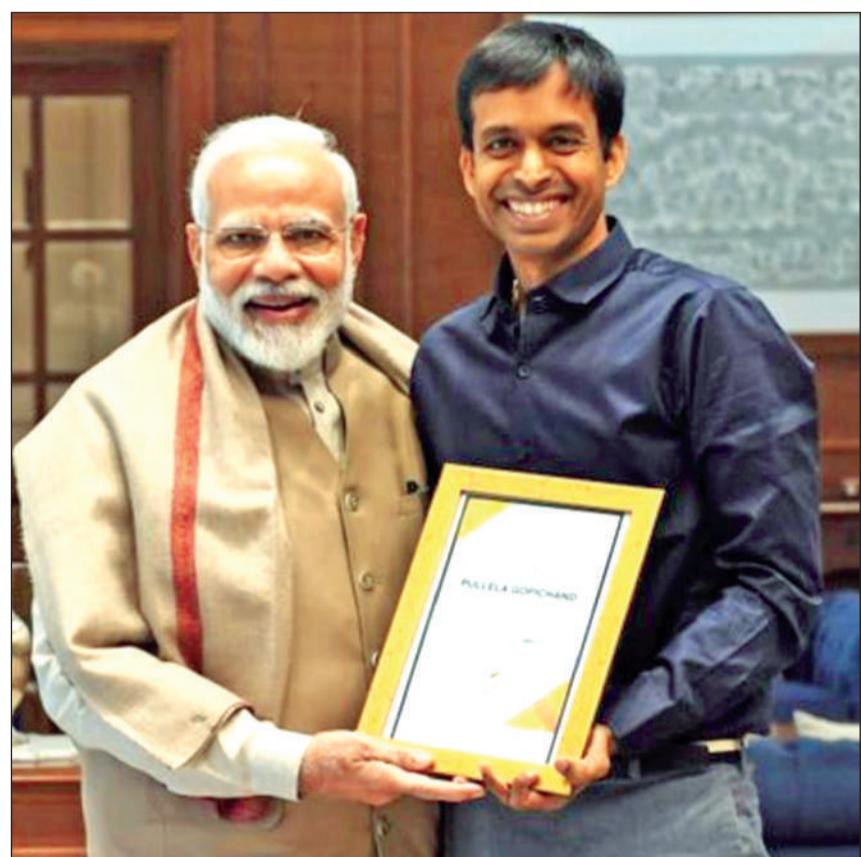


## Pullela Gopichand: The man who put Indian badminton on global radar



**T**he legend behind the champions, Pullela Gopichand is widely known for his exploits as a coach. His world-class academy in Hyderabad has churned out multiple superstars who have kept India's flag flying high in major tournaments. Among the array of world beaters, none more than Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu have been successful, winning multiple major titles including Olympic medals. Gopichand is undoubtedly the main reason behind India's golden generation.

His humongous coaching achievements overshadowed his playing days. Not to forget that Gopichand was a talented player himself. Having won the National Badminton Championship title five times in a row, he won a silver in the team event and a bronze in men's singles of the 1998 Commonwealth Games. Among the other titles, his major feat was the prestigious All England Open Badminton Championships in 2001. He is the last Indian shuttler to bag that title and only the second from the country ever to claim it. Earlier, Prakash Padukone had won in 1980.

It took a while for the current chief national coach of Indian badminton team to set-up his academy. In 2008, the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy (PGBA) was finally completed. Besides the several playing courts, the academy also has gym, swimming pool, cafeteria among others.

With wooden flooring of the courts made as per international standards, it also has physiotherapy. Besides, the academy also possesses quality Indian and international coaches. A focused physical and mental training is provided on the players to prepare for the pressure of playing in major tournaments.

Saina Nehwal was the first major player to come out of the academy. As a budding player, she showed a lot of promise with several trophies, including the World Junior Badminton Championships title in 2008. Gopichand was by Saina's side to guide her at every step as she went on to win 11 Super Series titles. But her Olympic performances caught everyone's eyes.

After becoming the first Indian to qualify for the quarterfinals of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, she went a step further in 2012. In the London Games, she bagged a Bronze to become India's first badminton player to get an Olympic medal. Gopichand's influence behind the scenes was finally getting noticed.

Next up was PV Sindhu! The youngster from Hyderabad slowly started to come out of the shadows of Saina. The two Bronze medals she won in the 2013 and 2014 World Championships put the spotlight on her. But it was in the 2016 Rio Olympics, she had her major moment with a Silver medal. Sindhu then went on to win many other titles including a World Championships in 2019.

His academy produced many another world class players like Kidambi Srikanth, Parupalli Kashyap, HS Prannoy and Sai Praneeth. The rise of these stars from being a budding talent to a world beater has to be credited to Gopichand. His world class facility is a major reason behind India enjoying a generation of global superstars.

In his playing career from 1991 to 2004, Pullela Gopichand won numerous national and international championships. Here's a list of championships he had won medals in –

1996 – 2004 – Held his trophy of National Champion

1998 – Won two gold and one silver at Indian National Games, at Imphal

1997 – Runner Up at India Open Tournament

1998 – Bronze at Commonwealth Games In Malaysia

1999 – Gold medal at Le Volant d'Or de Toulouse, Scottish Open, and India International Runner up at French Open and German Open

2000 – Bronze at Asian Championship in Indonesia

2001 – Gold medal at All England Open

2004 – Gold medal at India Asian Satellite

Indian badminton owes it's success to the great Pullela Gopichand. The Indian government also awarded Pullela Gopichand with numerous awards, Arjuna Award, 1999

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, 2001

Padma Shri, 2005

Dronacharya Award, 2009

Padma Bhushan, 2014

Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar, 2013, under Category Establishment and Management of Sports Academies of Excellence- Pullela Gopichand Academy of Badminton, Hyderabad.

