

## A dream come ture for Mary Kom

New Delhi: MC Marykom was a relieved person on Wednesday. After days of suspense, the ministry of youth affairs and sports finally announced its decision to confer the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award on the twenty five-year-old woman pugilist from Manipur, along with boxer Vijender Singh and wrestler Sushil Kumar.

Last year, Marykom had been the favourite to win the Khel Ratna but it ultimately went to Team India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

"It is a dream come true for me," said the pinweight boxer, regarded one of the best in the world. So far, Marykom has won four consecutive gold medals in the World Championships including the one in China last year.

"Surely I was bit disappointed at not having received it last year," the mother of two said. "But then I am thankful to those who have chosen me for the award. I feel honoured. This award has also given me the motivation to continue," she said.

Marykom had previously won the Arjuna Award in 2004 before being conferred the Padmashri in 2006.

Although the Khel Ratna has been previously shared by two sportspersons in 1996-97 and 2002-03, it is the first time that three have been picked for the coveted award for their outstanding performance in 2008-09.

"Normally, the Khel Ratna is given to only one sportsperson in a year. However, taking into consideration the spectacular performance of Vijender and Sushil, the government has accepted the recommendations of the selection committee to confer the award on both of them as a special case, in addition to Marykom," the sports ministry said in a statement.

Vijender said he was going to win more medals for India in the international arena. "I am not going to stop here. The Khel Ratna is the highest award for a sportsperson. It is going to motivate me for the World Championship in September."

Wrestler Sushil Kumar however, was not surprised. "After what I did at the Olympics, I think I deserve to win the Khel Ratna."