



CM Omar Abdullah inaugurates 70th National School Games in Ganderbal

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS JAMMU, OCT 15

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inaugurated the 70th National School Games at the Government College of Physical Education, Ganderbal, welcoming young athletes from 23 States and Union Territories and calling for greater recognition, support and opportunities for sports beyond cricket.

The five-day sporting event features Under-17 boys' and girls' competitions in Wushu and Taekwondo, bringing together promising young talent from across the country.

Welcoming the participating athletes to Kashmir, particularly Ganderbal, the Chief Minister said the region had a strong tradition of excellence in Wushu and Taekwondo, with local athletes achieving success at both national and international levels.

Expressing happiness at the enthusiasm and determination of the young participants, he said he hoped the athletes would compete wholeheartedly and bring pride to their respective States and Union Territories.

Highlighting the importance of sports in the overall development of children, Omar Abdullah said young people should be encouraged to pursue their sporting interests alongside academics, without being burdened by excessive pressure to secure high marks.

He expressed concern over the disproportionate attention and resources devoted to cricket, observing that other sports, including football, hockey and disciplines such as Wushu and Taekwondo, deserved greater media visibility, sponsorship and institutional support.

Chief Minister stressed the need to create a more inclusive sporting environment in which talent across disciplines receives adequate opportunities and encouragement.

He said sports played a vital role in instilling discipline, building confidence and opening new avenues for young people. He urged the participants to compete with determination, uphold the spirit of sportsmanship and develop lasting friendships during their stay in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Minister said the government was making concerted efforts to strengthen sports infrastructure and expand opportunities for young athletes. He emphasised the need to develop indoor sports complexes in every district to encourage wider participation and provide children with better facilities to pursue different sporting disciplines.

Encouraging the visiting teams and officials to explore the region, Omar Abdullah invited them to visit Sonamarg, Srinagar's Mughal Gardens and other local attractions, adding that Kashmir's hospitality was as memorable as its natural beauty.

On the occasion, boys and girls presented demonstrations of Wushu and Taekwondo, drawing appreciation from the Chief Minister and other dignitaries.

Minister for Youth Services and Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Director General, Youth Services and Sports, Anuradha Gupta, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal Shreya Singhal, SSP Ganderbal, senior officers, athletes, team officials and students were present on the occasion.



Vishvajit More wins historic silver at U23 World Wrestling Championship in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS, OCT 15: Vishvajit More became the first Indian Greco-Roman wrestler to win a silver medal at the U23 World Championship while Komal and Diksha Malik remain in bronze medal contention here. More, who already has two U23 World Championship bronze medals in his collection, was gunning for a historic gold but finished second after losing the fiercely fought final 12-13 to Georgia's Koba Karumidze.

More opened his campaign with a close 10-8 win over Mexico's Isaac Marin Mata and then beat Iranian U20 world champion Armin Shamsipour 8-1 in the quarterfinals.

Shamsipour suffered a left shoulder injury during the bout, handing the Indian wrestler an easy win.

More attempted a shoulder throw in the first period but could not execute the move properly. Later, More successfully rolled the Iranian for a four-pointer, which appeared to have caused Shamsipour's injury.

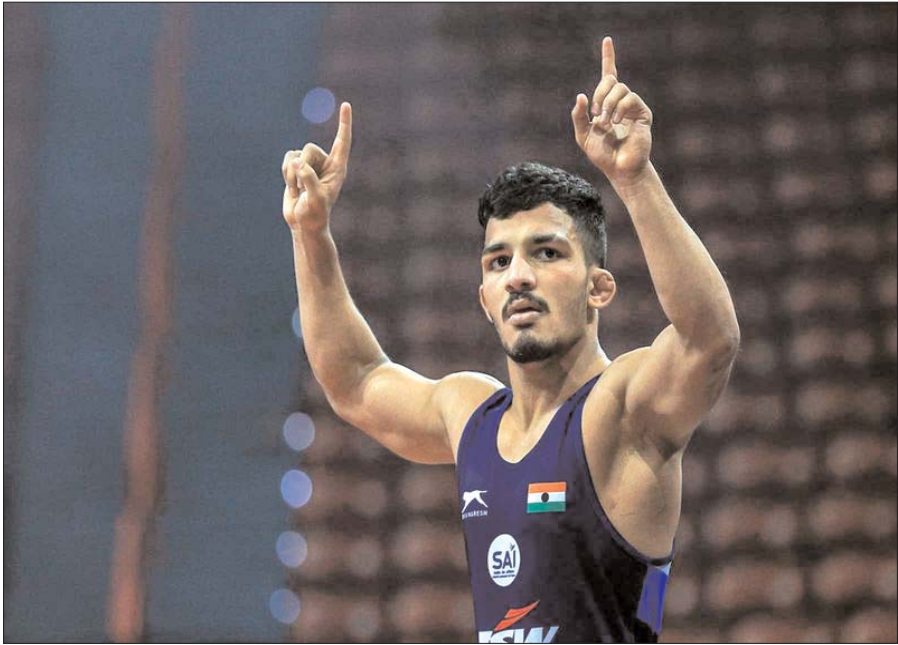
The Iranian took a medical timeout, wincing in pain. He could offer no resistance during the final minute.

