

Limca Book of Records launches special Olympic edition

With the Beijing Olympics slated to be held in August, the Limca Book of Records Tuesday launched its 19th edition with a special section on the four individual Olympic medallists India has produced so far.

The Limca Book of Records 2008 lists the Indian individual Olympic medallists as wrestler Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav, tennis sensation Leander Adrian Paes, weightlifter Karnam Malleswari and shooter Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore. Jadhav, who won the bantamweight wrestling bronze at the 1952 Helsinki Olympiad, is no longer alive.

'It is a shame that we are a nation of 1.1 billion people, but there are so few Olympic medal winners in the individual categories. So, we have to take India to the next level where talented sportsperson will take part in the Olympics and win medals,' Amit Mitra, secretary-general of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), said at the launch here Tuesday.

In an attempt to promote the spirit of the Olympics and sports awareness in general, FICCI Tuesday feted the four individual Olympic medal winners in association with Coca Cola India at the launch of the Indian Olympians Special edition of the book that is also published in Hindi for the first time this year.

Those felicitated included Olympics bronze medal winner Leander Paes, Olympian G.S. Randhawa (hurdles champion), the country's lone Winter Olympics medallist Shiva Keshavan (Luge winner), and Special Olympic medallist Rushi Gulati.

'As 2008 is the year of the Olympics (in Beijing), the 19th edition of the book catalogues the Olympians and their achievements under the title 'India At Her Best',' Atul Singh, chief executive of Coca Cola India, said. The book has replaced its 'People of the Year' section with a detailed chapter on 'Olympians of the Year'.

Coca Cola, which publishes the book, plans to translate it into other Indian languages starting with Malayalam.

The thick hard-bound volume with a striking black cover begins with the section on the Indian Olympic legacy. 'Success of an individual or a team at a stage as big as the Olympic Games is always well-chronicled, but losing out on a medal by a whisker or one-hundredth of a second is the stuff folklores are made of,' says the preface of the book, edited by Vijaya Ghose.

One such name is Milkha Singh, who missed a medal by one-tenth of a second despite clocking a timing that smashed the existing records. The book is full of such nail-biting finishes and anecdotes.

A senior member of the Limca editorial team, Arthy Muthannasingh, said the aim of the new Olympic edition was to inspire children into taking up sporting activity and even making a career out of it.

'Since we reach out mostly to kids across the country, we hope it will encourage them. Our performance in the Olympics has not been heartening, barring hockey. Leander Paes won an individual medal after 40 years in 1996, a year after he became Limca's person of the year in 1995,' she said.

Clad in a pink shirt, Paes struck a spiritual note. 'It was kind of lucky. This is the second time I am in the Limca Book of Records. The first time was in 1995, a year before I won the bronze in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics,' he said.

For the tennis ace, the capital is special because this is the place where he first proved his mettle as a 14-year-old when he played against the national masters.

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