



MT Swarna Krishna: International Women's Day

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Why in News

The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has flagged off an all-women crew onboard **Shipping Corporation of India (SCI)** vessel **MT Swarna Krishna**.

- The initiative is a part of SCI's ongoing **Diamond Jubilee celebrations** and also to commemorate the **International Women's Day (8th March)**.
- This is the **first time in the world maritime history** that a cargo ship is being sailed by all women officers.

Shipping Corporation of India

- **About:**
 - SCI was established on **2nd October 1961** by the amalgamation of Eastern Shipping Corporation and Western Shipping Corporation.
Two more shipping companies, Jayanti Shipping Company and Mogul Lines Limited, were merged with SCI in 1973 and 1986 respectively.
 - It is a Government of **India Public Sector Enterprise**. It operates and manages vessels that service both national and international lines.
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai.
- **Navratna status:** SCI was also awarded the prestigious "**Navratna**" status by Indian Government in 2008.
- **Disinvestment:** In November 2019, the Union Cabinet had accorded "in-principle" approval for strategic disinvestment of Government of India's shareholding of 63.75% in SCI along with transfer of management control to a strategic buyer.

Key Points

- **International Women's Day:**

- **About:** It is celebrated **annually on 8th March**. It includes:

- Celebration of women's achievements,
 - raising awareness about women's equality,
 - lobbying for accelerated gender parity,
 - fundraising for female-focused charities, etc.

- **Brief History:**

- Women's Day was **first celebrated back in 1911 by Clara Zetkin**, who was a German. The **roots of the celebration had been in the labour movement**.
 - It was only **in 1913, however, that the celebrations were shifted to 8th March**, and it has remained that way ever since.
 - International Women's Day was **celebrated for the first time by the United Nations in 1975**.

- In December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a **United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace** to be observed on any day of the year by Member States, in accordance with their historical and national traditions.

- **2021 Theme:**

- The UN has decided to keep the theme as **“Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a Covid-19 world”**.
 - Meanwhile, some groups of women have called for the theme to be **“Choose to challenge”**, claiming that the world only became alert about such issues if it was challenged.

- **Related Data:**

- According to the UN, **legal restrictions have kept 2.7 billion women from accessing the same choice of jobs as men**.
 - As of 2019, **less than 25% of parliamentarians were women**.
 - **One in three women** experience **gender-based violence**.
 - In 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, **female labor force participation in India was 20.5%**, according to ILO estimates. Comparable estimates for males was 76%.
 - In the **World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index** (which measures progress towards gender parity), **India slipped to 112th place in 2019-20**, simply because over 70 lakh Indian women have dropped out of work.

- **Safeguards for Women in India:**
 - **Constitutional Safeguards:**
 - **Fundamental Rights:** It guarantees all Indians the right to equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State on the basis of gender (Article 15(1)) and special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women (Article 15(3)).
 - **Fundamental Duties:** The Constitution imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen through **Articles 51 (A)(e)** to renounce practices derogatory to dignity of women.
 - **Legislative Framework:**
 - **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** It provides victims of domestic violence with a means for practical remedy through prosecution.
 - **The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:** It prohibits the request, payment or acceptance of a dowry.
 - **The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013:** This legislative act seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work.
 - **Related Schemes:** Women Technology Park, **Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI)**, etc.
- **World Conferences on Women:**
 - The United Nations has organized 4 **world conferences on women**. These took place in
 - Mexico City, 1975
 - Copenhagen, 1980
 - Nairobi, 1985
 - Beijing, 1995
 - The 4th **World Conference on Women (WCW)**, held in Beijing, was one of the largest ever gatherings of the United Nations, and a critical turning point in the world's focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
 - The **Beijing Declaration** is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality.
 - It sets strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern like women and health, women in power and decision-making, the girl-child, women and the environment.
- Recently, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has proposed a **Temporary Basic Income (TBI)** for poor women in developing countries to help them cope with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and alleviate the economic pressures they face every day.

Source: TH