

**VARSHA JOSHI**, head of Delhi's transport, power departments



VIPIN KUMAR/HT

## A green energy warrior bent on breaking barriers

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As the head of Delhi's transport and power departments, Varsha Joshi is at the forefront of the Capital's fight against pollution.

Under her tenure, the Delhi government brought out the city's solar policy, and soon a unified parking policy for the Capital will be out, apart from a separate set of rules for taxis and junk vehicles.

She has been a green energy warrior since her days in the ministry for new and renewable energy (MNRE). She broke several barriers to introduce India's first wind prediction system in Tamil Nadu and set the ball rolling for bidding in the wind industry.

A 1995 batch IAS officer, Joshi started her career as an SDM in Delhi. A single mother, she finished her Master's in Physics from DU's Hindu College and ranked 10th in UPSC-CSE exam.

Joshi says that deep domain knowledge and trust of her colleagues are what makes her stand out in two of the "extremely male dominated sectors of power and transport".

"Everyone assumes they know more than you. And then, they try to talk you down. We should know that it becomes a male thing because there

just happen to be more men in the sector. There is no other reason," she says.

But, she asserts, having domain knowledge is a must. "You can't shoot in the dark. You have to understand the core principles. You have to make it clear that you know what you are talking about. At the same time, you should know when the other person is talking bullshit."

Apart from MNRE, Joshi also fondly remembers her stint at the Census of India. "I was part of the core team for digitisation of census data. It was like creating history of sorts because of the sheer volume of data. But, that's the beauty of India and I am proud of it," she said.

Joshi has always found space for what she loves doing since her childhood. "When I was 4 or 5, I was fascinated by the designs of offices and houses. I used to make offices and houses while my friends played," she says.

Putting her life philosophy in context, she shares an incident from her days in SDM office. "During a dowry related inquest, I found that it was a suicide and did not register a case. However, the victim's relatives tried to pressure me and when I didn't relent, I was transferred. My successor filed a case but the court threw it out. I was vindicated." "I don't fight battles I can't win," she says.

### RAPID FIRE

**Most sexist thing said to them at work:** A man wrote that "despite being a lady" I was able to do "some work"

**One thing they could change about Delhi:** The reluctance to use public transport

**One thing all women should remember:** Be yourself