

Shamsher Khan: India's First Olympic Swimmer

The Indian delegation at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics comprised 59 athletes participating in eight different sports. While the Indian hockey team yet again drew the limelight that year with another Olympic gold medal in their caps, the forgotten heroics of India's fastest ever swimmer had many hearts racing.

The narrative of Mehbob Shamsher Khan - the first ever Indian swimmer to participate in the Olympics - has somehow steeped in the annals of history being unheard. It was only October last year, his story resurrected in the media with the news death at the age of 92. Khan died of a cardiac arrest at his native village of Kythapalli in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.

A tryst with the Olympics

Almost six decades ago, Shamsher Khan became a national hero after he finished fifth in the qualifiers of 1956 Melbourne Olympics and participated in both breaststroke and butterfly events. He was the first Indian to achieve this feat. Till date, no Indian has been ranked as high as Khan at the Olympic qualifiers. A national record holder in swimming, Khan equally proved his mettle in sports like diving and water polo.

In 1946, Khan had joined the Indian Army while he was still a teenager. He was inducted into Bangalore's Madras Engineer Group. In his 27 years of army career, Khan went on to serve in the Indo-China war of 1962 and the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971.

Khan, who would swim in the Krishna river during his childhood days, decided to take up swimming professionally during his days with the army. After quite a long session of training, in 1949, Khan participated in his maiden swimming tournament in Mysore. It was the beginning of his illustrious career.

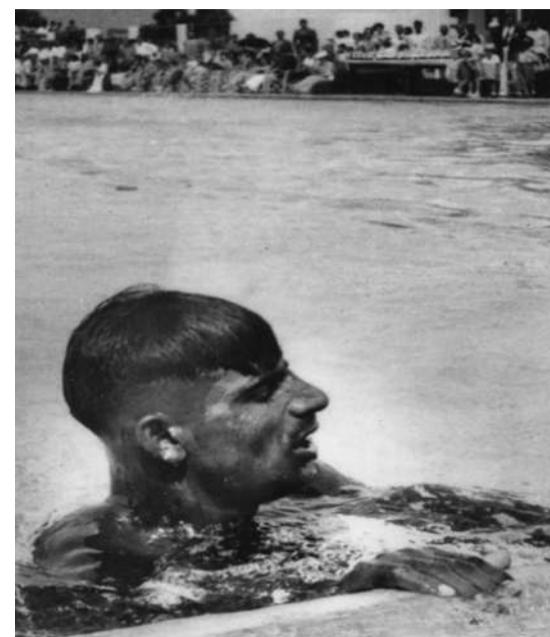
In 1954, Khan set a national record in the 200m butterfly event. He went on winning different events all across India. It was followed by the 1955 national meet in Bangalore, where he swept all the records. This feat eventually won him a ticket to the 1956 Olympics.

The journey to Melbourne was a difficult one, as the then Indian government could only sponsor his airfare. To fend for himself, Khan secured a loan of Rs.300 from the Army. The Army deducted the entire Rs.300 from his salary after his return from the Olympics.

Though the sporting ecosystem in India has witnessed a sea change today with significant upheaval in infrastructure, Khan's record at the Olympics remains unbroken. At Melbourne, he participated in both the 200-meter butterfly and breaststroke events, after securing the 5th spot in the qualifiers.

Unable to secure a podium finish, Khan desperately wanted to try for another bout at the 1960 Olympics. His dreams, however, were marred by a shortage of financial resources. The government was not ready this time to send Khan. He continued to serve in the Army till 1973. After his retirement as a Subedar, Khan settled in his native village with his wife and children. With time, Shamsher Khan was a forgotten name in the sports fraternity.

During his last years, Khan was not in his best of health. He survived three severe heart attacks in 2012. His family used to

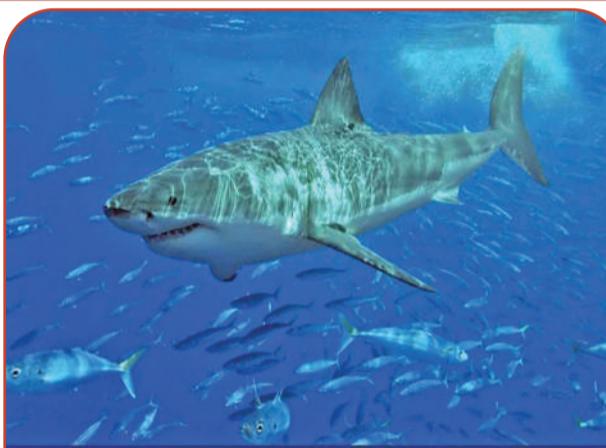


run on farming and were distressed owing to dire financial conditions. Unfortunately, nobody from the Government or any sports body came to his support even after Khan's house got washed away in the 1990 Andhra Pradesh cyclone. Despite moving from pillar to post for government assistance, his pleas fell on deaf ears. Though he wanted, his sons to join the army and take up swimming failed expectations from the government left him only with grief. Shamsher Khan was a true Indian hero, whose achievements have left a mark for athletes to take inspiration from.

