

# Saluting the best!

Real estate to hospitality, healthcare to social work; personalities from across fields recognised at [Pune Times Mirror](#)'s Iconic Punekar Awards

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“This is not the era of war. This is an era of breaking the wall, assimilation, cooperation, and cooperation. In the last year-and-half, we have ventured out and reached out to not just to [Pune](#) but Maharashtra at large,” said Lt Gen Ajai Kumar Singh, GOC-in-C Southern Command, who was present as the guest of honour at the Pune Times Mirror’s Iconic Punekar Awards held at The Rajendra Sinhji Army Mess & Institute (RSAMI). VTP Realty and Punit Balan Group supported the event in association with PNG Jewellers.

“Leaders are very different and they see things differently. What could look to me as 6, a leader will say, ‘This can be 9.’ They look at things from the point of view of, ‘Can I add value to society’. We can’t be great leaders if we can’t add value to society. If you don’t add value to society, you don’t love your fellow beings, relationships, colleagues, and people who

help you grow.”

- Neeraj Sharma, director, [Pune Times Mirror](#)

“It is our Army so you have the right to know what kind of army you have. A Lot of people think that the Army is only protecting the borders and safeguarding the sovereignty of the country, but the Army is much larger than that. Civilians come up to me and say, ‘What is the Army doing at the peace station when there is no war?’ I tell them, ‘India is a country that still has unsettled borders’. We haven’t been able to settle our borders with China or resolve complete border issues with Pakistan. We have active borders on both sides, where the Army is deployed to handle the situation.”

- Lt Gen Ajai Kumar Singh, GOC-in-C Southern Command

Hosted by the [Pune](#) Southern Command, the award ceremony was a huge success with the who’s who of the city present. Achievers from different fields of work - social work, sports, education, real estate, automobile, healthcare, and defence were awarded.

The awardees included Padma Bhushan Dr KH Sancheti, chairman, Sancheti Hospital; late Dajikaka Gadgil, founder, PNG Jewellers; Vishal Chordia, chairman, Suhana Masala; Ganesh Natrajan, chairman, Zenzar Technologies; Padma Shri Anu Aga, entrepreneur and social worker; Advocate SK Jain; Padma Shri Murlikant Petkar; Umesh Zhirpe, mountaineer; Padmashri Dhanraj Pillay, former captain, Indian hockey; Arnavaz Damania, managing trustee, Connecting NGO; social activist Dr Baba Adhav; Adcocate Harshad Nimbalkar, former chairman, Bar Council of Maharashtra & Goa; Ravindra Sakla, chairman & founder, Raviraj Realty; GS Bindra, founder, Bindra Hospitality; Nitin Nyati, chairman & MD, Nyati Group; Mukesh Kumar Sah, director, Santiago Realty; Mohaniraj Khodade, MD & CEO, Relation Realtech; Madhura Kedar Kasak, proprietor, KK Travels; Aditya Sarpotdar, director and costume designer; Chinmay Pramod Umarji, director, Umarji Mother & Child Care Hospital; Dr Kailash Katkar, founder & MD, Quickheal Technologies; Dr Suhas Hardar, cardiologist; Mrunal Kulkarni, actor-director; Advocate Aashuutosh Srivastav; Lt Gen Shammi Mehta, National defence; Lt Gen Abhijeet Guha, National defence; Lt Gen V G Patankar, National defence; Rustom Kayani, owner, Kayani Bakery; Prasanna Patwardhan, chairman, Prasanna Purple; Narendra Parmar, founder, Pooja Communications; Rajesh Shah, chairman, Jairaj Group; Indraneel Chitale, managing partner, Chitale Bandhu Mithaiwale; Prof Suraj Sharma, chairman, Ramachandran International Institute of Management; Prof Sanjay B Chordia, founder president and chairman, Suryadatta Education Foundation; Sanjay Hariprasad Verma, founder & MD, Tulip Group; Padmashri Pandit Vijay

Ghate, musician; Darius Dorabjee, owner, Dorabjee & Sons; Rajashree Tupe, yoga instructor; and Arundhati Patwardhan, Indian classical dancer.

The trustees of Manache Ganpatis in the city were also felicitated. A sense of pride set in among the crowd as the trustees of the oldest Ganesh mandals – Shri Kasba Ganpati Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav Mandal; Guruji Talim Ganpati Mandal; Tulsibaug Ganpati Mandal; Kesari Wada Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav Mandal; Shrimant Dagdusheth Halwai Ganpati Mandal, and Shrimant Bhausahab Rangari Ganpati walked among the guests.

Lt Gen Singh, Pankaj Sharma, chairman & MD, [Pune Times Mirror](#); Neeraj Sharma, director, [Pune Times Mirror](#); Rakesh Malhotra, CEO Pune Times Mirror; Bhushan Palresha, managing director, VTP Group; Sachin Bhandari, CEO & executive director, VTP Realty; Punit Balan, entrepreneur; and Parag Gadgil, director, PNG Jewellers gave away the awards.

For the first time, a unique initiative, the Iconic Punekar Awards, brought together the armed forces and the media. Lt Gen Singh, while addressing the guests, said, “It is our Army so you have the right to know what kind of army you have. A Lot of people think that the Army is only protecting the borders and safeguarding the sovereignty of the country, but the Army is much larger than that. Civilians come up to me and say, ‘What is the Army doing at the peace station when there is no war?’ I tell them, ‘India is a country that still has unsettled borders’. We haven’t been able to settle our borders with China or resolve complete border issues with Pakistan. We have active borders on both sides, where the Army is deployed to handle the situation.” He added that in the peace station, the Army is there to prepare for war.

As the event was about to end, Neeraj Sharma, while addressing the guests, focused on the importance of leaders and said, “Leaders are very different and they see things differently. What could look to me as 6, a leader will say, ‘This can be 9.’ They look at things from the point of view, ‘Can I add value to society’. We can’t be great leaders if we can’t add value to society. If you don’t add value to society, you don’t love your fellow beings, relationships, colleagues, and people who help you grow.”

But guests couldn’t have enough of Padma Shri Murlikant Petkar, the first Paralympic gold medalist who was present to receive his award. He happily posed for selfies, and photos and even shared his experience. Guests couldn’t stop gushing about Chandu Champion, the recently released film based on his life.