



World Championships: Sindhu, Shetty win; Lakshya suffers shock exit



NEW DELHI, AUG 20: Lakshya Sen suffered a shock second-round defeat to USA's Garret Tan to make an early exit but two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and fast-rising Ayush Shetty progressed to the pre-quarterfinals at the BWF World Championships here on Wednesday.

Sen, a 2021 World Championships bronze medallist, could not match USA's former world Junior No.1 Garret Tan's pace, attack and deception, losing 21-19 19-21 17-21 in the men's singles round of 32.

"It was a very tough match. I gave my all whatever I had in my tank. I was also exhausted physically in the third game. I will give a lot of credit to him, he played a solid game. I am little disappointed though I gave my all in the end but it wasn't enough. He was just a better player today," a crestfallen Sen said.

"It is a big tournament, it would hurt probably more, but we have some big tournaments coming up, so will prepare for that."

Sindhu, who is chasing an unprecedented sixth world championship medal, secured a 21-16 21-17 win over Canada's Wen Yu Zhang to

enter the last-16.

The 2019 World Champion, seeded ninth, will face China's third seed Wang Zhi Yi next.

Ayush Shetty brushed aside Sri Lanka's Dumindu Abeywickrama 21-8 21-10 to set up a clash with a formidable opponent in Indonesia's Alwi Farhan.

Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty advanced to the pre-quarterfinals after receiving a walkover in their opening match. IndiaNews Focus

The fifth-seeded Indians, who have already won two bronze medals at the World Championships, had received a first-round bye and were scheduled to face Scotland's Alexander Dunn and Adam Pringle in the second round.

However, the Scottish pair withdrew at the last moment after Dunn suffered a right ankle injury while playing his mixed doubles match earlier in the day.

The Indian mixed doubles pair of Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila also advanced to the pre-quarterfinals after defeating Macau's Leong Lok Chong and Ng Weng Chi 21-11 21-11.

Young Unnati Hooda, making her debut at the prestigious tournament, also bowed out after squandering an opening-game advantage, losing 21-11 9-21 21-23 to 12th seed Michelle Li of Canada in the women's singles.

Men's doubles pair of Hariharan Amsakarunan and MR Arjun also went down 17-21 14-21 to Korea's Kang Min Hyuk and Ki Dong Ju.

Sen was troubled by Tan's pace and attacking play, with the American making good use of his overhead smashes. He repeatedly targeted the Indian's backhand rear corner and used jump smashes and deception to disrupt his opponent.

Tan raced to a 4-1 lead in the opening game, but the contest soon turned into a slugfest as the players moved from 5-5 to 18-18. Sen then managed to gain the upper hand and take the game.

After the change of ends, Tan stepped up his attack and dominated the rallies. He led 4-0 and maintained control throughout the game.

Sen attempted a comeback, reaching 15-20, and saved four game points be-

fore Tan finally sealed the game to level the match.

In the decider, Tan took control early, surging to a 12-4 lead.

Sen, however, found a second wind and fought back to 15-17, with the 17th point coming after an intense rally that ended with Tan falling awkwardly and was hit on his head as he took a medical timeout.

"I went for the slide and then I hit my head a little bit and wasn't feeling really well because that happened in my previous match a couple of weeks ago and same thing happened."

Tan responded with a jump smash to make it 18-16.

Sen then served long before Tan unleashed a cross-court smash to earn four match points.

A flurry of smashes kept Sen alive, but he slipped while approaching a shot at the front court on the next rally, allowing Tan to put the shuttle away and celebrate a memorable victory.

Sen, who had taken little time off to address his wounded leg before addressing the media, said: "There were lot of dives, I stretched my leg, it was tough match."

"He was quite dominant. I was always playing the covering up, I had my chances, he was taking the points. I was playing under pressure a lot of times.

"I mean both the sides were pretty even today, all the games were close so I don't think there was any clear advantage, the rallies were long, drift was not playing a big role. He was quite solid on his defence and attack, so I wasn't getting much chances."

Denmark's Rasmus Gemke also created a big upset with a 13-21 21-17 21-11 thrashing of All England champion and world No. 12 Lin Chun-yi of Chinese Taipei.

Satwik-Chirag battle past Malaysia's Arif-Yap to reach BWF World Championships quarterfinals

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 20: India's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty fought back from difficult positions to beat Malaysia's Junaidi Arif and Yap Roy King 21-23, 21-19, 21-17 in the men's doubles at the New Delhi World Championships 2026 on Thursday.

The Indian pair needed one hour and 22 minutes to complete the hard-fought victory and secure their place in the quarterfinals.

