



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Sheetal Devi & Rakesh Kumar: Shooting to Success

Historic Win in Para Archery

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India's para-athletes continue to make the nation proud on the global stage. Among the standout performances in Paris were those of **Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar**, who clinched a **bronze medal in the Mixed Team Compound Open Archery event**. Their victory adds another chapter to India's growing legacy in para-sports!



¹ https://x.com/Media_SAI/status/1830664856468603015/photo/1

Sheetal Devi's Journey

Sheetal Devi, born on **January 10, 2007**, in **Kishtwar, Jammu & Kashmir**, has captivated the world with her incredible journey. Despite being born without arms, she has shown that physical limitations are no barrier to achieving greatness. Her early life was filled with challenges, but a pivotal moment came in **2019** when the Indian Army discovered her at a military camp. Recognising her potential, they provided her with educational support and medical care.



Under the mentorship of renowned **coach Kuldeep Vedwan**, Sheetal embarked on a rigorous training regimen that transformed her into one of the world's leading para-archers. Her achievements speak for themselves: **gold medals in both Individual and Mixed Team events at the 2023 Asian Para Games**, **a silver medal at the 2023 World Archery Para Championship**, and multiple accolades at the **Asian Para Championship**. Sheetal's story is one of courage, perseverance, and an unwavering belief in her abilities.

Sheetal Devi

Achievements



2024

Paris Paralympics

Bronze Medal

Mixed Team Compound Open Archery event

2022-23

Asian Para Games

Gold medal

Individual and Mixed Team

Silver medal

Women's Team

2023

World Archery Para Champ.

Silver medal

Individual

2023

Asian Para Championship

Gold medal

Mixed Team

Silver medal

Individual

2023

Asian Paralympic Committee

Best Youth Athlete of the
Year Award



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Rakesh Kumar: From Adversity to Excellence

Rakesh Kumar, born on **January 13, 1985**, in **Katra, Jammu & Kashmir**, is another testament to the power of resilience. A tragic accident in 2010 left Rakesh paralysed from the waist down, confining him to a wheelchair. The years that followed were filled with despair. However, his life took a new direction 2017 when he was introduced to **archery** at the **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Sports Complex**.

² <https://x.com/narendramodi/status/1830666563244183707/photo/1>

With the guidance of coach **Kuldeep Kumar**, Rakesh discovered a newfound passion for archery. Despite financial hardships, he dedicated himself to the sport, quickly rising through the ranks to become one of **India's top para-archers**. His accomplishments include a **gold medal in the Mixed Team event at the 2023 World Archery Para Championship** and a **stellar performance at the 2023 Asian Para Games**. Rakesh's story is one of overcoming insurmountable odds to achieve greatness.

Rakesh Kumar



Achievements

2024

Paris Paralympics

Bronze Medal

Mixed Team Compound Open Archery event

2022-23

Asian Para Games

Gold Medal

Mixed Team

Silver Medal

Individual & Men team

2023

World Archery Para Champ.

Gold Medal

Mixed team

2023

Asian Para Archery Champ.

Gold Medal

Individual & Mixed team

2020

Tokyo Paralympics

6th place



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Paris 2024 Paralympics

The Paris 2024 Paralympics marked a significant milestone in the careers of both **Sheetal Devi** and **Rakesh Kumar**. Competing in the **Mixed Team Compound Open Archery event**, the duo faced

³ <https://x.com/narendramodi/status/1830666563244183707/photo/1>

fierce competition from some of the world's best para-archers. Their journey to the podium was marked by grit, determination, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

Sheetal and Rakesh secured the bronze medal in a nail-biting match against Italy's Eleonora Sarti and Matteo Bonacina. The Indian archers displayed remarkable composure under pressure, hitting **four perfect 10s** in the final set to come from behind and clinch the medal. Their performance not only secured a place on the podium but also equalled the **Paralympic record of 156 points**, a testament to their skill and focus.

Government Support: A Crucial Pillar of Success

The success of **Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar at the Paris 2024 Paralympics** would not have been possible without the extensive support provided by the Indian government. Both athletes benefited from financial assistance under the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)**, which covered training expenses, equipment procurement, and travel for international competitions. Sheetal received **six foreign exposures** for training in Thailand, UAE, Czech Republic, China, and France, while Rakesh was supported with specialised equipment and wheelchair facilities. The National Coaching Camp at SAI Sonipat, where both athletes trained, played a critical role in honing their skills.

A Legacy of Inspiration

The **bronze medal win by Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar** at the Paris 2024 Paralympics is not just a victory for India but a powerful message of hope and perseverance. At just **17 years old**, **Sheetal became India's youngest Paralympic medallist**, while 39-year-old **Rakesh** added a Paralympic medal to his impressive list of achievements. Their stories transcend the world of sports, serving as beacons of inspiration for anyone facing adversity. Their legacy will continue to inspire generations of athletes to dream big and push the boundaries of what is possible.

References

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