

International Day for Women in Maritime 2026



The National Maritime Day Celebrations Committee (NMDCC), under the aegis of the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, marked the International Day for Women in Maritime 2026 with a special programme celebrating the achievements and rising participation of women in the maritime industry. The event brought together senior government officials, maritime professionals, industry representatives, cadets and aspiring women seafarers.

The programme began with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by Chief Guest **Shri Sushil Mansingh Khopde, IPS**, Additional Director General of Shipping, signifying enlightenment, progress and the shared commitment towards strengthening women's role in the maritime domain.

Shri S M Rai gave the welcome address, narrating contribution of NMDCC in celebrating and highlighting sectors role in the growth and development of India's Sea trade and transportation. **Shri Sanjeev Mehra** read out the message received from **Shri Sarbananda Sonowal**, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. Shri Sonowal reaffirmed the Government of India's dedication to promoting gender inclusivity and expanding opportunities for women in the maritime sector under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi**.

Delivering a video message, **Mr. Arsenio Dominguez**, Secretary-General of the International Maritime

Organization (IMO), highlighted this year's theme, "From Policy to Practice: Advancing Gender Equality for Maritime Excellence." He stressed the importance of converting policy frameworks into meaningful action to ensure equal opportunities for women across the maritime ecosystem. He further emphasized that education, training, mentorship and inclusive leadership are essential to fostering innovation, sustainability, and excellence within global shipping.

In her message, **Smt. Ashwini Bhide, IAS**, Municipal Commissioner, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, underlined the need to transform policy commitments into real opportunities by creating inclusive and supportive work environments for women throughout the maritime sector.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Khopde emphasised the importance of enhancing women's participation in maritime careers through measures focused on safety, equality, skill development, scholarships, welfare schemes and institutional backing. Drawing from his experience in Bihar, he shared initiatives undertaken to empower women by ensuring security, dignity and employment opportunities within the police force. He also highlighted flagship initiatives of the Directorate General of Shipping, including 'Sagar Mein Samman', 'Sagar Mein Yog' and digital grievance redressal systems aimed at fostering a safer and more inclusive maritime environment.

One of the major highlights of the event was the unveiling of the five-year “Sagar Mein Samman” implementation roadmap by the Directorate General of Shipping in the presence of **Shri Dipendra Singh**, Deputy Director General of Shipping; **Capt. Abdul Kalam Azad**, Nautical Advisor and Deputy Director General of Shipping; **Shri Sudhir Kohakade**, Deputy Director General of Shipping and Member Secretary, NMDCC; **Dr. Kusum Kanwar** and **Ms. Ambika Singh**, Joint Chairperson of Sagar Mein Samman.

The roadmap outlines a phased approach focusing on awareness and policy strengthening in the first year; education, skill development and mentorship in the second year; welfare, healthcare and inclusive infrastructure in the third year; leadership, innovation, sustainability and international collaboration in the fourth year; and institutional integration along with long-term impact evaluation in the fifth year.

During the programme, distinguished women professionals were also honoured under the Sagar Mein Samman initiative for their exceptional contribution to the maritime industry. Those felicitated included **Mrs. Manisha Umakant Jadhav**, General Manager – Admin. & Secretary, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA); **Ms. Janhavi Mehta**, Senior Vice President, MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company – MSC Agency (India) Pvt. Ltd.; Chief Engineer **Ms. Pooja Kumari**, Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. and **Mrs. Aishwarya Gupta Pilankar**, Vice Chairperson, International Maritime Federation (IMF) and Head of the Women’s Wing, Forward Seamen’s Union of India (FSUI).

Another significant segment titled “Women Seafarers: Success Story” under the Sagar Mein Samman initiative showcased the inspiring journeys of young women pursuing maritime careers. Participants included **Cdt. Fateen Maqsood Ahmed Kazi**, a first-year B.Tech Marine Engineering cadet from Tolani Maritime Institute;

Cdt. Payal Sharma, a third-year B.Sc. Nautical Science student from the same institute and **Cdt. Vaishnavi Rajendra Kadam** from Anglo-Eastern Maritime Academy (DNS Batch – 16 August 2017). Their stories reflected determination, ambition and the growing presence of women in seafaring professions.

The event also featured an insightful panel discussion on “From Policy to Practice – Awareness of Gender Equality,” moderated by Ms. Ambika Singh. Panellists included **Ms. Sanjam Sahi Gupta**, President Emeritus and Founder of Women’s International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA) India and representative of the National Shipping Board; **Ms. Saleha Shaikh**, Founder of MUI Women’s Wing and Founder & President of Women in Maritime Association (WIMA India); Chief Engineer **Ms. Pooja Kumari**, SCI; Second Officer **Ms. Kamana Menshram**, SCI; and Fourth Engineer **Ms. Meghana Menon** of Seaspan Corporation. The discussion focused on the challenges and opportunities for women in the maritime industry, with emphasis on mentorship, workplace safety, progressive policies, and equal opportunities.

Adding colour and enthusiasm to the celebrations, the event concluded with cultural performances by maritime institutes and organisations. Performances included “Sagar Mein Samman – The Pride of Professionalism” by Samudra Institute of Maritime Studies (SIMS), “Waves of Change” by Anglo-Eastern Maritime Academy (AEMA) and “Waves Do Not Discriminate” by Mediterranean Crewing Services Pvt. Ltd. The performances celebrated diversity, inclusion and unity within the maritime community.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by **Shri Sudhir Kohakade**, who expressed gratitude to all participants, stakeholders and members of the maritime fraternity for their support and contribution towards making the celebration a success.

Glimpses of the Event