Satwik and Chirag looked unsettled early on as they struggled to read the drift in the stadium, having entered the tournament after receiving a couple of walkovers.

They faced a three-point deficit at the change of ends in the deciding game, trailing 8-11. The Malaysian pair extended their advantage to 15-12, leaving the Indian duo under pressure.

However, Satwik and Chirag showed resilience to turn the contest around and eventually close out the deciding game 21-17, sparking loud celebrations among the home crowd.

The victory came after Indian shuttlers Ayush Shetty and PV Sindhu suffered contrasting defeats earlier in the day.

With the win, Satwik and Chirag joined Treesa Jolly



and Gayatri Gopichand as the only Indian pairs to reach the quarterfinals of the New Delhi World Championships 2026.

Earlier, India's ace shuttler PV Sindhu bowed out of the BWF World Championships 2026 after suffering a hard-fought defeat to China's Wang Zhi Yi in the women's singles pre-quarterfinals here on Thursday, bringing the host nation's singles campaign at the tournament to an end. DownloadingInteractive Geographic Maps

The five-time World Championships medallist went down 11-21, 21-15, 17-21 to the World No. 2 in an absorbing 88-minute contest at the Indira Gandhi

Indoor Stadium, despite a vociferous home crowd backing the two-time Olympic medallist throughout.

The defeat ended Sindhu's hopes of winning a historic sixth World Championships medal and also brought an end to her perfect record against Chinese opponents at the tournament. Before Thursday, Sindhu had won all eight of her World Championships meetings against players from China.

Earlier in the day, India's Ayush Shetty also bowed out in the men's singles Round of 16, losing 19-21, 11-21 to Indonesia's Alwi Farhan. Ayush, who had stunned World No. 1 Shi

Yuqi in the previous round, fought back from 14-18 down to lead 19-18 in the opening game but failed to close it out. Alwi then dominated the second game to seal victory in around 45 minutes.

Lakshya Sen and Unnati Hooda had also been eliminated in the second round on Wednesday, bringing India's singles challenge to a close at the home World Championships. There was, however, some cheer for the hosts as women's doubles pair Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand advanced to the quarterfinals with a 21-16, 21-12 win over Japan's seventh seeds Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakanishi.

Chinar Premier League 2026 CS inaugurates knockout phase; says tourney brings together youth from Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, AUG 20

The historic Chinar Premier League (CPL) 2026 entered its much-awaited knockout stage today with a spectacular ceremony held at General Bipin Rawat Stadium, Baramulla, witnessing a massive gathering of around 6,000 spectators, including school students and sports lovers.

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo inaugurated the tourney while Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, attended the event as the guest of honour.

The ceremony commenced with the national song followed by the National Anthem and featured vibrant cultural performances by the local school bands, adding colour and patriotic fervour to the grand sporting occasion.

The inaugural knockout match was played between Sheeri Blasters and Downton Bijbera, marking the beginning of the decisive phase of the tournament.

"The CPL 2026 has emerged as a major sporting platform, bringing together the young athletes from Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh and providing them an inclusive space to connect, compete and showcase their talent", asserted the Chief Secretary. The league phase witnessed unprecedented participation and



public engagement, with 1.6 million viewers, around 1,600 athletes, 79 competing teams and 81 matches across eight venues. The teams were selected from 130 applicants and divided into 26 pools with 32 teams qualifying for the knockout stage.

Spearheaded by the Indian Army in partnership with BCF, the CPL goes beyond competitive cricket by promoting youth engagement, community participation, sportsmanship and so-

cial cohesion. The initiative aims to create a vibrant platform where young people can express themselves through sport and contribute towards a positive and empowered society.

The event was attended by Major General Manoj Joshi, GOC Dagger Division; Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Dr. S.F. Hamid, Brigadier M.B. Singh, Commander, 79 Mountain Brigade; Gurinder Pal Singh, Senior Superintendent of Police Baramulla;

and the Commanding Officer, 46 Rashtriya Rifles, besides other senior officers and officials from the civil administration, police and Army, officers of the Youth Services & Sports Department, sports personalities, players, students and public. The grand commencement of the knockout phase marked another significant milestone for the CPL 2026, reflecting the growing enthusiasm for cricket and the power of sport to bring communities together.