### THE FACT CORNER

#### Did you know?



The human eye has a resolution of about 576 megapixels

#### Did you know?



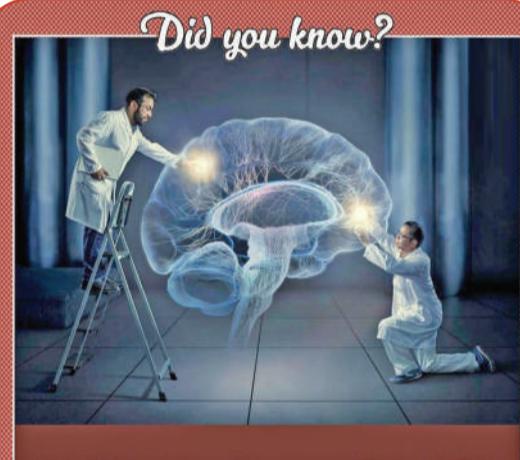
Queen ants can live for over 30 years, making them one of the longest living insects

#### Did you know?



Women speak about 20,000 words a day. 13,000 more than the average man.

#### Did you know?



Scientists have discovered how to find your bad memories and DELETE them from your mind for good

### BRAIN TEASERS

1 Q. There are several books on a bookshelf. If one book is the 4th from the left and 6th from the right, how many books are on the shelf?

2 Q. What do you get when you divide 30 by 1/2 and add 10?

3 Q. I am a three digit number. My tens digit is five more than my ones digit. My hundreds digit is eight less than my tens digit. What number am I?

4 Q. If it were two hours later, it would be half as long until midnight as it would be if it

were an hour later. What time is it now?

5 Q. There are two ducks in front of two other ducks. There are two ducks behind two other ducks. There are two ducks beside two other ducks. How many ducks are there?

6 Q. Can you arrange four nines to make it equal to 100.

7 Q. Sam is 54 years old, and his father Joe is 80. How many years ago was Joe three times the age of his son Peter?

7. 41 years ago.  
6.  $99+9/9 = 100$ .  
5. Four ducks (in a square).  
4. 9pm.

3. 194.  
2. 70.  
1. 9 books.  
SOLUTIONS

### English Proverbs and Meanings

\* **Don't dig your grave with your own knife and fork.**

Don't do something yourself which causes your own downfall.

\* **Familiarity breeds contempt.**  
Knowing somebody very well may lead to a lack of respect for them.

\* **Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.**  
Inexperienced people act in situations that more intelligent people would avoid.

\* **Half a loaf is better than none.**  
You should be grateful for

something, even if it's not as much as you wanted.

\* **He who hesitates is lost.**  
If you delay your decision too long, you may miss a good opportunity.

\* **He who pays the piper calls the tune.**  
The person who provides the money for something should control how it is spent.

\* **He who plays with fire gets burnt.**  
If you behave in a risky way, you are likely to have problems.

### Red Velvet-Coconut Biscotti



**Ingredients:**  
1 package red velvet cake mix  
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, 3 eggs  
1/4 cup vegetable oil  
1/2 cups sweetened flaked coconut  
1 package white chocolate chips  
1 tablespoon shortening

#### Method

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Combine cake mix, flour, eggs, and oil in a large bowl; beat using an electric mixer until smooth and creamy. Fold in flaked coconut. Divide dough in half. Shape each portion into a 4 1/2x12-inch log and place onto a prepared baking sheet. Bake in the preheated oven until firm, about 25 minutes. Remove from oven and reduce oven temperature to 310 degrees F (155 degrees C). Place loaves onto wire racks until cool enough to handle, about 5 minutes, retaining parchment on baking sheets. Slice logs into 1/2-inch slices and place biscotti onto the prepared baking sheets. Bake in the hot oven for 8 minutes, turn, and bake until dry, about 8 more minutes. Remove and place onto wire racks to cool completely.

Place white chocolate in the top of a double boiler over simmering water. Stir frequently, scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula to avoid scorching, until chocolate is melted, about 5 minutes. Stir in shortening to thin out chocolate. Drizzle white chocolate over cooled biscotti and let dry, about 1 hour.

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### Cinnamon Stars



**Ingredients:**  
2 2/3 cups finely ground almonds  
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon lemon zest  
1/3 cup egg whites  
1/8 teaspoon salt

2 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar  
1 3/4 teaspoons lemon juice  
**Method**  
Stir together the almonds, cinnamon, and lemon zest until combined. Beat the egg whites and salt until soft peaks form. Slowly sift in the confectioner's sugar, continuing to beat until the mixture is stiff. Set aside 1/3 cup of the egg white mixture for the glaze. Fold in the almond mixture. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (170 degrees C). Line the cookie sheets with parchment paper. Roll the dough to 1/4 inch thickness on a surface that has been sprinkled with confectioners' sugar. Using a 2 1/2-inch star cookie cutter, cut out the cookies and place them on the cookie sheets. To make the glaze, add the lemon juice to the reserved egg white mixture, stirring until smooth. Brush the tops of the cookies lightly with the glaze. (If the glaze starts to thicken, add a few more drops of lemon juice.) Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. When done, they will be light brown and soft in the center. Remove and cool on wire racks.