THE FACT CORNER



Lobsters can live for up to 50 years



Sharks have no air bladders, so they must swim constantly or they'll sink



A single bat can eat more than 600 bugs in one hour, which is like a person eating 20 pizzas a night



The fastest land animal in the world is the Cheetah, clocking a max speed of around 113 km per hour (70 mph)

BRAIN TEASERS

1 Q. Replace the ? by the correct Mathematics symbol to make the expression true
18 ? 12 ? 4 ? 5 = 59

2 Q. Solve this logic number sequence puzzle by the correct digit
8080 = 6
1357 = 0
2022 = 1
1999 = 3
6666 = ?

3 Q. I know a three positive numbers that will results the same when multiplied together or added together.

4 Q. By using numbers 7,3,7,3 and with any maths signs can you make number as 24

5 Q. If $1 + 9 + 11 = 1$, Then what is the value of $12 + 11 + 9 = ?$

6 Q. Let us say that a table tennis tournament was going on with knock out terms which means the one who loses the match is out of the tournament. 100 players took part in that tournament.
How many matches were played?

7 Q. If $77x = 189x = 345x$.
What is the value of x?

SOLUTION:
1. $18 \times 12 \div 4 + 5 = 59$.
2. 4 .
3. three positive numbers
4. $7 * ((3 / 7) + 3) = 24$.
5. 10
6. 99 matches.
7. 0(zero) off course.

English Proverbs and Meanings

* All cats are grey in the dark.
People are undistinguished until they have made a name.

* All's well that ends well.
There is a solution to everything even though there are doubts.

* All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.
Everybody needs a certain amount of relaxation. It is not good to work all the time.

* An empty purse frightens away friends.
When one's financial situation deteriorates, friends tend to

disappear.

* An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
It is easier to prevent something from happening than to repair the damage or cure the disease later.

* Anger is the one thing made better by delay.
When you are angry, it is best not to speak or act immediately.

* Be swift to hear, slow to speak.
Listen carefully before speaking.

Roasted Baby Potatoes



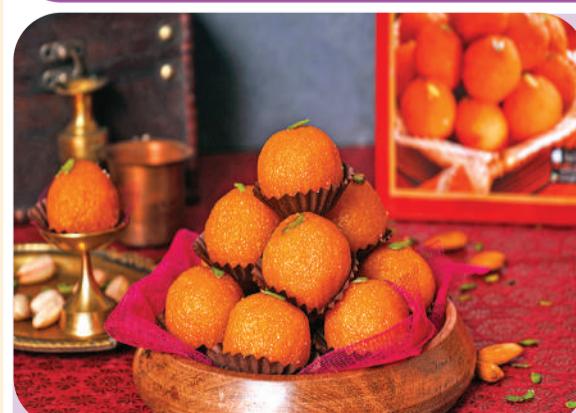
Ingredients:
400 gm small potatoes with skins
1 teaspoon thyme, 4 cloves garlic
salt as required
1 teaspoon rosemary
1 1/2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 handful parsley
1 teaspoon black pepper

Method:
To begin with this easy recipe, just wash the potatoes and pat dry them. Do not peel the skin. Next, preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius. In the meantime, take a baking tray and grease it with a little oil. Place it inside the oven so that it gets piping hot. Take large bowl and add the baby potatoes, olive oil, chopped garlic, thyme and rosemary along with salt and black pepper. Mix well all the ingredients.

When the tray becomes hot, take it out of the oven using mittens and arrange the seasoned potatoes. You can sprinkle some parsley and keep some for garnishing. Roast the potatoes to perfection. Roast the seasoned baby potatoes in the oven for 20 minutes until they become golden and crispy. Garnish with fresh parsley.

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Motichoor Laddoo



Ingredients:
2 1/2 cup gram flour (besan)
3 cup ghee
2 pinch baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoon green cardamom
1/2 teaspoon edible food color
For The Main Dish
3 cup sugar

2 cup water

Method
To make this traditional Indian sweet at home, take a large bowl to add 2 1/2 cups of gram flour, then mix orange colour and mix it well. Then, add some water and a little baking soda.

Blend the mixture well and make sure, there are no lumps. Once the blend attains a perfect consistency. It's time to move to the next step.

Now, heat ghee in a large deep frying pan. Place a perforated ladle on top of the oil and add some of the batter. Slowly let the boondi batter fall in the oil and cook them on a low flame, till properly cooked. Once done, place the boondi on a tissue paper to remove excess oil.

Then, take a pan and add some water and sugar, allow this blend to boil until it attains a two string consistency. Then add some cardamom powder and let it cook.

Then add the boondis and cook till the sugar syrup and boondi is perfectly mixed.

Cover it with the lid and turn off the flame.

Grease your hands with a little ghee and start shaping the laddoos. Place them in an open tray and garnish with some crushed pistachios and indulge in the goodness.