



Asian Games 2026 Day 7

Double delight for India as men, women kabaddi teams retain gold

NAGOYA, SEP 26: India completed a golden double in kabaddi at the Asian Games as both the men's and women's teams defended their respective titles with thrilling victories over Iran in the finals in Nagoya on Saturday.

The Indian men overcame Iran 40-34 in a closely fought final to retain their gold medal, following the women's team's 37-34 victory over the same opponents earlier in the day.

The men's final was a tense affair, with the scores tied at 20-20 at one stage before India managed to gain the upper-hand and secure another gold.

The Indian men had won seven successive gold medals before their dominance was halted at the 2018 Jakarta Games, where Iran emerged champions and India finished fourth. India bounced back at the 2023 Hangzhou Games, reclaiming the title.

It was India's overall ninth gold medal in kabaddi at the Asian Games.

Earlier, the women's team held a 22-16 lead at half-time, but Iran fought back strongly in the second half, winning it 18-15. However, the Indian cushion proved sufficient as they



held on for a thrilling victory. The women's team have now won the Asian Games gold in every edition except the 2018 Jakarta Games, when they settled for silver after losing to Iran. — with Agencies

Asian Games: In kabaddi player Nikita, another Haryana girl emerges as a sporting hero

17-YEAR-OLD NIKITA, the youngest of seven siblings from Hisar's Hasangarh village, has emerged as a national hero and brought fame to her family after playing a crucial role in helping India win the gold medal in kabaddi at the Asian Games.

While Nikita played like a live wire in the final match at the Asian Games, vil-

Her coach, Sandeep Singh, said Nikita contributed in both aspects of the game—as a defender and as a raider. She secured her place in the team after impressive performances in domestic competitions. She had helped Haryana win the 72nd Women's Senior National Championship, scoring 17 points to help the state clinch an exciting victory in the final.

Doda clinches U/19 Girls Division Level Cricket Title

KISHTWAR, SEPTEMBER 26: The Department of Youth Services & Sports (YS&S) Kishtwar successfully concluded the Inter-District Division Level U/19 Girls Cricket Tournament with an electrifying final held at Chowang Ground today.

Doda emerged as champion after defeating Jammu in a high-scoring final, showcasing outstanding cricketing talent and determination.

The day began with the first semi-final between Samba and Doda. After winning the toss, Samba elected to bat first but were bowled out for 59 runs in 14.4 overs. Doda responded emphatically, chasing down the target in just 6.2 overs to secure a convincing victory and book their place in the final.

The second semi-final was played between Poonch and Jammu. Poonch won the toss and elected to bat, posting a competitive total of 106/2. Jammu displayed excellent batting form and successfully chased the target in 13.5 overs, securing their place in the much-anticipated final.

The final between Jammu and Doda witnessed an enthusiastic crowd and an exciting display of cricket, as both teams battled for the coveted championship title.

Jammu won the toss and elected to bat first, putting up an impressive total of 109/1 in 15 overs. However, Doda



produced a remarkable batting performance in reply, reaching 110/1 in just 12.2 overs to claim the championship in style.

The final was highlighted by two outstanding individual performances. Hafsah Khanday of Doda played a magnificent unbeaten knock of 61 runs off 44 balls, while Mannat of Jammu contributed a brilliant 51 runs off 48 balls. Their impressive batting displays added excitement to an already memorable final.

After the thrilling final, District Youth Services & Sports Officer Jaffer Haider Sheikh presented awards to the participating teams and players in the presence of Zonal Physical Education Officers (ZPEOs), Physical Education Masters (PMs), Physical Education Teachers (PETs), REKs, GMs, NYCs and others.

The tournament was organised under the directions of Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma and Director General, Youth Services & Sports J&K, Anuradha Gupta and under the guidance of Joint Director Jammu, Inderjeet Singh Parihar and under the supervision of District Youth Services & Sports Officer Kishtwar, Jaffer Haider Sheikh.

POWERGRID Inter-Regional Bridge Tournament Concludes in Chandigarh

CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 26: The three-day POWERGRID Inter-Regional Bridge Tournament 2026 concluded here today with an exciting final round and a valedictory ceremony. The tournament was held from September 24 to 26.

In the Pairs Event, Ranjit Kumar and Digvijay Singh of Eastern Region-I emerged champions. Sudhir and Devi Lal of North Western Region secured the first runners-up position, while Abhiram Singh and Pallab Nandi of Eastern Region-II finished second runners-up.

In the Team Championship, North Western Region defeated Eastern Region-I 18–16 in a closely contested final to claim the title. Eastern Region-II secured third place after defeating Western Region-I 9–7 in the playoff.

The valedictory ceremony



was attended by Tarun Bajaj, Executive Director, POWERGRID Northern Region-II, as Chief Guest, along with Ashutosh K. Sharma, General Manager (HR), senior POWERGRID officials and office bearers of the Punjab Bridge Association.

The dignitaries felicitated the winners, participants and match officials with trophies and prizes. Addressing the gathering, Bajaj congratulated the winners and appreciated all participants for displaying sportsmanship and professional skills. He highlighted the importance of sports in promoting physical fitness, mental well-being and camaraderie among employees.

