



In the world of competitive sports, the journey to the Olympic podium is often shaped not just by the athlete's dedication but also by the unwavering support of their family. In this exclusive interview, with **Shri. Ramkishan Bhaker**, a Chief Engineer in Merchant Navy and the proud father of **Ms. Manu Bhaker**, who recently made headlines by winning two bronze medals in shooting at the 2024 Paris Olympics. With a career that has taken him across the seas and a commitment to his daughter's dreams that has anchored their family's journey, Shri. Bhaker shares the unique challenges and triumphs of balancing his demanding profession with nurturing an Olympic champion with **Rashmi Tiwari**, Sub-editor, iMélange.

Anchoring Dreams: A Father's Journey from the High Seas to the Olympic Podium

iMélange: As a marine engineer, your career has undoubtedly been demanding. How did you manage to balance your professional responsibilities with being a supportive father to your daughter, especially during her intense training and competitions?

RB: I feel incredibly blessed to have the support of a wonderful family. My wife and son have been

instrumental in this ongoing journey, providing the emotional and logistical support needed to keep everything running smoothly.

I made it a priority to be present for my daughter during her competitions. This was possible thanks to careful planning and the excellent cooperation of shipping managers, especially those at Synergy Maritime. Their timely support and the office staff's dedication allowed me to balance my professional commitments with my role as a father.

iMélange: How has your career as a marine engineer influenced your daughter's journey in becoming an Olympic champion? Were there any specific values or lessons from your profession that you passed on to her?

RB: As a mariner, the unique blend of glamour and challenges that come with life at sea was something my daughter and family experienced firsthand. My wife, Dr. Sumedha Bhaker, along with my daughter and son, would often join me during voyages, especially during the summer holidays. Those times were not just about being together—they were an adventure for us, filled with memorable experiences that brought us even closer as a family.





**On behalf of the iMélange team,
we extend our heartfelt
congratulations to him and
his family!**



iMélange: Both of your careers require immense dedication and hard work. Can you share some of the challenges and sacrifices your family faced, and how you overcame them to support your daughter's Olympic dreams?

RB: As a seafarer, I was fortunate to be able to provide for my family financially. However, my absence during long periods at sea made it challenging for my kids to attend all their competitions. During those times, our extended family truly stepped up, offering invaluable support and ensuring that my children could pursue their passions despite my being away.

iMélange: Marine engineering, much like competitive shooting, demands a high level of precision and discipline. Do you see any parallels between your work and your daughter's sport? How did these shared qualities help in her development as an athlete?

RB: During my Chief Engineer classes in the UK in 2007, I noticed that our professors often



managed their stress through shooting. Intrigued, I tried it a few times myself and found it to be an excellent stress reliever.

When I returned to India in 2008, I decided to establish a shooting range at Universal School in Gorla, Jhajjar, which is





run by our family. We even appointed a retired military officer to oversee it. I would occasionally visit the range myself to unwind.

It was in this very range that Manu began shooting in 10th grade as a new hobby. Her dedication and talent quickly shone through—by 11th grade, she had become a world champion, and by 12th grade, she had earned the titles of Commonwealth champion and Youth Olympic champion. Being part of a family-run school allowed her the flexibility and support she needed to excel in her training and competitions.

iMélange: When your daughter won the bronze medal at the Olympics, it must have been a moment of immense pride for you as a father. How did it feel to see her hard work pay off, and what message would you like to share with other parents who are supporting their children's ambitions while balancing demanding careers?

RB: Manu Bhaker, our daughter, is truly a pride of India, and we couldn't be prouder as her parents. Our message to all parents is simple: support your children in every way you can, and never stop believing in their potential. Jai Hind!