

## Cricket Legend Muttiah Muralitharan holds Masterclass on his Biopic at IFFI 54

Wanted to present a truthful story without cinematic  
glorification: Muralitharan

‘A Legendary 800 - Against all odds’ is a human  
drama of a great sportsperson, stronger than fiction:  
Madhurr Mittal

“The film aims to capture the essence of a legend  
whose journey was as dramatic off the field, as it was  
on”: Filmmaker Sripathy M

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An In-conversation session with legendary cricketer, Muthiah Muralitharan, also joined by Madhurr Mittal who portrays Murali in the biopic of the spin wizard, ***A Legendary 800 - Against all odds***, one of the highlights of 54<sup>th</sup> International Film festival of India in Goa today.

The session moderated by Komal Nahta, delved into the depths of Murali's journey from obscurity to becoming a cricketing legend.



*Spin Wizard Muthiah Muralitharan during In-Conversation session*

Sharing his incredible story, one that began amidst the backdrop of war and uncertainty in Sri Lanka and defying all odds to become a cricketing legend, Murali said, "Cricket was my solace during those tumultuous times," reminiscing about his childhood dreams that never included playing for his school, let alone representing his country.

Discussing the upcoming biopic that chronicles his life, Murali emphasized the importance of authenticity. "It's not about glorification; it's about truth," he affirmed, having meticulously scrutinized the script multiple times to ensure the narrative stayed faithful to his struggles and triumphs.



Speaking about the 'chucking controversy' over his bowling action in Australia in 1995, Murali claimed that it was done purposefully to put him down. He said "it was a heartbreak but I didn't give up and continued with active support from my fellow teammates and the cricket board."

Talking about his struggles and topsy turvy incidents in cricketing life, Murali said that the worst incident in his cricketing history was the attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan.

For philanthropic work, Murali has been running a charitable organization **Foundation of Goodness**. The organization is committed to the well-being of the Seenigama region and supports local communities through a range of projects across areas including children's needs, education and training, health care and psycho-social support, housing, livelihood, sport and the environment.

The director of the film Sripathy M revealed that the film is not merely portraying a celebrity cricketer but encapsulating the seismic events and struggles that shaped Muralitharan's extraordinary life. "The film aims to capture the essence of a legend whose journey was as dramatic off the field, as it was on", he articulated.

For making a biopic, Sripathy revealed, "there is no template or screenplay format. We wanted to make a truthful story of a legend, whose personal and professional life is too dramatic to handle."



Madhurr Mittal, portraying Murali in the film said, "this is more than a sports film. It is a human drama and resilience of a great sportsperson, stronger than fiction." Reflecting on his acting journey from *Kahin Pyar Na Ho Jaye* at the age of seven, to playing Murali, Madhurr said it was very exciting and an honour to play the cricketing legend in the biopic. Madhurr said, "To emulate the bowling action of the spin wizard, I practiced with a bowling coach for two months to honour Murali's legacy."

Averaging over six wickets per Test match, Muralitharan is widely regarded as one of the greatest bowlers in the history of the sport. He is the only bowler to take 800 Test wickets and more than 530 One Day International (ODI) wickets. Muralitharan was a part of the Sri Lankan team that won the 1996 Cricket World Cup.

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