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Vartika Joshi: The Woman Who Skippered India Around the World

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Vartika Joshi: The Woman Who Skippered India Around the World

Vartika Joshi skippered India's first all-woman crew to sail around the world. Six Indian Navy officers completed Navika Sagar Parikrama aboard INSV Tarini in 2017–18.

A **skipper** commands a vessel and takes charge of its safety. **Circumnavigation** means travelling around the world. Neither word means that one person sailed alone.

Sources: pib.gov.in

1. Who sailed, and where did they go?

Who were the six officers?

Lieutenant Commander Vartika Joshi, from Uttarakhand, commanded the crew. The other officers were **Pratibha Jamwal, P. Swathi, Aishwarya Boddapati, Payal Gupta and Shourgrakpam Vijaya Devi**.

The crew belonged to the Indian Navy. Tarini's achievement was the first Indian all-woman round-the-world voyage. It was a crew achievement, rather than a solo record.

Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini was built in India. It was a sailing yacht, rather than a large warship. The crew had to sail, navigate, maintain equipment and manage everyday needs.

Sources: pib.gov.in; indianexpress.com



INSV Tarini at Mauritius in June 2017, before the round-the-world voyage. Photograph: Indian Navy, via Wikimedia Commons, Government Open Data Licence – India. Displayed to fit; no endorsement implied.

How long did the voyage take?

Tarini left Goa on **10 September 2017**. The crew returned there on **21 May 2018**. The expedition lasted **254 days, including stopovers**.

The often-quoted distance is about **21,600 nautical miles**. Official return accounts also round the distance to over 22,000 nautical miles. These are rounded descriptions of the voyage, rather than different expeditions.

Do not read “254 days” as continuous sailing without entering port. Time in harbour was part of the expedition. Port stops allowed upkeep, supplies and meetings with local communities.

Sources: pib.gov.in

Quick check 1. Check 1: The crew sailed continuously for 254 days without stopping at any port. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

How did the route go around the world?

The planned stops were **Fremantle** in Australia and **Lyttelton** in New Zealand. The route continued to **Port Stanley** in the Falkland Islands and **Cape Town** in South Africa.

An unplanned halt at **Port Louis, Mauritius**, allowed repairs to the steering system. A repair stop does not turn a crewed round-the-world voyage into a different kind of voyage. It does mean the voyage was not non-stop.

Tarini crossed every longitude and crossed the Equator twice. The crew rounded **Cape Leeuwin, Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope**. Those route requirements distinguish a full round-the-world voyage from simply returning to the starting port.

Sources: pib.gov.in; rediff.com

Outward leg Goa → Fremantle → Lyttelton
Across the oceans Port Stanley → Cape Town
Return leg Port Louis repairs → Goa
This diagram shows the order of stops. It is not a scale map or an exact sailing track.

Sources: pib.gov.in; rediff.com

Quick check 2. Check 2: Tarini's route rounded Cape Leeuwin, Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

2. How did training support the voyage?

What did the officers need to learn?

In 2014, the Navy called for volunteers for the sailing project. About 30 of its 500 women officers volunteered.

The crew trained for about three years under **Captain Dilip Donde**. Classroom work covered navigation, radio use and weather. Practical training included sailing and maintaining **INSV Mhadei**, followed by Tarini.

Navigation helps sailors work out their position and choose a safe route. Weather knowledge helps them prepare for changing winds and waves. Maintenance skills matter because a workshop may be thousands of kilometres away.

The crew shared watches, cooking and repairs. Taking turns on watch kept the boat under observation while other crew members rested. A skipper's command therefore depended on skills across the whole crew.

Sources: pib.gov.in; indianexpress.com; timesofindia.indiatimes.com

Why was seamanship essential?

The voyage crossed remote seas, including the Southern Ocean. The crew faced cold weather, strong winds and large waves. Near **Cape Horn on 14 January 2018**, Joshi steered Tarini through a severe storm.

A yacht cannot simply stop beside a safe road when conditions worsen. The crew must adjust sails and steering while protecting people and equipment. Training made those practical responses possible.

The voyage also collected weather, ocean and wave data. Those data supported the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**. The crew reported marine pollution and discussed ocean sailing during port visits.

Sources: pib.gov.in

Quick check 3. Check 3: The voyage required only sailing skills, with no upkeep or weather training. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Which honours recognised the crew?

The team received the **Nari Shakti Puraskar for 2017**. The national award ceremony took place on **8 March 2018**, while the crew was sailing.

The award was physically presented to the crew on **24 May 2018** by **Maneka Sanjay Gandhi**. That handover followed their return. Award year, main ceremony date and the crew's handover date are different facts.

The six officers also received the **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award for 2017** in the water-adventure category. The award recognises adventure achievement, rather than giving the name of their expedition.

Sources: pib.gov.in

3. How do the different sailing records compare?

Does skipper mean solo sailor?

Solo means sailing alone. **Double-handed** means two sailors operate the vessel. A larger crew shares the work among more people.

Dilip Donde completed India's first solo round-the-world voyage in **2009–10** aboard Mhadei. His voyage included stops. **Abhilash Tomy** completed India's first non-stop solo round-the-world voyage in **2012–13**.

Joshi commanded a six-woman crew in **2017–18**. Calling her voyage "solo" would erase the other five officers' work. Calling it "non-stop" would erase the port calls.

Sources: pib.gov.in

> **Quick check 4.** Check 4: Vartika Joshi's crewed voyage and Dilip Donde's solo voyage describe the same record. *(True or False?)*
>
> See answer ↓

What happened in Navika Sagar Parikrama II?

