

# Permanent commission for women in more branches of military soon

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Women officers will now be able to opt for permanent commission in some other branches of the armed forces, apart from existing ones like legal and education, though there is no plan to induct them in combat arms like infantry, mechanised infantry, artillery and armoured corps or allow them to serve on board warships and submarines.

"I wish to share some wonderful news with my brave daughters. Women officers who have been appointed through the short service commission (SSC) in the armed forces will get permanent commission (PC). The selection will be transparent and like the one for male officers," the PM said in his address.

Defence ministry officials said the government will now come out with a comprehensive policy on granting



The PM promised a transparent selection process for women via SSC

permanent commission to women officers in the next couple of months after consultations with the Army, Navy and IAF. The PM's announcement on permanent commission comes four months after the government told the Supreme Court that it was considering such a move.

Women officers, who un-

der the SSC can serve for a maximum of 14 years, have been demanding permanent commission for a long time but have had to contend with entrenched mindsets in the predominantly male environs of the armed forces.

Despite being inducted into the armed forces since the early 1990s, women offi-

cers (they are not inducted in lower ranks) number just 1,561 in Army, 1,610 in IAF and 489 in Navy in the 65,000-strong officer cadre in the over 14-lakh armed forces. Only around 350 women officers have been granted permanent commission till now. These figures do not include women officers in the medical, dental and nursing streams who are inducted through the PC route.

Under the new policy, women SSC officers in other wings like ordnance, signals, engineers, intelligence, air defence, logistics and air traffic control, among others, will also be able to opt for permanent commission. "The technicalities will have to be worked out. Will they, for instance, command air defence or engineering units in Army? Will they get PC in the flying stream in IAF and Navy?" a senior officer said.