



Murlikant Rajaram Petkar

India's 1st Paralympic Gold Medalist Swimmer

Padma Shri Awardee 2018

Name: Cfn. Murlikant Rajaram Petkar

Born: 1st November 1944;

Place of Birth: Islampur, Sangli District, Maharashtra.

Among his many recognizable feats, the most extraordinary one is that **Mr. Murlikant Rajaram Petkar brought India's First ever Olympic Gold Medal in the Summer Paralympics held at Heidelberg, Germany in the August of 1972.** At the same event, he had also created a **new world record in 50 M Freestyle swimming (37.33 seconds).**

Throughout his sporting career he has won laurels for the country at events like the Stoke Mandeville International Paraplegic Meets held in England where he consistently outdid his own records and won the General Championship Cup for 5 consecutive years (1969-73); the 3rd Commonwealth Paraplegic Games held at Edinburgh, Scotland where he bagged Gold in 50 M Freestyle Swimming, Silver in Javelin Throw and Bronze in Shot-put; the International FESPIC Games in Hong Kong in 1982 where he created another world record in 50 M Swimming, among others.

Mr. Petkar's love for the sports shone through in his early schooling years as he excelled at sports like wrestling, hockey and athletics. On being enrolled in the Boys Battalion of the Indian Army in Secunderabad, he soon established himself as a strong sportsperson and excelled at every sport he tried a hand at.

In 1964 he was chosen to represent Indian Army in Boxing at the International Services Sports Meet to be held at Tokyo, Japan. On returning, he was transferred to Jammu and Kashmir where he started training to be an armourer along with preparing himself for the Nationals.

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Unfortunately this star player found himself at the onset of the 1965 Indo-Pak War at the Sialkot Sector while he was in Kashmir. Petkar suffered multiple gunshot wounds, was run over by a car, lost his memory and as a blaring reminder of the horrific incidence he still has a bullet lodged in his spine. However, showing extraordinary courage, he made significant recovery over the next two years. In 1967, he became the Maharashtra State Champion in Shot-Put, Javelin throw, discus Throw, Weight Lifting, Table Tennis and Archery. He consistently kept moving upwards from becoming a state champion to a national one and soon enough representing the country in more than one sport at various international sports meets.

Maharashtra's highest sporting award, the Shiv Chhatrapati Award has also been awarded to him **at the hands of Nawab Ali Yawar Jung, then Governor of Maharashtra, in 1975**. This was in light of his various athletic achievements and the fact that he was the National Champion for 7 Years straight from 1968- 76, for which he was also given special recognition by the Mayor of Pune, Mr Thorat. In 1972, he began working in TELCO (Tata Motors), Pune, where he was at the post of Senior Assistant in the Public Relation Department.

Considering all his efforts, **Padmashree (India's 4th Highest Civilian Award)** was awarded to him by the then **President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, on 26 January 2018**.

In spite of having been a loyal serviceman and an extraordinary athlete, Mr. Petkar has been subject to injustices on both political and social level, yet his contribution to the field and the subsequent honour which he deserves remain indubitable. Mr Petkar has overcome innumerable odds in his extraordinary career as a professional sportsman. He has been extensively covered by international and national media for his various feats. Recently featured in the book "Courage Beyond Compare", he is now going to be the subject of a biopic based on his many struggles and his extraordinary resilience in conquering them all.

On 3rd of December 2023, his **Achievement images were showcased at the Qatar Olympic and sports Museum's Permanent exhibition in the State of Qatar at Doha, Qatar by the Qatar Government**. His images are also showcased in the **Prime minister Sangrahalay, New Delhi in India**. A significant milestone was celebrated on **14th June 2024**, with the global premiere of his biopic "**Chandu Champion**".

Received the **Arjuna Award (Lifetime) 2024** at the hands of the **Honourable President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu ji, at Rashtrapati Bhawan** in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Para-Swimming. He was also conferred with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** on the sidelines of the **Army Sports Conclave at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantt, by General Upendra Dwivedi, PVSM, AVSM, Chief of the Army Staff**, honouring his extraordinary service and sporting legacy.

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