Lieutenant Commander Dilna K and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A undertook Navika Sagar Parikrama II aboard Tarini. They left Goa on **2 October 2024** and returned on **29 May 2025**.

The second expedition used a **double-handed** crew. It was a separate voyage by two women officers. It did not replace Joshi as skipper of the original six-woman expedition.

Sources: pib.gov.in

Solo1 sailor: Donde's voyage

Double-handed2 sailors: Parikrama II
Six-woman crew6 sailors: Joshi's voyage
Crew size and whether a voyage stops in port are separate questions. A two-person crew is not a solo crew.

Sources: pib.gov.in

4. What changed with the 2026 tri-service voyage?

How was Samudra Pradakshina different?

Samudra Pradakshina used **Indian Army Sailing Vessel (IASV) Triveni**. Its nine women officers came from the Army, Navy and Air Force. "Tri-service" describes that group of three services.

The expedition was flagged off from Mumbai on **11 September 2025**. Its **314-day** voyage covered nearly **25,500 nautical miles across four oceans**. The crew crossed every longitude, the Equator twice and the International Date Line.

Triveni also rounded the same three great capes. The crew was flagged in on **22 July 2026**. Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** honoured the officers in New Delhi on **30 July 2026**.

The record concerns India's first all-women **tri-service** round-the-world voyage. Tarini's original crew came from the Navy alone. The different service mix explains why both achievements can be described as firsts.

Sources: pib.gov.in

> **Quick check 5.** Check 5: Triveni's tri-service crew included officers from the Army, Navy and Air Force. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Review your understanding checks

This page-session score is separate from the five practice MCQs below.

Questions and answers

Why are 254 days not 254 days continuously at sea?

The expedition total includes port stops. Sailing days and time away from the home port measure different things.

Why do the later voyages not cancel the original record?

The achievements involve different years, crew sizes and services. Joshi's first Indian all-woman crew remains a distinct historical achievement.

Which three names should I keep separate?

Vartika Joshi commanded the original crew. Tarini was their vessel. Navika Sagar Parikrama was their expedition.

Practice: 5 MCQs

Connect each voyage with its skipper, crew, vessel and record.

Practice MCQs

1. What was the name of the 2017-18 expedition in which INSV Tarini's all-woman crew circumnavigated the globe?

A. Tarini Vishwa Yatra

B. Navika Sagar Parikrama

C. Nari Sagar Abhiyan

D. Sagar Parikrama

See answer ↓

2. Who skippered the six-woman crew during the 2017–18 Navika Sagar Parikrama voyage?

A. Roopa A

B. Dilip Donde

C. Vartika Joshi

D. Abhilash Tomy

See answer ↓

3. Which set contains the three great capes rounded during the original Navika Sagar Parikrama voyage?

A. Cape York, Cape Leeuwin and Cape Comorin

B. Cape Comorin, Cape York and Cape Cod

C. Cape Horn, Cape Cod and Cape Comorin

D. Cape Leeuwin, Cape Horn and Cape of Good Hope

See answer ↓

4. The original Tarini expedition's 254-day duration included which of the following?

A. The complete voyage, including port stopovers

B. Only time spent sailing without interruption

C. Only training before departure

D. Only the final leg from Mauritius to Goa

See answer ↓

5. Which statement correctly distinguishes Navika Sagar Parikrama II from the original 2017–18 voyage?

A. It was a solo voyage commanded by Dilip Donde.

B. It used an Army, Navy and Air Force crew aboard Triveni.

C. It was the original six-woman voyage under a new name.

D. It used two women sailors, Dilna K and Roopa A, aboard Tarini.

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.**
   Navika Sagar Parikrama was the 2017–18 expedition aboard INSV Tarini. Vartika Joshi commanded six women officers of the Indian Navy. Tarini is the vessel's name; Navika Sagar Parikrama identifies the expedition. Sagar Parikrama is associated with earlier Indian solo sailing projects. The other two names do not identify this expedition.
   ↑ Q1
2. **C.**
   Vartika Joshi skippered the six-woman crew of INSV Tarini. Dilip Donde trained the team and held an earlier solo-round-the-world voyage record. Abhilash Tomy completed a separate non-stop solo voyage. Roopa A was one of the two sailors in Navika Sagar Parikrama II. Matching the year and crew size prevents confusion.
   ↑ Q2
3. **D.**
   Tarini rounded Cape Leeuwin, Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope. The route also crossed every longitude and the Equator twice. Returning to Goa alone would not describe that full route. The alternative sets substitute capes that do not form the expedition's three-great-capes requirement.
   ↑ Q3
4. **A.**
   The 254 days describe the complete expedition, including stopovers. The crew visited ports for upkeep and supplies. The total therefore differs from time actually sailing at sea. Training took place before departure, while the Mauritius-to-Goa passage was only the final part.
   ↑ Q4
5. **D.**
   Navika Sagar Parikrama II was a separate double-handed voyage by Dilna K and Roopa A. They sailed aboard Tarini in 2024–25. Joshi's original voyage had six women officers. The tri-service crew aboard Triveni belonged to Samudra Pradakshina. Donde's solo voyage was an earlier achievement.
   ↑ Q5

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** The 254-day expedition included stopovers. The crew visited ports for supplies, upkeep and outreach. ↑ 1
2. **True.** The crew rounded all three great capes while crossing every longitude and the Equator twice. ↑ 2
3. **False.** The crew studied navigation, radio use and weather. They also trained in repairs and upkeep. ↑ 3
4. **False.** Joshi led six officers. Donde sailed alone. Crew size is part of what makes each record distinct. ↑ 4
5. **True.** Tri-service means three services. Triveni's crew differed from the Navy-only crew of the original Tarini expedition. ↑ 5

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