



## The Ongoing Empowerment of Women with Willpower

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### History-Making Women Contingent Marches on Kartavya Path for 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day of India

#### Introduction

For the first time in Indian history, a dedicated women's contingent will march down Kartavya Path on the 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day. This contingent, consisting of 194 women officers, including IPS officer Shweta K. Sugathan, symbolizes a momentous step towards bridging the gender gap in the armed forces.

Robin Hibu, a senior official, stated that the inclusion of the women's marching contingent aims to bridge the gap between women and men in the armed forces. Notably, the women's pipe band will also be led by women officers.

Initially, there was some confusion regarding the eligibility criteria for regiments not having women in the required ranks. However, after issuing an officer memorandum in March 2023 and addressing various concerns, a final decision was made for women's participation in the 2024 Republic Day parade. Following detailed orientation, it was concluded that female personnel would participate in the march and the band only, as per the official memo. Preparations for the contingent's participation have been initiated for all involved ministries, departments, and organizations.

### French President Graces the occasion as chief guest

French President Emmanuel Macron will grace the occasion as the chief guest and has invited French aircraft to participate alongside their Indian counterparts. The parade's theme, "Viksit Bharat" and "Bharat Loktantra Ki Matraka," celebrates India's developed state and its role as the mother of democracy, as stated by Defense Secretary Sri Giridhar Aramane.

### Women take center stage across the parade

Women's marching contingents will form the major chunk of the parade, showcasing India's diversity from across the country. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi emphasizes that India truly embodies the spirit of a mother of democracy. This year's Republic Day also witnesses the maiden participation of transgender women contingents, marking a truly inclusive celebration.

### Indian heritage and culture celebrated in diverse forms

A distinguished committee comprising experts from art, culture, painting, and music has curated performances and displays that highlight India's rich heritage and cultural diversity. In a unique twist, 100 women artists playing traditional Indian instruments like shankh, nadaswaram, and nagada will replace the traditional bands, commencing the parade with a melodious flourish. Defense Secretary Aramane assures that this year's parade will showcase the best representation of women, both in the marching contingent and the fly-past. Notably, women pilots will participate in the Air Force fly-past, piloting some of the 29 fighter jets among the 56 military aircraft taking part.

### Agni veers make their mark

A tri-service contingent of 144 women Agniveers, with an average age of 20, will march in the parade, making it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these young recruits. The Indian Air Force's tableau, themed around "potent, powerful, and self-reliant," will feature Sukhoi-30 pilots Flying Officer Asma Shaikh and Flight Lieutenant Ananya Sharma, further underscoring the celebration of women's empowerment.

Prime Minister Modi sees the marching of the women's contingent as an embodiment of democratic values and a significant step towards achieving equal gender representation in the armed forces.

### [An ode to women through textiles and performance](#)

The Ministry of Culture's contribution comes in the form of "Anand Sutra: The Endless Thread," a textile showcase featuring nearly 1900 sarees from across India. This serves as a tribute to the rich emotional heritage woven into women's clothing, emphasizing the need for its respect and preservation. Around 1300 women will participate in cultural performances, marking the highest number of female performers ever seen in a Republic Day celebration. This 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day promises to be a historic event, celebrating India's progress, diversity, and the ever-increasing role of women in shaping the nation's future.

### [Conclusion](#)

#### [Tribute to mother of democracy](#)

India is witnessing a powerful surge in women's empowerment, evident in various spheres. From the 144-strong tricolors women contingent in the Central Armed Police Forces to the 100 women artists and flight crash pilots participating in a recent event, women are breaking barriers and proving their mettle in every field. These are the extraordinary women who stand tall, representing the immense potential of India's female population. They are the Armstrong's holding humanity aloft, the multi-taskers juggling diverse roles, and the change makers paving the way for a more gender-equal future. This year has seen a remarkable rise in women leaders, with many holding positions as prime ministers, defense ministers, and heads of various departments. It's a testament to India's commitment to nurturing female talent and providing opportunities for their growth. The New Delhi police's marching contingent comprised solely of women is a powerful symbol of this progress. These brave officers stand as role models, inspiring countless others to face challenges with courage and conviction. Empowering women isn't just about providing equal rights; it's about recognizing their inherent strength and unlocking their full potential. It's about creating a society where women can thrive, contribute meaningfully, and be valued for who they are.

## Reference

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