More's semifinal against Russia's Malik Gigiev was a close affair, and he prevailed 7-4.

The other Indian Greco-Roman wrestlers in the fray could not reach the medal round with Chetan (63kg) losing his pre-quarterfinal bout and Karan Kamboj (87kg) suffering a heavy technical superiority defeat in the qualification round.

In the women's event, Komal lost her semifinal by technical superiority to Ukraine's Alina Filipovych and will now fight for bronze.

Diksha Malik (76kg) is also alive in the bronze-medal race but Mansi Lather (68kg) bowed out after losing her quarterfinal 9-10 to Laura Godino from Italy. Mansi was trailing 1-8 at one stage but scored eight points in a row to take a 9-8 lead. Just as the bout was drawing to a close, Godino executed a double-leg attack with four seconds remaining for a two-point takedown to win the bout by one point.



Indian track and field stars Prachi, Ancy Sojan speak on meeting PM Modi after Asian Games success

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15 (ANI): Indian athletes Ancy Sojan and Prachi Choudhary expressed happiness after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi following their Asian Games 2026 medal wins at Aichi-Nagoya, highlighting PM Modi's keen interest in sports and how he presented his vision of 'Viksit Bharat' to the athletes.

PM Modi interacted with India's Asian Games 2026 contingent at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi on Thursday, as athletes, coaches and officials gathered to mark the country's performance at the continental multi-sport event.

Speaking to ANI, Prachi, who secured a gold medal in the women's 4x400 m event alongside Kiran Pahal, Machettira Poovamma and Vithya Ramraj, said that the motivation is always to win medals in major events outside India and meeting PM Modi becomes a motivation in itself as well.

"It felt very good. You get good motivation. And when we go outside to represent India, our target is always to bring back a medal. If we bring back a medal, the Prime Minister invites us, and we get to meet and talk with him, which serves as motivation for us to have him come and speak with us," she said.

India clinched the gold as the quartet clocked 3:29.69 to finish on top in the women's 4x400m relay final.

Prachi also spoke of the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' that PM Modi presented before them and highlighted their role in fulfilling it, with a rise in sports infrastructure and facilities.

"He spoke of the dream of Viksit Bharat and how we need to fulfil it. Our sports infrastructure is developing a lot, and these facilities are benefiting sports children immensely. Even children at the ground level are emerging strongly, so in the coming time, India will become a sports hub," she added.

Ancy Sojan, a silver medalist in long jump with best effort of 6.53 m, said that PM Modi also took pictures with athletes and shows very keen interest in sports.

"It was so nice, he just came with us and had a photo. He took some time from his busy schedule to appreciate us, and he is such a... what do we say, very interested in sports, I can say. He is always talking about sports, Olympics, and we were so enthusiastic about this," she said.

Sojan missed out on gold by just two centimetres, with China's Huang Yingying taking the top spot with a jump of 6.55m. Another Chinese athlete, Tan Mengyi, won bronze with 6.46m, while India's Shaile Singh finished fourth with a best effort of 6.42m.

The Indian women's cricket team, which



RAIPUR, OCT 15: India will look to majorly refine their T20 game when the era of new captain Smriti Mandhana begins with a three-match series against a zealous Zimbabwe here on Friday.

