

Khel Ratna Award

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In news- Khel Ratna Award was renamed after hockey wizard Major Dhyan Chand recently.

About Khel Ratna Award-

- This award is the **highest sporting honour** in the country.
- The Khel Ratna award was **instituted in 1991-1992** and the **first recipient was Chess legend Viswanathan Anand.**
- It is awarded annually **by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.**
- Khel Ratna award comes with a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh.
- The recipient(s) is/are selected by a committee constituted by the Ministry and is honoured for their “spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports over a period of four years” at international level.
- The committee evaluates the performances of a sportsperson at various International events like Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games.
- As per the revised criteria, **the performance over a period of four years is considered for the award**(earlier it was one year).
- The name of the award has been changed from Rajiv Gandhi to Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award.

Major Dhyan Chand

- He was born in Allahabad on 29th August 1905
- Major Dhyan Chand, a field hockey player, played international hockey from 1926 to 1949, scoring over 400 goals in his career.
- He was part of the Olympic team that won gold medals in 1928, 1932 and 1936.

- Popularly known as **The Wizard or The Magician of hockey** for his superb ball control, Chand played internationally from 1926 to 1949; he scored 570 goals in 185 matches.
- **His autobiography is 'Goal'.**
- He was honoured with the Padma Bhushan in 1956 and his birthday on 29 August is celebrated as National Sports Day in India every year.

Timeline

- **Early 1920s:** Is in the 1st Brahmin Regiment of the British Army. Learns hockey from Bale Tewari. Represents the United Provinces in an inter-provincial championship.
- **Between 1922 and 1926,** Chand exclusively played army hockey tournaments and regimental games
- **1928:** Leads Indian team to the Olympics in Amsterdam. Bags a gold.
- **1932:** Gold again at the Los Angeles Olympics.
- **1936:** A hat trick at the Berlin Olympics.
- **1947:** At age 42, scores 61 goals during tour of East Africa. It confirms that were it not for the war he would have won two more gold medals.
- **1979:** Dies in Delhi.

Awards in his name

- Apart from the Khel Ratna award, the country's highest award for lifetime achievement in sports is known as the Dhyan Chand Award. It was instituted in 2002.