Asian Games gold, first squash Olympian on mind as Veer Chotrani eyes historic milestone

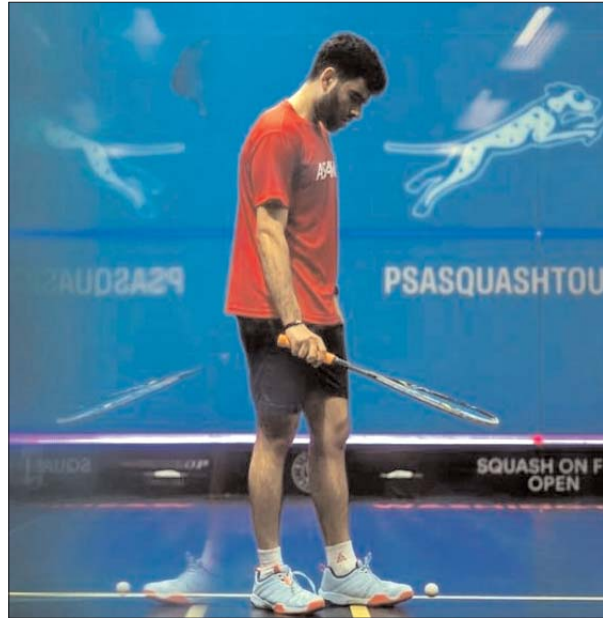
NEW DELHI [INDIA], AUGUST 20 (ANI): Indian squash player Veer Chotrani is aiming for Asian Games gold at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, knowing that a title in Japan could also make him the first Indian squash player to qualify directly for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Squash will make its Olympic debut at the 2028 Games, with the men's and women's singles champions at the Asian Games set to secure direct qualification for the LA Olympics. For Chotrani, currently ranked World No. 38, the prospect of making history has added significance to his preparations for the continental showpiece.

"It's great that we are finally an Olympic sport. It was a long time coming. So, I think it's a good opportunity for so many players now to be part of that event, and we will find out at the Asian Games; whoever wins the Asian Games will be directly selected. It's not going to be long until we find out who's going to be the first squash Olympian. So, I'm very excited about it, and I'm very happy that I'm part of that list of players who could be. So we shall see in the next couple of months what happens, and may the best player win," Chotrani told ANI.

The 24-year-old Mumbai-born player has been preparing for the Asian Games for the last two months, spending time training in the United States before moving to Europe as he looks to peak for the tournament.

"It's been two months since I started preparing. I've been in the US, and now



I'm in Europe training to get ready for the Asian Games, and it's been a positive few months. I've been working hard. So, it's always important to build in the off-season because we have the off-season right now, so it's very important to build on that, not just for the Asian Games, but also for the rest of this season. I think it's been a good couple of months and I'm looking forward to the games," he said.

Squash at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games will be held from September 23 to October 2 at the Nagoya Kinjo-Futo Arena, with men's and women's singles, men's and women's team events and mixed doubles on the programme.

Chotrani, whose father Manish Chotrani was a two-time Indian national champion, has emerged as one of India's leading players on the PSA Tour. He believes Indian squash is currently going through a strong phase, with success coming at both senior and junior levels. History

"It's very good right now, I'd say. We've been performing really well, especially on the PSA Tour, and obviously recently we had some great wins in the juniors as well," Chotrani said.

He pointed to Anahat Singh's historic World Junior title as one of the biggest signs of the sport's growth in the country.

"Anahat winning the World Juniors was a huge historic achievement for Indian squash, and also the boys won a bronze medal in the world junior team, which was also very, very impressive. On the tour, we've been doing pretty well the last few years," said Chotrani.

Chotrani also highlighted the growing depth in Indian men's squash, saying four Indian players have consistently remained inside the world's top 50 in recent months.

"We have had Anahat already in the top 20 in the world, and we have four boys who have been within the top 50 in the world con-

sistently now for the last 12 to 16 months, 18 months. So, I think it's a very positive phase for our sport. We have a lot more support now as well, which is great. And I think in the world of squash, India is definitely one of those top contenders for any events we play. So that's a very, very positive fact," he said.

Chotrani also believes Anahat's breakthrough at the World Juniors can inspire a new generation of Indian squash players.

"Of course, it (Anahat's title) has already inspired a lot of people to pick up a squash racket and play. She is the one who's going to do incredible things for our sport in India in the next many, many years to come," he said. History

Having trained and travelled alongside Anahat, Chotrani said he has seen first-hand the work ethic that has helped the teenager reach the top.

"And I know she works very, very hard, and we all are part of the same team; we spend a lot of time together, so I've seen how hard she works and how dedicated she is. So that's very good to see that she's achieving these kinds of things. And it's not just inspiring the youth; it's also inspiring her teammates who travel with her and play with her and who spend time with her, which is great," he said.

"To be honest, I wasn't surprised she won the World Juniors; she's leaps and bounds ahead of everyone in junior squash, which shows her level and how good she already is. So, I think it was an amazing, amazing feat," Chotrani added.