

HT SPOTLIGHT

SPIRITED PERFORMERS

Game, set and match to true grit

STANDING TALL These are two tales of sporting excellence with different shades. One showcases a Kanpur-based woman handball player's journey through the ups and downs of life and the other puts the spotlight on how an ace weightlifter has to contend with a difficult ground reality at home but remains determined to scale new heights



Jyoti Shukla on her return to Kanpur from the Asian Games.

MANOJ YADAV/HT

Jyoti first from Kanpur to represent India in Asiad

Haidar Naqvi
haidar.naqvi@hindustantimes.com

KANPUR: Jyoti Shukla became the first Kanpur sportsperson to represent India in any Asiad when she played for the country as a member of the women's handball team in the Jakarta Palembang Asian Games. The women's handball team finished ninth in the recently concluded Asian Games.

It was no mean feat for a player from a city, which is otherwise synonymous with cricket and cricketers.

Little wonder, her father Shiv Shankar Shukla describes Jyoti as a gritty girl.

He says she overcame many obstacles to make it to the Indian team at the age of 20.

"She made it to the Indian team despite our family facing its worst financial crisis for the last 10 years," he says. It was not

easy for the family to make ends meet as Jyoti's parents had to provide for her four siblings as well.

For Jyoti's success, the family gives credit to her courage and the help she received from her school's sports teacher Ramakanti, coach Rajat Aditya Dixit and Atul Misra.

Jyoti started playing handball when she was in class 6 at the Purna Devi Girls Inter College. Her teacher Ramakanti had introduced her to handball coach Atul Misra in 2008 and he started training her at the Green Park stadium.

Success came quickly as she won her first gold medal at the district level handball championship in 2008 and another gold at the national level handball championship in 2009.

Impressed by her skills, Rajat Aditya Dixit referred her to the Sports Authority of India Hostel in Lucknow in 2010 for rigorous training. Within three months, Jyoti got a good platform to exhibit her talent at the regional, district and later at the national level. She won a gold medal at the state level championship in 2011 and another gold medal at an international championship in 2015, besides a bronze medal in Uzbekistan.

Jyoti also won a gold medal in the South Asian Handball Championship in Dhaka in 2016. She represented the country in Sweden too but the team failed to secure any position there.

In Singapore, she bagged the Young Rising Player Award in 2016.

Her success in handball got her a job with the North Eastern Railway in 2016. She was head TTE (travelling ticket examiner) at Gorakhpur and played for the railways, Dixit said.

No proper road to her house, Punam still paves future with hope

Sudhir Kumar
sudhir.kumar@hindustantimes.com

VARANASI: Reaching weightlifter Punam Yadav's house at Dandupur village in Varanasi is not easy. A mud road leading to the dwelling turns slippery after light rain.

The Commonwealth Games gold medal winner and her family have no choice but to negotiate the slushy stretch as the promise to build a concrete road has not been fulfilled.

Punam Yadav and her family members either walk or drive on the over 200 metre dirt track to reach the Varanasi-Sindhaur road. A narrow path connecting her house to the nearest road from the other side is also muddy.

After Punam struck gold in the Commonwealth Games in the 69 kg category in April, the then district magistrate Yogeshwar Ram Mishra visited her village and announced that the mud road leading to her house will be made 'pucca'.

Almost five months later, the weightlifter's family is still waiting for the promise to be kept.

"The then DM sahib visited my house to congratulate us on Punam's victory in the Commonwealth Games.

He wished Punam good luck and promised construction of an asphalt or concrete road to my house. But the road is yet to be built," her father Kailash Yadav says.

It is too difficult to drive a scooter on the dirt track, he complains. He hopes road construction will begin after the rains as a consignment of material (stone chips) was dumped near the site over a month ago.



Punam Yadav and her father Kailash on a dirt track that leads to their house on the outskirts of Varanasi.

