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EW DELHI: After showcasing ‘Nari Shakti' in successive Republic Day parades over the last few years, the defence ministry now wants to take a big leap forward. The marching and band contingents as well as the tableaux and other performances should comprise only women during the January 26 parade next year, as per the [MoD](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/mod).



While other organizations like the CAPFs can come up with all-women marching and band contingents, the over 14-lakh strong armed forces will find it next to impossible.

[Women officers in the military have often led the contingents](https://m.timesofindia.com/india/spectacular-show-of-made-in-india-weapons-and-display-of-nari-shakti-at-republic-day-parade/articleshow/97341660.cms)during the annual parade. But the contingents themselves are exclusively made up of men PBORs (personnel below officer rank).

In a letter issued to the secretaries of the home, housing and urban affairs and culture ministries as well as the chief of defence staff and the three Service chiefs, the MoD’s department of ceremonials said that a “de-briefing” meeting with various representatives was chaired by defence secretary Giridhar

Aramane after the Republic Day parade this year on February 7.

“After the detailed deliberations, it has been decided that the Republic Day Parade, 2024, will be having only women participants in the contingents (Marching & Band), tableaux and other performances during the Parade at Kartavya Path,” it said.

“All the participating ministries/departments/organizations/agencies are, therefore, requested to start the preparation accordingly from now. Progress in this regard may be apprised to MoD time to time,” the letter added.  
Asked about this by TOI on Saturday, an MoD official said, “The intent is there. The feasibility is being examined. There is still a lot of time.”  
Women have been inducted in the armed forces as officers since the 1990s but they number just over 3,900 (around 1,710 in Army, 1,650 in IAF and 600 in Navy) in the 65,000-strong officer cadre. There are separately around 1,670 women doctors, 190 dentists and 4,750 nurses in the military medical stream, who all are officers.  
But till recently, there were no women PBORs. There are now 100 women jawans in the Corps of Military Police after the Army began recruiting women in “other ranks” in 2019-2020 for the first time. Under about all.