It will be the first time India and Zimbabwe face each other in a bilateral series.

India recently reaffirmed their dominance at the Asian level but they remain very much a work in progress in international cricket, especially in the shortest format.

The back-to-back premature exits in the T20 World Cup have exposed chinks in their armour. India need improvement in all three departments of the game if they are to consistently challenge the likes of Australia.

India won a path-breaking ODI World Cup at home last year but lifting the inaugural Women's Champions Trophy at home early next year would be a tougher task.

On the batting front, the team is struggling to maintain momentum in the middle overs following the flying starts provided by Mandhana and Shafali Verma.

The number three spot has become a case of musical chairs and the form of Mandhana's predecessor, Harmanpreet Kaur, has been a concern for a while.

Now playing as a specialist batter in the side, Harmanpreet will be under more pressure to deliver. India also need to groom more power hitters to support Richa Ghosh in the lower-order.

The fielding has let the team down on a number of occasions and needs significant improvement. In the bowling department, the recent rise of Nandni Sharma has been a big positive but overall the pace attack needs more potency to strike regularly in all phases of the game.

Spin has been India's strength traditionally with the young Shree Charani standing out. Of late, veteran all-rounder Deepti Sharma has troubled the batters with her off-spin.

For regular breakthroughs in the middle overs, leg-break bowler Prema Rawat needs to be given an extended run to flourish. The fresh faces in the squad include Niki Prasad and Jintimani Kalita.

The series presents an ideal opportunity for high on confidence Zimbabwe after beating the West Indies in an ODI last month.

The squad will be captained by Josephine Nkomo. Both teams will travel to Vadodara for three ODIs following the T20s.

Squads
India: Smriti Mandhana (c), Shafali Verma (vc), Niki Prasad, Harmanpreet Kaur, Anushka Sharma, Richa Ghosh (wk), G Kamalini [WK], Deepti Sharma, Prema Rawat, Shree Charani, Nandni Sharma, Kranti Gaud, Arundhati Reddy, Jintimani Kalita, Minnu Mani.
Zimbabwe: Josephine Nkomo (c), Beloved Biza, Chipo Mugeriri-Tiripano, Kelis Ndhlovu, Michelle Mavunga, Francisca Chipare, Olinder Chire, Kudzai Chigora, Nyasha Gwanzura, Nomvelo Sibanda, Loryn Phiri, Chiyedza Dhururu, Modester Mupachikwa, Tendai Makusha, Sharne Mayers



"Rinku could've changed the game": Wasim Jaffer feels India missed batter's presence in 4th West Indies T20I

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15: Former Indian cricketer and domestic cricket giant Wasim Jaffer felt that Team India missed the services of middle-order batter Rinku Singh in the middle order during a massive chase of 248 runs against West Indies in the fourth T20I, saying that as a batter, he is "miles ahead of everyone else" and could have changed the game for India.

Jaffer was speaking on his YouTube channel. After unstoppable Shai Hope's fourth century of the India tour, the back-to-back T20I champions were tasked with hunting down 248 runs. Despite a half-century from Sanju Samson, who came out firing right from the start, Team India were barely hovering around the required run rate instead of being way above it.

A 70-run stand between Tilak Varma and Nitish Kumar Reddy ignited hope and brought the equation to 59 runs needed in 24 balls, a gettable total. However, once they were dismissed, it was curtains for Team India, who will now play the fifth T20I at Bengaluru with the series on the line.

Notably, Rinku has not featured in Indian colours since the tour of Zimbabwe in July this year and overall, his use has been very low since last year.

Jaffer said, "If you look from a batter's perspective, Rinku is miles ahead of everyone else. He bats amazingly at number five and six, plus he is a left-hander. I feel it is very unfortunate that he is not part of this Indian team purely because he cannot bowl. I can understand Rajat's (Patidar) case, as he bats in the top order and there is no place there, but Rinku should be there."

"If you had Rinku in that position, you never know. He could have changed the game. He has the capacity and has won a lot of matches in franchise cricket in this manner," he added. This year in T20Is, Rinku has made 152 runs in 13 matches and 10 innings at an average of 25.33 and a strike rate of 139.44, with best score of 44*.