RAJESH KUMAR/HT PHOTO

ALMOST FIVE MONTHS LATER, THE WEIGHTLIFTER'S FAMILY IS STILL WAITING FOR THE PROMISE TO BE KEPT.

pucca road has made things inconvenient. The path turns slippery and a scooter may slide.

Nevertheless, she expresses confidence the road will be constructed eventually.

A district administration official says, "A consignment of stone chips has already reached the site to construct a road leading to the weightlifter's house. Construction work will begin very soon."

Things are also looking up for Punam on the job front. She says the state government has started the process for appointing her as a regional sports officer.

She recently visited Lucknow and met the authorities concerned in this connection. Later,

she filled in forms and completed other formalities for the job.

After her Commonwealth Games feat, a government job was announced for her.

She says she told officials that she was not interested in joining as deputy superintendent of police but was keen on becoming a regional sports officer. The state government authorities accepted her decision and the process to appoint her as RSO has begun, she says.

"Sports is my passion. I can't stay away from it. Therefore, I decided to be a regional sports officer. As an RSO, I will work to create an environment for promotion of sports. I will train the youngsters who want to make a career in weightlifting," she says.

She says she will work to realise her dream of having a sports stadium equipped with the best training facilities at her village.

She says she will also try to participate in the next Commonwealth Games.

EXPRESSIONS

An hour of empowerment

At the Community Empowerment Lab (CEL) in Lucknow, we do a lot of talking about Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC)—extended periods of skin-to-skin contact between the mother and her newborn along with exclusive breastfeeding—how effective it is compared to traditional incubators, how often it should be given, what it will take to increase uptake.

However, there is a barrier to articulating the intangible aspects of this practice. To truly understand KMC, you have to give it, so that's what I did. I went to the Veerangana Avanti Bai Women's Hospital in Lucknow and gave KMC to a baby for just one hour. I will try, briefly, to describe this wonderful overwhelming experience.

When they placed him on my chest and I felt his small heart beating against my own, I understood everything we promise to mothers when we say KMC is more than just a recommended healthcare practice. I felt love, responsibility, agency, bonding and empowerment. I had no prior attachment to this baby; I didn't even know his name until halfway through, but this put our bonding into even sharper, more undeniable relief.

I wanted to stay by him, convince him I loved him, that everything would be okay, and that I would protect him. I was praying over him and singing to him. I was actually healing this baby as he slept on my chest, and he was healing me. At the end of the hour, I didn't want to give him up. I wish I had the vocabulary to adequately articulate what can only be described as the divinity of this experience.

And now, I can't help but wonder why something so beautiful and successful, has only been championed in field of healthcare in recent decades. It is with intentionality that I call this practice "innate": 21st century public health researchers didn't invent KMC. Rather, its effectiveness is rooted in human nature itself, and this cannot be ignored. Since the fascination with technology has failed to do much in the way of curbing neonatal mortality, it is time to look within for revival.

Modern medicine must stop



Kangaroo mother care refers to the practice of continuous skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby.

circumventing humanity in trying to solve public health problems. In 2000, the team at CEL started a movement, right here in UP, with the simple and powerful idea that mothers and babies should be at the centre of innovation in maternal and newborn health.

Fifteen years later and KMC is on the verge of a massive expansion. There are now KMC lounges in 68 hospitals and CHCs, designed to provide empathetic spaces in which women are empowered to do the very thing they were built for. They are finally and rightfully recognized as powerful beings with agency and ability. These lounges are the manifestation of the groundbreaking realisation that acknowledging human nature transforms lives. And being reminded of this doesn't just heal the babies or the mothers; allowing ourselves to be inspired into action by this focus on humanity can heal the brokenness in the healthcare system, and it may be the only way to begin healing our society.

We can present studies and statistics to convince someone of the benefits of this practice, but for anyone still skeptical, I recommend they try it. Give KMC and put what research tells us: the proof of its power will be inspirational. Take an hour, feel empowered.

