When uniform's weight becomes badge of honour for SWAT team

Khushi.Bhuta@timesofindia.com

Piyal Bhattacharjee





New Delhi: When 26-year-old constable Aashima left her village in Haryana's Ambala district to join the Delhi Police, she became the first woman in her family—and in her village—to secure a govt job. Today, armed with an MP5 submachine gun and trained for high-risk operations, she is one of the 34 women who make up Delhi Police's elite Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) unit.

These commandos, trained in counter-terror operations, hostage rescue and VVIP protection, are experts in Krav Maga, building interventions and advanced weapons handling. The unit currently includes three women sub-inspectors and 31 women constables.

'A commando's father—that's how the village knows him'

Speaking with TOI, Aashima said her journey still feels unreal. "I used to see cops in movies as a child and feel inspired. Now my younger siblings tell me that they are inspired by me," she said.

Her pride deepens when she hears villagers refer to her father as "a commando's father". A trained sniper, she won a medal at an all-India shooting competition in 2024—a moment that further cemented her confidence.

'The uniform is more than a career, it's a legacy'

For constable Anshu, 26, from Meerut, the love for the uniform runs in the family. With her father in the Indian Army and her brother in UP Police, she grew up watching the Republic Day parade in awe.

"My favourite class was games, and I always enjoyed adventure sports," she said. The SWAT's gruelling physical regimen became an extension of that spirit. "The uniform is more than a career—it's our family's legacy."

Rising after injury, determined to stand tall

Not all journeys were smooth. Twenty-seven-year-old Palak from Sonipat, Haryana, nearly dropped out mid-training after a severe foot injury.

"It was my family that motivated me not to give up," she said. For her, joining the force was motivated by a fascination with weaponry and a conviction that financial independence is essential for women. "We should not have to depend on a husband or anyone to survive."

One of her favourite moments on the job? Flying in a helicopter during a training assignment.

Inspiring the next generation

Aashima recalled an encounter that stayed with her. A young woman approached her during deployment and said she had once dreamed of joining the force but could not pursue it. "She told me that seeing me made her feel that Indian women can reach great heights," she said. "That is what the uniform means to me."

Training that doesn't stop

The women joined Delhi Police in 2022, beginning their initial training at the Police Academy in Jharoda Kalan. Over time, they have undergone several advanced programmes across the country, including courses in unarmed combat.

They undergo refresher modules every three to four weeks, revisiting rappelling, optical training, day and night firing and cross-country physical training. On non-deployment days, they participate in mock drills to keep their skills sharp.

In tactical gear, they carry pride and purpose

As they patrol with heavy gear and heavier responsibilities, the women of Delhi Police's SWAT unit say the job fills them with pride, resilience and purpose.

With every drill, deployment and mission, they are reshaping how strength and courage are imagined—one that future generations of women can look up to.



ACP Apurva Verma cracks UPSC exams

Assistant Commissioner of Police (CR Park) Apurva Verma secured All India Rank (AIR) 42 in the UPSC Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2025, marking a significant milestone in her career. Verma had earlier joined the police service through the Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands Police Service (DANIPS), gaining valuable field experience before attempting the civil services examination. She described this attempt as her final one and expressed satisfaction at successfully clearing it. Reflecting on her journey, Verma said it had been a rewarding and enriching experience. "My overall journey has been great. When you serve in one service and then move to another, you carry that experience with you. It also brings greater clarity and perspective. Overall, it has added significantly to my work profile," she said.

Crime patrol: 'Jhansi' team at forefront

The 'Jhansi' scooties, which are exclusively operated by women police officers, actively patrol areas surrounding schools, colleges, office complexes, and JJ clusters, providing a highly visible and reassuring presence, particularly for women and young girls. These patrols are designed not only to prevent crime but also to create a sense of safety and confidence among the local community. Every vehicle in the fleet is fitted with advanced GPS tracking systems and is managed by specially trained personnel, ensuring that officers can respond quickly and effectively during emergencies while also acting as a strong deterrent to potential offenders. In addition, the officers maintain constant communication, alerting one another whenever they observe any suspicious activity, unusual behaviour, or potential threats in their vicinity. This proactive approach helps in maintaining public safety and enhances the overall sense of security in the areas they patrol.