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12 GOODLIFE

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THE TELEGRAPH WEDNESDAY 8 JANUARY 2014 XXXC

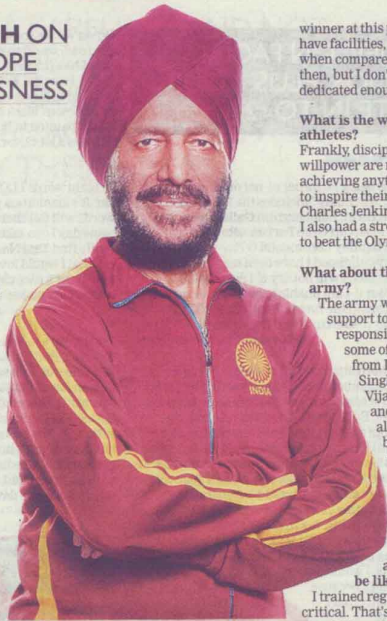
MILKHA SINGH ON ATHLETICS, HOPE AND HOPELESSNESS

Your favourite memories of the Commonwealth Games and Olympics?

In 1956, during my first visit to the Olympics in Australia, I did not fare well. But I had an opportunity to meet Charles Jenkins of USA who won gold with a timing of 46.7 seconds. He really inspired me and when I asked him, he generously gave me his entire training schedule. Not only was I inspired but I was touched by his sharing the routine with me which I then followed religiously. My hard work and the routine then started showing positive results and the Commonwealth Games in Cardiff in 1958 were special when I beat Malcolm Spence to win gold. It was great to beat an athlete of his caliber and win gold for India.

Your favourite Indian athletes, then and now?
My favourite Indian athlete was Lavy Pinto but, unfortunately there are none at this moment.

What then is the future of India in track and field events?
I have to regretfully state that there is no hope of an Indian



I BELIEVE THAT IF YOU WANT TO IMPROVE ATHLETICS IN INDIA, HAND OVER ATHLETICS TO THE INDIAN ARMY

winner at this point of time. We have facilities, stadiums... now, when compared to what we had then, but I don't see anyone dedicated enough.

What is the way out for Indian athletes?

Frankly, discipline, hard work and willpower are necessary for achieving anything. Coaches need to inspire their students. My hero Charles Jenkins motivated me and I also had a strong personal desire to beat the Olympic record.

What about the role of the army?

The army with its discipline and support to athletes has been responsible for producing some of the finest athletes from India. Makhn Singh, Parduman Singh, Vijay Kumar, Sriram and Milkha Singh are all army products. I believe that if you want to improve athletics in India, hand over athletics to the Indian Army.

What should an athlete's schedule be like?

I trained regularly and that's critical. That's what an athlete should do and the coaches should be judging his performance and development every 15 days. They should assess what's required by the athlete; stamina, technique... regularly and work on those elements.

What was your diet back then?

We had a fairly simple diet then and ate what we got. I would drink a lot of juice whenever I managed to get it.

And now?

Nowadays I make sure I get my vitamins and Zandu Kesari Jivan.

That is why you endorse Emami's Zandu Kesari Jivan?

detailing that went into ensuring that the right message of good health was communicated appropriately.

Your take on Usain Bolt?

He is a tremendous athlete and has made Jamaica proud. Athletics is the number one sport and he is one of the finest athletes.

Your take on Bhaag Milkha

I HAVE TO REGRETFULLY STATE THAT THERE IS NO HOPE OF AN INDIAN WINNER AT THIS POINT OF TIME. WE HAVE FACILITIES, STADIUMS... NOW, WHEN COMPARED TO WHAT WE HAD THEN, BUT I DON'T SEE ANYONE DEDICATED ENOUGH

I have always been a strong advocate of health and fitness. Having a healthy body, mind and spirit can lead to a happy and meaningful life. Zandu Kesari Jivan reflects this lifestyle mantra of mine. It not only keeps one physically strong but also helps to maintain a youthful vigour. My regular intake of Zandu Kesari Jivan enables me to maintain youthful energy even at the age of 84. It is never too late to walk the path of health and fitness. Through my association with Zandu Kesari Jivan, I urge all people, young and old, to pay attention to their health and fitness.

How was it shooting the TV ad?
I was happy to see the effort and

Bhaag?

Well, I think the entire team did a great job. Prasoon (Joshi) wrote it beautifully. Rakeysh (Omprakash Mehra) did a good job of directing it and Farhan (Akhtar) worked really hard to become a ditto copy of Milkha. I congratulate the whole team and through their efforts India has been motivated.

Finally, how was it being called the Flying Sikh?

The credit of that goes to Pakistan, especially General Ayub who gave me that title. It was a very proud and special moment for me.

Mathures Paul
Do you agree with Milkha Singh that athletics should be handed over to the Indian Army?
Tell t2@abp.in