MARISA WILLSON
(The writer is a student at Stanford University in the United States where she is completing her BS in Human Biology and Global Child Health. Views expressed are personal.)

short stories

MAN RAPES FRIEND'S WIFE IN MOVING CAR

MEERUT: A man allegedly raped the wife of his differently-abled friend in a moving car on Delhi-Saharanpur highway in Baghat district on Tuesday, police said. Superintendent of police, Baghat, Shailesh Kumar Pandey said a case had been registered in Baraut Kotwali on the complaint of the rape survivor's husband. Police said the complainant claimed that he had developed friendship with Farooq who later started visiting his house in Baraut area of Baghat. He said Farooq telephoned him on Monday and said he was going to Ghazabad for some work and, if he wanted, his wife could go with him to meet her sister there.

Believing Farooq, the man allowed his wife to go with him. Farooq, who used to claim that he treated my wife as his sister, started molesting her in the car. When she resisted, he raped her at gunpoint," he told the police.

Couple ends life on board North East express train

KANPUR: A couple consumed poison on board the North East express train in outer of Kanpur railway station and died on Wednesday. They had eloped from Muzaffarnagar on August 30 and were living together in Allahabad. They were recovered from a flat and were being taken back to Muzaffarnagar where the girl's father had filed a complaint of kidnapping against Mohammad Abid with Meerpur police. Kanpur SHO of GRP Ram Mohan Rai said the couple was brought down to Kanpur central in the morning. From here the police team accompanied by girl's father changed train and board NE Express.

Kanpur girl goes missing from IIT Roorkee

KANPUR: A physically challenged M Tech first year student from Kanpur has gone missing from IIT Roorkee's Khosla hostel. Akansha Dwivedi, who is from Roor, Kanpur Dehat, had taken admission in electrical engineering in July this

year. She had done her B Tech from an engineering college in Lucknow, where her grandmother also lives. Her father SP Dwivedi, a hardware dealer in Roor, said she had come for an exam on September 1 to Lucknow and reached Roorkee on September 3.

Notorious criminal nabbed in encounter in Pratapgarh

ALLAHABAD: A wanted notorious criminal was injured in an encounter with cops in Kandhai area of Pratapgarh district. The injured criminal identified as Javed was arrested while two of his accomplices managed to flee the scene. Javed, who had several cases of loot and murder against him, was admitted to the district hospital where the doctors referred him to SRN hospital in Allahabad. SP Pratapgarh Dev Ranjan Verma said, on a tip off, the police team spotted Javed and his two aides at his native village Garhaidih in Kandhai area on Wednesday. However, instead of surrendering, Javed and his accomplices opened fire on policemen. **HTC**

EX-RANJI PLAYER COMMITS SUICIDE

GORAKHPUR: A senior officer of the North Eastern Railway (NER) and former Ranji cricketer allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself at his official bungalow in the Shahpur area here, police said on Wednesday. Tarun Shukla, 56, who was posted as the deputy chief commercial manager, was found dead in the drawing room of his residence on Tuesday afternoon and a revolver was found lying near him, they said. A two-page suicide note was recovered from the spot.

Police have found that the handwriting in the suicide note matches with that of Shukla and post-mortem report is awaited.

Shukla was a Ranji Trophy cricketer. A native of Bareilly district, had been the captain of NER railway cricket team for 10 years and played in the Ranji Trophy from 1980 to 82. **PTI**

IPS OFFICER'S SUICIDE BID



Family members of IPS officer Suresh Das in Kanpur. (Right) Officials outside Regency Hospital where Das was admitted.

MANOJ YADAV/HT

Police officer seemed deeply troubled, say personal staff

HT Correspondent
htletters@hindustantimes.com

KANPUR: Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Suresh Kumar Das had cancelled all his engagements on Tuesday and did not come out of his residence after 4pm, his followers (personal staff) told the authorities on Wednesday. The followers posted at this residence also told the authorities Das seemed deeply troubled.

The officer was posted in Kanpur as superintendent of police (East) on August 7. His in-laws live in Sarvodaya Nagar, Kakadeo, on the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) campus.

