

Cueing up for success

In Conversation With The Unbreakable Wizard Of The Baize



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Meet Pankaj Advani, a 28-time World Title holder and India's most decorated cueist, mastering both billiards and snooker with finesse. The only player to have won world titles across formats in both sports, he has been honoured with the Arjuna Award, Khel Ratna, Padma Shri, and Padma Bhushan for his extraordinary contribution to Indian sports.

Discovering the passion

As a child, I played many mainstream sports and enjoyed them all. But everything changed when my elder brother, Shree Advani, introduced me to cue sports when I was in class VI. The first time I played, I potted the ball and that moment sparked an obsession. My mother supported my passion but ensured academics remained a priority. My brother, who is a sports psychologist, continues to be my mentor.

Being India's pride

People often ask what keeps me going after winning 28 world titles. The answer is quite simple - I genuinely love and enjoy the game. My passion for competition and the privilege of representing India, both on and off the table, fuel me every single day. Whenever someone

asks for advice on handling pressure, I always say - remember why you started playing. For me, that 'why' has always been love for the sport and pride in representing my country and cue sports.

Thriving under pressure

Pressure is often self-inflicted, especially in an individual sport. There are expectations when you are at the top, but it's impossible to perform your best every time. I'm human and setbacks are a part of life. Understanding that sports is unpredictable and that others work equally hard has helped me embrace pressure.

Mastering the game

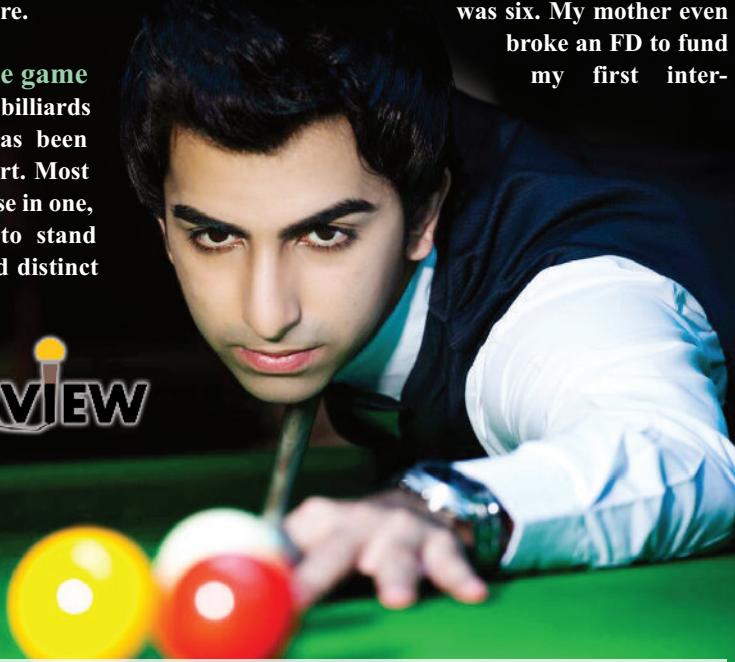
Balancing both billiards and snooker has been the toughest part. Most players specialise in one, but I wanted to stand out. I developed distinct



Pankaj Advani with GT reporters

techniques for each. Starting young came with its own hurdles. Most clubs had an age restriction of 14. Financial support was tough too, especially after my father passed away when I was six. My mother even broke an FD to fund my first inter-

INTERVIEW



Pankaj Advani, award-winning cueist

Rapid Fire

Describe billiards in one word: Concentration.

Lucky charm before a match: Wearing all black, my formal outfit.

Toughest opponent: Mike Russell, with an equal win-loss record between us.

A sport you enjoy: Tennis. I love watching Federer, Nadal and Djokovic.

Unfulfilled dream: For cue sports to be more visible and embraced in India.

national trip in 1999. Things improved after my first world title in 2003 and when I landed a job with ONGC.

Remembering the milestones

My first world title will always be special. On Oct 25, 2003, I was up against a Pakistani player in the final. Against all odds, I won. The next day's headlines read, 'Pankaj's Diwali gift to the nation'. Receiving the Padma Bhushan from the President in 2018, alongside MS Dhoni, too, was surreal. It was also an honour to be conferred the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam for my contribution to Indian sports.

Message for Amitians

Play with your heart and soul - not just for money, fame, or recognition. True passion will always keep you going and help you excel.

ATPC | AUUP

Amy University, Uttar Pradesh hosted an outreach programme by senior officers from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India on November 28, 2025. The event provided a platform to advance science, engineering, and technology through shared expertise and strategic discussions.

The programme was spearheaded by Dr Anjani Kumar Bhatnagar, additional director & head, Amity Technical Placement Centre (ATPC), and commenced with a warm welcome for the BARC delegation, which included Yuva Raj Nitin and Nishant Mishra, both scientific officers F.

During a session between BARC representatives and Amity Univer-

Amity hosts BARC officers

Fostering Collaboration In Science And Technology



Delegates from BARC and DAE at Amity University

sity's faculty, directors and deans from Amity's Science, Engineering, and Technology domains en-

gaged in a meaningful exchange, exploring avenues for collaborative projects, student internships,

and learning opportunities at BARC's various initiatives.

Prof (Dr) Balvinder Shukla, vice chancellor, AUUP, welcomed the BARC officials and highlighted the growing collaboration, with emphasis on nation-building and joint projects. Dr Sunita Rattan, dean of Science & Engineering, shared existing partnerships with BARC, while Dr Alpana Goel spoke about the various initiatives undertaken by the Amity Institute of Nuclear Science & Technology. Faculty members Dr MK Pandey, Prof Vivek Kumar, Dr Niraj Kumar, Dr V Pooja, and Dr OP

Sinha were also present. The BARC delegates motivated students from final and pre-final years of Science, Engineering, and Technology, delivering an informative presentation that provided direct exposure to cutting-edge research at one of India's premier research centres.

The visit reinforced the ongoing collaboration between BARC and Amity University, a partnership crucial to developing skilled professionals in nuclear and radiation safety, and supporting national priorities in energy, healthcare, industry, and research.