cost is the increase of expenditure?

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History of the Republic Day parade and floats

India's first Republic Day parade was starkly different from the ones held today. On the morning of the first Republic Day celebrations in 1950, India's first President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, took oath of office in the presidential palace and then headed to Irwin Amphitheatre (now Major Dhyan Chand Stadium) where he raised the national flag and bands played the national anthem. He then took a salute at a march past of the armed forces and a fly past of air force planes. Records show that 3,000 officers of the Armed Forces, and more than 100 aircraft participated. However, there's no mention at all of cultural tableaux at this parade.

President Rajendra Prasad (in the horse-drawn carriage) readies to take part in the first Republic Day parade on Rajpath, now named Kartavya Path, New Delhi, in 1950. Image Courtesy: Wikimedia Commons

However, in the years to follow, the location of the parade moved from the Irwin Amphitheatre to Rajpath, now renamed Kartavya Path. In the book, *Designing Worlds: National Design Histories in an Age of Globalization*, Balasubrahmanyan writes that in 1952, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to the chief ministers of states explaining that the "concept of this procession and exhibition and everything else should be to demonstrate both the unity and great variety and diversity of India" and that this could happen if "states participate in these Delhi celebrations and take some responsibility for them". Each state was invited to send a tableau representing some distinctive feature of its people, performing arts, crafts and architecture, displaying India's rich diversity of regional costumes, dance forms and music along with dioramas and models of famous monuments. And that's how the first floats rolled down the avenue at the Republic Day parade. When tableaux were first introduced in the R-Day parade, they were simple. However, as the pageantry grew, so did the scale and grandeur of the floats.

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