His wife Ravena, pursuing a masters course in surgery, is a resident doctor at Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Memorial (GSVM) Medical College here. Her father Ravendra Singh is a medical officer with the ESI Corporation and mother Reena Singh is a homemaker.

The in-laws had come down to Das's residence in the evening and stayed back. The Singhs haven't spoken about the purpose of their visit or why Das was distressed.

Additional director general of police (Kanpur zone) Avinash Chandra said the officer consumed poison under mysterious circumstances and the reason behind it was personal.

"Our priority right now is saving his life; we will investigate the reasons threadbare

FAMILY REMAINS TIGHT-LIPPED

KANPUR: The family members of IPS officer Suresh Kumar Das reached Kanpur from Lucknow on Wednesday but refused to comment on the suicide attempt by the IPS officer.

All his mother Indu Devi said was: "Ab kya kaha babu?" (what should I say son)."

His brother Narendra Kumar Das tried to say something but held

himself back before joining his mother and wife Sunita in the car. The family was present when the forensic experts opened the room and collected evidence. The family belongs to Ballia but later settled in Lucknow. Suresh Kumar Das studied electrical engineering but chose to become an IPS officer. His superior officers said he was a clear headed and hardworking officer. **HTC**



Suresh Kumar Das.

later," he said.

The news of Das attempting suicide left the police shell-shocked in Kanpur.

Some officers spoke to his followers in the house, who said Das had virtually locked himself in the room. Around 4pm, he told his gunner and driver that he won't be going anywhere.

NEIGHBOURS AND FRIENDS IN PRAYER

Neighbours and family friends are praying for the life of Suresh Kumar Das, whose family stays in Ekta Nagar locality behind SGPPI in Lucknow. His family, including father RC Das, mother Indu Devi and younger brother Narendra Das, had reached Kanpur on Wednesday morning itself.

Suresh's friends Karun Shankar Dixit and Sushil were found at his home, busy calling his family to know his condition.

His friends said Suresh was very studious since his school days and used to lock himself in a room for hours for studies when he was preparing for civil services examination. They said he came from a very humble background and worked very hard to clear the exam.

Mumbai specialists air-dash to Kanpur with ECMO

KANPUR: A team of specialist doctors has left Mumbai with an extracorporeal membrane oxygenation machine (ECMO) on a chartered flight to help the doctors treating IPS officer Suresh Kumar Das, who allegedly attempted suicide.

The machine is not available in Kanpur. The Regency Hospital here asked Dr Pranav Ojha in Mumbai to fly to Kanpur.

Regency Hospital chief medical superintendent Dr Rajesh Agarwal said the hospital had considered two options: first to call Dr Ojha to Kanpur or airlift Das to Mumbai after evaluating his condition. It was not deemed prudent to use an air ambulance given Das's condition, the hospital doctors said. The ECMO is like the heart-lung machine used in open heart surgery.

It drains blood from the veins, adding oxygen and removing the carbon dioxide. The machine keeps the blood warm and then returns the blood to the artery. It pumps blood through the body. This method allows the blood to bypass the heart and lungs, allowing them to rest and get better. **HTC**

THE MACHINE KEEPS THE BLOOD WARM AND THEN RETURNS THE BLOOD TO THE ARTERY. IT PUMPS BLOOD THROUGH THE BODY.

PVR 70th CELEBRATING CINEMAS SCREENS

Deal day Thursday

Enjoy lowest prices on **F&B** and **TICKETS** throughout the day

UP TO 40% OFF ON F&B

VINAYAK CITY CENTER

YAMLA PAGLA DEEWANA PHIR SE (U/A) 9:40am, 10:40am, 12:45, 3:50, 4:50, 6:55, 10:00, 11:00 pm | STREE (U/A) 9:15am, 11:40am, 2:30, 5:20, 8:10, 11:00 pm | HAPPY PHIR BHAG JAYEGI (U/A) 10:20am, 4:25, 10:20 pm

www.pvr Cinemas.com | PVR mobile app