



Women's Participation in India's Maritime Sector Surges 340% Since 2020: Sarbananda Sonowal

“India remains committed to work with all partners to advance a safe, secure and stable Indian Ocean Region”: Sarbananda Sonowal

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Women's participation in India's maritime sector has increased by 340% since 2020, **Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), Sarbananda Sonowal** said here today, underscoring the government's push to build a more inclusive, future-ready maritime workforce.

Delivering the keynote address at the 10th Indian Ocean Dialogue in New Delhi, Sonowal highlighted “Nari Shakti” as a central pillar of India's maritime growth story. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal was joined by **His Excellency, Dhananjay Ramful, Foreign Minister of Mauritius**, and **His Excellency, Waleed Mohammed Al-Qadimi, Minister of State of Yemen**.

“Through initiatives like ‘Sagar Mein Samman’, we are advancing dignity, inclusion and leadership opportunities for women in the maritime sector, which has seen a remarkable rise of about 340% since 2020,” **Sarbananda Sonowal** said. “Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, this transformation in the maritime sector is helping shape a more inclusive, resilient and future-ready workforce for the Indian Ocean Region.”

The Union Minister positioned the surge in women's participation within India's broader maritime vision, combining economic growth with social empowerment. He noted that the “human element” remains central to India's maritime strategy, alongside efforts to enhance security, connectivity and sustainability.

“The Indian Ocean is not just a geographic space, but a global lifeline,” **Sonowal** said. “Its importance to global energy flows, trade and supply chains calls for stronger cooperation, resilience and inclusivity.”

Sonowal emphasized that India's maritime initiatives are aligned with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, including frameworks such as SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and MAHASAGAR, aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and ensuring equitable growth.

The 10th Indian Ocean Dialogue, hosted by India as Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for 2025–27, is themed “Indian Ocean Region in a Transforming World.” The forum brings together ministers, policymakers, academics and industry leaders to deliberate on maritime security, blue economy, disaster risk management and women's empowerment.

Under India's Chair of IORA, the forum focuses on “Innovation, Openness, Resilience and Adaptability,” with women's economic empowerment identified as a key cross-cutting priority area.

Sonowal also highlighted India's role as a “net security provider” in the region, pointing to initiatives in humanitarian assistance, maritime surveillance and disaster response. Sonowal stressed that no single country can address maritime challenges alone and called for collective action rooted in transparency and

respect for international law.

“India remains committed to working with all partners to advance a safe, secure and stable Indian Ocean Region,” Sonowal said.

The Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD), IORA’s flagship Track 1.5 platform launched in 2014 in Kochi, convenes ministers, policymakers, academics and industry leaders to deliberate on key regional issues. IORA comprises 23 member states and 12 dialogue partners, focusing on economic cooperation and sustainable development in the Indian Ocean Region, with women’s economic empowerment identified as a key cross-cutting priority alongside the blue economy. The 10th edition of the Dialogue, being held on May 7–8, 2026 in New Delhi, features dedicated sessions on maritime security, blue economy, disaster risk management, climate change and women’s empowerment.



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