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TINTU LUKA

BETWEEN BREATH AND BELIEF,
SHE FOUND HER FINISH LINE

CREATIVE TEAM



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TINTU LUKA

Running Beyond Limits

If you ask how far it is from a remote village in Kerala to the world stage, Indian athlete Tintu Luka would probably answer that it is exactly 800 meters. In the world of mid-distance running, there is a defining moment during the 800-meter race when the lungs are beating for life and every step feels heavy. If for most people it is an obstacle, time has long marked that for Tintu Luka it was a charm.

Tintu wasn't just competing for decades, but the girl performed wonders on the track, capturing the hearts of a nation.

Under the guidance of a legend

Tintu Luka's athletic journey began at PT Usha's 'Usha School of Athletics'. Those intense training days at Usha's school were the beginning of her journey from an ordinary athlete to India's proud Olympian. Under Usha's tutelage, Tintu acquired a style that effortlessly glided across the track even as his opponents struggled.

From morning workouts to international-level fitness training, it was Usha School that instilled confidence and a competitive spirit in Tintu at every stage. The precision and consistency he gained from there was what later catapulted Tintu to national records and Olympic venues.

Tintu realized that running was her thing when she joined the School of Usha while she was in the seventh grade. Out of the 600 children who participated in the selection process for the Usha School, 50 were shortlisted in the first phase. After a 15-day camp, it was later reduced to twelve.

It was the starting time of Usha School. PT Usha had made Tintu switch to running.

“

P.T. Usha guided me from long jump to sprinting, helping me discover my true strength.

Fighting at every step

While many people run slowly at the beginning to perform well in the 800m race, Tintu's approach has always intrigued sports enthusiasts. Speed from start to finish! Strong front running and the will to fight until the last moment set Tintu apart from other stars. This approach, which combined stamina and speed, has even garnered Tintu attention on international stages.

Tintu would secure her position at the front the moment the pistol sounded. Her style was to gain good speed from the start and maintain it until the last lap. This method of taking the lead within the first 100 meters was a big risk. She had to listen to a lot of criticism. Yet, with her courage, Tintu achieved national records and a leading position in the world rankings. Tintu Luka, who sprinted alongside the world's fastest players in the Indian jersey, made India proud with every step she took.



Journey Beyond Borders

One of the biggest milestones in Tintu Luka's sports career was the journey from the Asian Games to the Olympics. When the 'School of Usha' was started in 2002, PT Usha's husband always said that our goal was the 2012 Olympics. But for Tintu, the most important thing was to survive in that academy that had selected 12 people.

Tintu's consistent performances in national competitions made her a promising young woman in Indian athletics. She later gained international attention by winning medals at the Asian Games and Asian Championships.

Medals & Milestones

Tintu Luka made her major international breakthrough by winning a bronze medal in the 800 metres at the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games. Four years later, she followed it up with a silver medal at the 2014 Incheon Asian Games. She was also part of India's gold medal-winning 4×400 metres relay team at the same Games. She further cemented her dominance on the Asian athletics circuit by winning the 800 metres gold at the 2015 Wuhan Asian Athletics Championships.

Tintu proved India's strength by reaching the 800m semi-finals at the 2012 Summer Olympics, competing alongside world-class athletes. She then represented India at the 2016 Summer Olympics, becoming one of the rare Indian athletes to compete in two consecutive Olympics.



India's Tribute to a Champion-Arjuna Award

The Arjuna Award received in 2014 was one of the greatest honors in Tintu Luka's sports career. The award was given in recognition of her consistent performances for India at international venues and her contribution to Indian athletics.

Tintu's medal achievements in the Asian Games and Asian Athletics Championships, national records, and participation in the Olympics have made her a prominent figure in Indian middle distance running. In recognition of these achievements, the Government of India has selected Tintu for the Arjuna Award. Tintu herself says that the recognition came at the right time.

Speed That Created History

Tintu broke Shiny Wilson's national record that had stood for 15 years in 2010. Tintu made history by running 1:59.17 in a competition held in Croatia. Completing the 800-meter race in under two minutes is a sign of world-class quality. Tintu's achievement is still a big goal for young athletes in Kerala.

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*No quick medals -
Only Consistency,
Patience and
hardwork
lead to success*



The Human Side of a Champion

A symbol of strength and speed on the competition stage, Tintu was a simple and calm personality in her personal life. She preferred to speak through her performance rather than chasing money and fame. Tintu proved through her life that hard work and discipline are the true strength of an athlete. It is this humility and hard work that continues to inspire a generation of athletes in South India.

When Tintu was competing, there were many athletes from Kerala. Whether it was in national competitions or Olympic competitions, Kerala's contribution was more. But now, Tintu is of the opinion that there are fewer medals for Kerala. Today, everyone wants medals quickly, results quickly. But Tintu believes that what we need consistency.

“

My 2010 record still stands unbeaten proving my training methods were right.



Life After the Track

After retiring from her career, she is a person who completely shifts to the hustle and bustle of family life and does not appear much on social media or in public. Tintu Luka got married after retiring from the athletics track.

The marriage was in January 2020. Her husband Anoop Joseph is an athletic coach. She has two daughters. She currently works in the Palakkad division of the Railways. She first joined Kozhikode in 2012. Later, she became an officer in 2019. Her first posting was in Salem. She reached Palakkad in 2022. She lives in the railway quarters with her children.

Her husband is busy as he is a coach. Tintu says that since she was under a coach like PT Usha, she understands the hustle and bustle that a coach faces. Therefore, Tintu is now giving priority to looking after the children's affairs. Despite her busy schedule, Tintu still never misses practice. The only time Tintu feels productive on a day is when she's exhausted from running around the ground.

Reflection

Tintu Luka holds an unparalleled place in the history of Indian sports. Beyond the medals and records, Tintu Luka also tells the story of how she rose from an ordinary girl to become the pride of India on the world stage. Her retirement from competition left a beautiful trail for the coming generation. She proved that although victory lies at the finish line, a true athlete is born during hard training.

Tintu's fighting spirit on the track was enough to inspire a large crowd to take up sports. She was not just running; she was flying, leaving traces of her speed on every track. Those memories of speed will always shine in Indian athletics history. Her speed on the track may end one day, but the inspiration she gave to a nation will never fade.

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Kerala was once a powerhouse of Indian athletics, but today fewer medals remind us to rebuild that sporting culture

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Outstanding Malayali of Kerala

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