

President of India graces International Women's Day Celebrations 2026 at Manekshaw Centre

To achieve development in the true sense, we must ensure equal participation of women : President Droupadi Murmu

Union Minister Smt. Annpurna Devi hails Nari Shakti as the foundation of 'Viksit Bharat'

Two panel discussions held on Labour Codes – Enhancing Empowerment of Women and SHG Women as Entrepreneurs

Over 1,000 women leaders from around 200 Ministries, Departments and organisations join to celebrate Nari Shakti

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The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Government of India, organised a national-level programme at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi, to celebrate International Women's Day 2026.



The event was graced by the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu. It was held in the august presence of the Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annpurna Devi; the Minister of State in the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Smt. Savitri Thakur; and other distinguished dignitaries.



President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, delivered the keynote address. Addressing the gathering, the President said that women are playing leading role in every field—education, administration, judiciary, military, medicine, science, technology, arts and entrepreneurship. Women in rural areas are becoming financially self-reliant through Self-Help Groups. They are providing leadership to rural development in panchayats. Many women are leveraging their abilities and capabilities to provide leadership in industry, startups and the corporate world. They are excelling in sports too. Such examples instil confidence that, given the opportunities and support, women can achieve excellence in every field.

The President said that India is rapidly moving towards women-led development. Over the past decade, strong foundation has been laid for removing barriers in the path of women. India has achieved gender parity in school education. Even in higher education, the number of female students is higher in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio. Women's participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education is rapidly increasing. The Union Budget 2026-27 provides for the establishment of a women's hostel in each district to help STEM students continue their studies. Our daughters are getting ready for leadership roles in the knowledge economy.

Please click here to see the President's speech-

<https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2026/mar/doc202638815101.pdf>

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Shri Anil Malik, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, who described the President of India as “a source of inspiration and a pillar of light for all women of India.” He called upon everyone to “pledge together to see the divine power in all our girls, women, mothers and sisters,” and emphasised, ‘Let us not just celebrate it as a day but make it an everyday ritual.’”



Union WCD Minister Smt. Annpurna Devi welcomed the President by presenting a memento, an artwork depicting the Sarhul Nritya festival in clay, reflecting the rich cultural traditions of Jharkhand, along with a shawl featuring Sohrai art from the state.



Addressing the gathering, the Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annpurna Devi, remarked that the day celebrates the resolve, dedication and achievements of the women of India, who constitute half of the nation's population and form the foundation of a *Viksit Bharat*.

Hailing the presence of the President of India, she said that the President herself stands as a living example of how a woman, when given opportunity and respect, can rise to the greatest heights and illuminate a new path for society. She added that it is a matter of great pride that today the progress of India is increasingly being led by *Nari Shakti*, whose aspirations, leadership and contributions continue to shape the nation's journey forward and inspire millions of daughters across the country. "Today's women are not only homemakers but also nation-makers," she said, noting that because of the Government's policies, women's participation in the workforce has increased significantly over the past six years, rising from 22.3 percent to 41.7 percent.

During the event, two short video presentations highlighting the transformative role of women in India's development journey were screened.

The first short film, titled "*Nari Shakti, Rashtra Shakti*," highlighted the expanding participation of women across diverse sectors and their increasing presence in professions traditionally dominated by men. It featured women serving as Metro train operators, Sarthi drivers of Bharat Taxi, Postwomen, Drone Didis, and Petrol Pump Managers, among others. The film also underscored the growing leadership of women in India's economy, pointing to the rising number of women directors in companies and the positive impact of various financial and empowerment initiatives that are enabling women to emerge as key drivers of progress.

The second short video, showcased key Government policies, flagship programmes and initiatives aimed at strengthening women's empowerment across the country. Titled "*Nari Shakti: Viksit Bharat Ka Aadhar*," it traced India's shift from women's development to women-led development, emphasising how women today are emerging as key partners in the nation's growth. The presentation highlighted initiatives aimed at strengthening women's representation in democratic institutions from Panchayat to Parliament, enhancing safety and access to justice through measures such as ERSS, Women Helplines, women help desks at police stations, One Stop Centres, SHE-Box and Anti Human Trafficking Unit, and expanding economic opportunities through schemes such as Bank Sakhi, Mudra Yojana, Stand-Up India, Self Help Groups, and Bima Sakhi. It also underscored the growing participation of women in fields such as STEM, aviation, defence, and space, reflecting India's broader vision of Nari Shakti as the foundation of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Following the inaugural session, the programme continued with two panel discussions.

The first panel discussion, "Labour Codes – Enhancing Empowerment of Women", explored the implications of India's new Labour Codes for women in the workforce, focusing on issues such as equal wages, mentorship programs, workplace safety, social security coverage for women in the informal and gig economy, and measures to promote greater participation of women in formal employment. The panel

featured Shri Sanjeev Sanyal, Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister; Ms. Poonam Sharma, National President, FICCI FLO; Dr. Pinky Anand, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India; and Shri Ashutosh A. T. Pednekar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India.

The second panel, “SHG Women as Entrepreneurs”, focused on the role of Self-Help Groups in promoting women’s entrepreneurship and economic independence. Discussions centred on strengthening market linkages, access to credit and mentorship, digital platforms for market access, and enabling SHG members to transition from livelihood activities to scalable enterprises. The panel included Ms. Swati Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, Ms. Vimala R., Resident Commissioner, Government of Maharashtra, Goverdhan Rawat Deputy Managing Director NABARD and Ms. Gayatri Rao, Country Director, IMAGO Global Grassroots India.



The event witnessed participation of over 1,000 women from around 200 Ministries, Departments and organisations, including representatives from the Armed Forces, police, media, healthcare, sports, academia, government institutions and grassroots organisations. Their presence reflected the diverse contributions of women across sectors and their growing leadership in shaping India’s journey towards Viksit Bharat 2047.

International Women’s Day, observed globally on 8 March, celebrates the achievements and contributions of women across diverse fields and reaffirms the collective commitment towards gender equality, safety, dignity, and empowerment of women.

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Honoured by the gracious presence and inspiring address of Hon'ble President
Smt. Droupadi Murmu Ji on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Her words reaffirm our collective resolve to strengthen women's leadership and
promote equality.

Together, we remain committed to... <https://t.co/s4ey5NB7Z8>

— Annpurna Devi (@Annapurna4BJP) March 8, 2026

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