

From Darkness to Distinction: The Extraordinary Journey of Lt. Col. Chandrasekharan Dwarakesh



Lt. Col. Dwarakesh
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A Trailblazing **Indian Army officer** who lost eyesight in the line of duty; a national symbol of resilience, inclusion & multifaceted excellence.

First to serve despite 100% vision loss - an international shooter, national record holding swimmer and world record holder adventure sports.

He is a unique amalgamation of technical expertise, international paralympic exposure, a robust academic foundation, and distinguished service as a Lt. Col. in *Indian Army*, reflecting a rare blend of discipline, intellect and global perspective.

He joined the Indian Army at the young age of 18, selected among a distinguished few to pursue a fully government-sponsored B.Tech from the College of Military Engineering. He successfully qualified one year of military training and four years of engineering degree with Indian Army & commissioned as Officer in the Indian Army on **13th June 2009** having parent arm as Military Intelligence Corp of Indian Army. At the inception stage of his professional career an accident changed his life. *He lost his vision of both eyes & was blinded without even realizing what had occurred.* He found himself in Military Hospital his eyes wrapped in bandages, right arm in a cast with hip completely dislocated. First experience when he regained consciousness - **“Traumatised -Helpless & Trapped in Silence”**. Where many might have stepped back, Lt. Col. Dwarakesh moved forward—with determination & aligned his mental-

physical strength to work place environment from daily life routine to professional enrichment & again begin his professional Journey.

Becoming the first and only officer in such a condition to continue performing administrative duties, he consistently demonstrated capability beyond conventional expectations. His recent success in the promotion examination, making him eligible for the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, stands as yet another milestone in a career defined by perseverance.



He served at the formidable Siachen Glacier—the highest battlefield in the world at over 16,000 feet, where sub-zero temperatures and extreme terrain test the limits of human endurance. For any soldier, such a posting is a matter of immense honour; for him, being completely blind, it stands as an extraordinary testament to courage and resolve. His remarkable service did not go unnoticed. It was later acknowledged with a personal endorsement from the Honourable Prime Minister of India, underscoring the profound respect his achievement commands at the highest level.

At his workplace, he adapted with remarkable ingenuity—using screen readers to handle increasing responsibilities independently. *His dedication and professionalism were formally recognized when he was awarded a Commendation Card for exemplary service.* Yet, what defined him even more was his pursuit of independence beyond professional achievement. Determined to experience complete freedom of movement, he took to swimming—believing that in water, he could move without relying on anyone else for guidance. What began as a personal quest soon turned

into a remarkable accomplishment. *He went on to break two national records in swimming, bringing immense pride and laurels to the Indian Army.*



His next pursuit was even more audacious: he introduced blind shooting in India, redefining what was thought possible in the sport. With the support of the national federation, he not only mastered the discipline but continued to surpass his own benchmarks, setting new standards of excellence.

His perseverance culminated in a historic achievement in

October 2025 at Al Ain, during the World Shooting Para Sport Championship. *Representing India, he delivered an extraordinary performance, securing a record score of 624.6 in the vision-impaired 10-meter air rifle competition—an accomplishment that stands as a milestone not just for him, but for the nation and the global para-sport community.*

The World Shooting Para Sports Championships is a competition that includes both Para Trap and Vision Impaired (VI) events. This includes a classification system and standardized rules and technology identical with abled bodied international competitions. Vision Impaired (VI) events Athletes use air rifles and an electronic sight that emits an audio signal, as the athlete moves the rifle, the pitch of the sound changes, rising as they get closer to the centre of the target but with adaptations for VI athletes. The goal is to get the highest score by placing shots in the bullseye,

identical to able-bodied shooting. **He has qualified for the World para shooting VI**", refers to events for athletes with vision impairments scheduled to be held in South Korea - September 2026 governed by World Shooting Para Sport (WSPS) and will represent India.



Lieutenant Colonel Chandrasekharan Dwarakesh is conferred the prestigious ***“Sarva Shreshtha Divyangjan”*** award by the Hon’ble President of India on the occasion of ***International Day of Persons with Disabilities***, observed annually on ***3rd December***.

With his unyielding spirit—a refusal to be limited by circumstances by becoming visually impaired, he has converted Adversities To Possibilities demonstrating the power of mental strength, phenomenal adaptability with professional quest, that epitomises trait of Indian Soldier “Commitment-Conviction & Courage” and created World Record as only Serving Visually Impaired Indian Army Officer.

Lieutenant Colonel Chandrasekharan Dwarakesh’s story is not just about personal triumph; it quietly challenges perceptions about disability, capability, and leadership. His journey is a powerful reminder that barriers, however formidable, can be redefined through courage, discipline, and an unwavering belief in one’s purpose. ***“Sarva Shreshtha Divyangjan”*** award places Lt Col Dwarakesh among the highest

distinguished role models in India's disability empowerment landscape—symbolizing resilience, leadership, and service to society.

Every Story, Every Insight -Go Beyond News. *There is foundational link between information-communication & education. **Information and awareness, when widely shared, go a long way in fostering enrichment and empowerment;** and when combined with active engagement in inclusion and adaptive technology, it creates meaningful change—proving that **Together, we can make it happen.***

*Tapash Chatterjee is a decorated officer of the Indian Army. He combined his vision with his man management skills to conceptualize and implement the mission 'Ability Beyond Disability' as First Nodal officer in conjunction with Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India & Indian Army. The Mission was aimed at restoring the dignity of persons with disabilities, strengthen the grassroots & community level activities by connecting rehabilitation professionals with those in need, residing in remote, under-served and border areas of the country. The mission work reported in **Niti Ayog Report** for outstanding strategies on effective & efficient Implementation with Sterling Performances covering remote, underserved border areas of India. He is regular contributor to the "Behind The Headlines" column of the Indian Interdisciplinary Research Journal Disabilities & Impairment est. 1987 and strong advocate of social entrepreneurship and adding positive value to society through empowerment & development.*
