

# Women in combat role soon, says Army chief

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IN A transformational move, the Indian Army is all set to open up combat positions for women, a gender barrier broken by only a few countries globally.

Army Chief General Bipin Rawat said the process to allow women in combat role, currently an exclusive domain of men, is moving fast and initially women will be recruited for positions in military police.



**Gen Bipin  
Rawat**

“I am looking at women coming as jawans. I am going to start it soon. Firstly, we will start with women as military police jawans,” he said, giving details of the move to allow women in the male-dominated positions in the Army.

Currently, women are allowed in a number of select areas, including in medical, legal, educational, signals and engineering wings of the Army, but combat roles are kept off limit for them due to operational concerns and logistical issues.

The Army Chief said he was ready to recruit women as jawans and the matter is being taken up with the government. “We have already started the process,” Gen Rawat told *PTI* in an exclusive interaction recently. He said women will have to show grit and strength in taking up challenges in combat role and

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shattering the glass ceiling.

Very few countries, including Germany, Australia, Canada, the US, Britain, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway, Sweden and Israel, have allowed women in combat roles.

The roles of military police include policing the cantonments and army establishments, prevent breach of rules and regulations by soldiers, maintaining movement of soldiers as well as

logistics during peace and war, handling prisoners of war and extending aid to civil police whenever required.

Creating history, the Indian Air Force, last year, had inducted three women as fighter pilots, less than a year after the government decided to open the fighter stream for women on an experimental basis.

A decision on having women as fighter pilots will be taken af-

ter evaluating the performance of the three women – Avani Chaturvedi, Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh – who are now part of IAF's fighter squadron.

The Indian Navy is currently deliberating on a policy on having women onboard the ships. The Navy allows women in various other segments including in legal, logistics, naval architecture and engineering departments.

**PTI**