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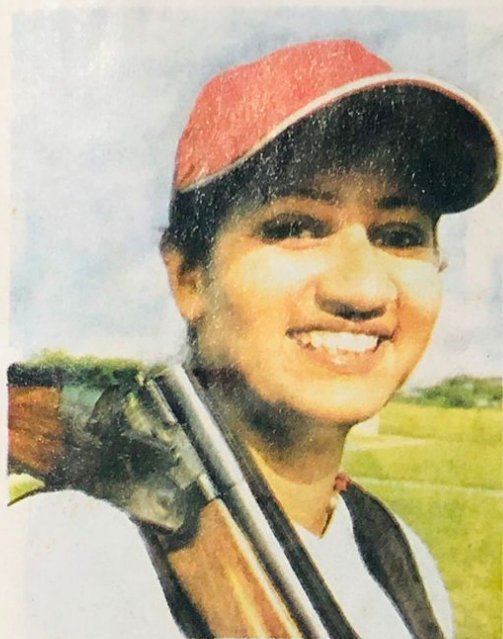
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SWELLING STREAM OF CORPORATE CROSSOVERS

Special Report

English learning
fever sweeping
India





Rao: killer instinct

championships, both held in Delhi.

The killer instinct which Indian sportsperson reputedly lack, has distinguished this gutsy sportswoman ever since she began competitive shooting at age eight. Despite the fact that her gun was then bigger than her, little Rao still accompanied her father — Rao Inderjeet Singh, a national level shooter in his own right — to the Karni Shooting Range in Tughlakabad on the outskirts of Delhi. "The skeet event attracts very few women participants in India. It's tougher than the other shooting events and necessitates long hours of practice," explains Rao who practises for five to six hours daily under the guidance of her father and foreign coaches.

An arts graduate of Delhi University, Rao was 19 when her career as a shotgun shooter in the skeet event took off. She worked hard under her late Georgian coach, Teimuraz Matoian, to prepare for the World Championships held at Lonato, Italy, in 1999. Though Rao didn't win a medal there, the experience stood her in good stead and boosted her confidence.

In the year 2000 Rao participated in the World Championships in Finland. She not only won a bronze in the under-21 category but also received reams of press coverage. "In a country of a billion plus, it's a shame that so few are of international standard. This is largely because sports — other than cricket — are not accorded sufficient

importance in our country. Parents, teachers and schools ought to be a lot more sports-oriented to produce sportsperson capable of competing with the world's best," she says.

With considerable international experience behind her, Rao has set her sights on the Commonwealth and Asian Games next year. "In India regional championships carry a lot of weightage. Of course competition will be intense as usual, but I'm confident of bagging a medal in both these events," she says confidently.

Stand by for this sharp shooter to hit bull's eye again.

Neeta Lal (Delhi)

Committed polymath

ENTREPRENEUR, WRITER, PUBLISHER, teacher, software professional and multimedia expert, Bhuvaneswari Krishnamurthy (33) wears many hats. A postgraduate in computer science from Bharathidasan University, Tamil Nadu, she turned down several lucrative offers of employment from IT companies in India and abroad to promote Compcare Software Pvt Ltd, a software, hardware development, training and



Krishnamurthy: presidential inspiration

placement company in 1992. The promotion of her own IT company paved the way for turning her childhood interest — writing — into a profession and signalled her transition from writer to publisher, web designer and multimedia specialist.

"I wanted to break the myth that English language fluency is a must for computer education. So I decided to

introduce computer education in Tamil at Compcare Software and bring technology within the reach of people in villages, housewives and mentally and physically challenged children between six-60 years," says Krishnamurthy who gives credit to her parents for supporting all her ventures.

To enable the state's Tamil-speaking majority to understand computers better, Krishnamurthy, who has been contributing short stories, poems and essays in various Tamil magazines since 1980, started writing a series of computer-related articles in Tamil which were greatly appreciated. She then progressed to writing computer familiarisation guides in 1999 and buoyed by the success of her first book (in English) *An Easy Way To Learn C language*, she pressed on to write 30 IT-learning books in Tamil. In October 2004, she turned publisher and under the banner of her publishing division, Compcare Arriveal Pathippagam, published the *Evvaluathan Computer* series of three books which are now part of the syllabus for postgraduate students of Presidency College, Chennai.

Moreover she has conducted computer awareness programmes for Madras University faculty members, programmes on Doordarshan television and a workshop for visually impaired children in 2003. "The objective of the workshop for the visually impaired was to enable them to use computers confidently with the help of a special software. I plan to create software in Braille very soon," says Krishnamurthy who is inspired by the nation's technocrat-president. "The words of President Abdul Kalam ring in my ears: 'Dream... Dream' I will continue to dream up novel, educational projects for children," she says.

It certainly seems Krishnamurthy's dreams are coming to fruition. In October this year three of her book titles were published by the Centre for Empowerment of Women, Anna University and Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women Ltd.

Hemalatha Raghupathi (Chennai)