J&K Sports Council facilitates District-Level Championships

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, SEP 26

In a continued effort to strengthen grassroots sports and foster an active sporting culture, the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council successfully facilitated a series of district-level championships and competitions across Wushu and Chess.

These initiatives were held in Shopian, and Srinagar, offering young athletes vital competitive exposure and platforms to showcase their talent.

The three-day ASMITA Wushu Women's League and District Wushu Championship concluded at the Indoor Sports Stadium, Arhama, Shopian. Over 300 athletes from various schools, clubs, and the Khelo India Wushu Centre competed. Khelo India Wushu Centre Shopian claimed the overall championship title, with Shahi Hamdan School securing the runner-up position.

Similarly, the 6th Kashmir FIDE International Rating Chess Tournament 2026 commenced at the Indoor Stadium, Polo Ground, Srinagar running from September 25 to September 26. Organized by the Kashmir Chess Club and the All J&K Chess Association under the aegis of the Sports Council, the event gives regional players a prestigious platform to earn FIDE ratings. These synchronized statewide activities underscore the J&K Sports Council's strategic focus on decentralizing sports infrastructure and bringing structured competitive opportunities closer to youth, particularly in rural and far-flung areas.

By combining targeted district events with inclusive participation models, the Council continues to successfully identify emerging talent, encourage mass sports engagement, and establish robust pathways toward higher-level competitive achievements.

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Bandipora clinches UT-Level U-14 Boys Handball Championship

BANDIPORA, SEPTEMBER 26: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Bandipora, today concluded the Inter-District UT-Level U-14 Boys Handball Competition at SK Stadium Bandipora, with the host district emerging as the champion.

In the much-anticipated final, Bandipora defeated Baramulla in a closely contested encounter to lift the championship title. Baramulla secured the runner-up position, while Kulgam finished third after defeating Jammu in the third-place play-off.

At the conclusion of the competition, DYSSO Bandipora, Ab Majeed Rather presented trophies to the winning, runner-up and third-position teams.



The championship witnessed enthusiastic participation of young athletes from across the Union Territory, highlighting the efforts of the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, J&K, towards nurturing sporting talent and promoting discipline, teamwork and competitive spirit among young players.

India maintain choke-hold on Asiad Kabaddi gold; Both men and women

Nagoya, Sep 26: India's supremacy in Asian Games Kabaddi competition remained intact as both the men's and women's teams out-witted familiar foes Iran in their respective summit clashes to successfully defend their gold medals here on Saturday.

The men's team prevailed 40-34, while the women clinched a 37-34 triumph to ensure that their dominance over the event continued. This was the ninth gold for the men and fourth for the women.

The men's win came without their most experienced player Pawan Sehrawat even having to step on the mat.

With the defending champions struggling for control midway through the contest, it was the composure of raiders Arjun Deswal and Devank in the decisive phase that tilted a gripping final in India's favour.

Iran fought for every point as if it

were the last, matching—and even exceeding—India's physicality, refusing to allow the defending champions to settle into a rhythm.

At half-time, Iran held a slender 18-17 lead and India had every reason to be concerned. The Iranian side's relentless approach had put the Indians under pressure.

But India did not panic. Instead, they changed the tempo of the game, trusted their raiders and allowed experience to take over.

Arjun and Devank repeatedly ventured deep into the Iranian half, picked their moments and returned with crucial points, gradually forcing Iran onto the back foot.

"After Iran were leading 17-18 at half-time, we strategised that only those raiders who were pulling out the opponents would be sent, and here Arjun Deswal and Devank were spot on. Their raids completely turned the



match on its head," Sehrawat said after the final.

The tactical adjustment was not restricted to the raiders. Aslam Mustafa, who had struggled early after venturing too deep and being pinned, was moved into defence, where he found a more effective role.

India also tightened its defensive lines, making it increasingly difficult for the Iranian raiders to find easy points.

The turning point came when India inflicted an all-out to stretch the advantage to 29-24. With the gold beginning to come into sight, the Indians showed another side

of their experience. Rather than chase points recklessly, they slowed the contest down.

The raiders hovered around the midline, waited for openings and repeatedly returned to safety without overcommitting. It was calculated kabaddi—forcing Iran to take the risks instead.

And Iran had little choice. Needing points, the Iranian raiders began probing deeper into India's half, only to run into a defence that had grown increasingly assured. Each failed raid added to the pressure, while India's lead gave its players the freedom to wait for mistakes rather than manufacture opportunities.

Women clinch it in tense finish

women also held their nerve in a slightly more tense finish to clinch a record-extending fourth gold.

India had already beaten Iran in the group stage and, in that encounter, also identified a weak-

ness they would return to when the stakes were much higher—the left flank.

Raiders Nikita, captain Pooja and Sanju Devi repeatedly attacked from that side, and the strategy paid dividends.

The tall, athletic Iranians had the technique and the physical presence to trouble India, but their lack of experience at this level showed when India consistently found openings on the left.

India began briskly, moving 3-1 ahead and reducing Iran to three players. But the Iranians refused to be overwhelmed.

Their youthful energy kept them in the contest and they fought back to level the scores at 7-7, with a succession of TV reviews underlining just how fiercely contested the opening exchanges were.

India's raiding was not at its most fluent in the first half, but its defence compensated.