



Asian Para Games

Sheetal Devi equals world record; India top women's compound team qualification

NAGOYA, OCT 19: India's archery sensation **Sheetal Devi** produced a phenomenal performance in the women's compound qualification round, equalling the world record with 704 points out of a possible 720 and setting a new Asian record at the Asian Para Games, here on Monday.

The 19-year-old Indian archer from Jammu and Kashmir delivered a near-flawless display of precision and consistency, registering 57 perfect 10s from her 72 arrows, including 32 Xs -- shots landing in the inner-most scoring zone of the target.

The Paris Paralympics bronze medalist thus surpassed the previous Asian record of 698 points by six points, setting a new benchmark in the continental competition.

The world record of 704 points was set by **Turkiye's Oznur Girdi** at the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games.

The reigning Asian Games champion also bettered her own Asian Para Games record of 680 points, set at Hangzhou in



2023 when she had gone on to win two gold (individual and mixed team) and one silver (doubles).

She had previously raised the Asian record to 698 in March this year before improving it further with her outstanding qualification-round showing in Nagoya.

Asian Games debutant **Payal** also impressed in the women's compound qualification, scoring 675 points to finish fifth and strengthen India's medal prospects in the individual

and team events.

The quadruple amputee from Odisha shot to prominence in April this year when she stunned **Sheetal** on her way to winning gold at the World Archery Para Series in Bangkok.

The combined efforts of **Sheetal** and **Payal** propelled India to the top of the women's compound team qualification standings with a combined score of 1,379 points, comfortably ahead of China, who finished second with 1,338 points.

India's strong qualification performance earned the team a direct berth in the semifinals.

The Indian pair will face the winners of the quarterfinal between fifth-seeded Thailand and fourth-seeded Kazakhstan, with a victory securing a place in the medal round.

Sheetal's record-equalling score, coupled with **Payal's** impressive debut, provided a major boost to India's campaign ahead of the elimination rounds.

India off to flying start at Asian Para Games with 11 medals on day 1

NAGOYA, OCT 19: India were off to a spectacular start at the Asian Para Games with medals, including four gold, pouring in from four different sports following assured performances by established names like wheelchair-bound shooter **Mona Agarwal** and long jumper **Nishad Kumar** here on Monday.

Armless archer **Sheetal Devi** also produced a statement performance as she equalled the world record in the women's compound qualification round before combining with **Rakesh Kumar** to set a new world mark in the mixed team event.

In all, India collected 11 medals—four gold, five silver and two bronze—to be fourth in the overall standings.

The medal rush began quite early in the day with **Mona** staging a stirring comeback in the women's 10m air rifle (SH1) final to beat compatriot **Avani Lekhara** for the gold.

Mona, a bronze-medallist at the 2024 Paris Paralympics, climbed from sixth place to set an Asian Para Games record of 250.0, edging two-time Paralympic champion **Avani** by



a mere 0.4 points.

The 24-year-old **Avani**, who entered as the defending champion, settled for the silver with 249.6.

Her medal also secured India a second quota place for the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics, with **Mona** having already earned one at the World Shooting Para Sport (WSPS) World Championships in Changwon, South Korea last month where she won a silver.

Mona set the pace in qualification, topping the eight-shooter field with 629.1 to establish an Asian Para Games qualification record. **Avani** was second with 626.4.

The evening belonged to the para-athletics competitors with two-time Para-

lympic silver-winner **Nishad Kumar**, middle-distance runner **Soumya**, and javelin thrower **Rinku** finishing on top in their respective competitions.

For **Nishad**, it was a very special performance as he was competing in an international long jump event for the first time in his career.

Nishad, whose right arm was severed by a grass-cutting machine in an accident when he was a mere six, leapt 7.11m to claim the top spot.

In the women's 1500m T12/T13 event, the visually impaired **Soumya** clocked a personal best of 5:12.39sec to win the gold ahead of compatriot **Venkatesh Radha** (5:30.90sec).

In the most severe cate-

gory of T11 for the visually impaired, India's **Ravanni Valasanaini** ended with a bronze after the original third-place finisher **Rakshitha Raju** was disqualified for a technical violation that covers non-compliance in relation to clothing, shoes, and bibs.

In the F46 men's javelin throw, India dominated a three-man field with **Rinku** and **Ajeet Singh** bagging the gold and silver with efforts of 65.11m and 65.02m respectively. It was a season's best throw for both the Indians.

F46 classification is for athletes with a single amputation below or above the elbow, moderately affected movement in one or both arms, or any equivalent upper-limb impairments.

IRS officer Ekta Vishnoi wins 3 gold medals at World Masters Powerlifting Championships in US

NEW DELHI, OCT 19: Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer **Ekta Vishnoi**, who is presently serving as Joint Secretary in the Government of India's Department of Biotechnology, has won three gold medals in the World Masters Classic and Equipped Powerlifting Championships held in Nevada, USA.

She won the top honours in the M2 (50-59 years), 57kg category after lifting a combined 362.5kg in a field that featured competitors from Canada and Japan.

Vishnoi lifted 130kg in squat, 72.5kg in bench press and 160kg in dead-lift and finished ahead of competitors from Canada, who recorded a total of 330kg, and Japan, whose total was 325kg.

Vishnoi's golds came in squat, dead-lift and in the final overall weight.

Vishnoi previously led the Fit India Mission and served as Deputy Director General (DDG) of the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

"Winning three gold



medals at the World Masters Championships and representing India on the international stage is a moment of immense pride for me. A total of 362.5kg is the result of years of discipline, perseverance and hard work," **Vishnoi** was quoted as saying in a Sports Authority of India press release.

"I hope my journey inspires more women, particularly those in their 40s and

50s, to pursue their sporting dreams and believe that age is no barrier to excellence," she added.

Vishnoi acknowledged the crucial role of her coach, **Sunil Kumar**, in preparing her for the championship.

"His technical expertise and belief in me have helped me push my limits. This achievement is the result of our collective commitment and hard work," she said.

The World Masters Classic and Equipped Powerlifting Championships bring together masters athletes from across the world to compete in different age and bodyweight categories. The competition comprises three disciplines—squat, bench press and dead-lift—with the combined weight lifted determining the athlete's total.

Jalandhar boy Viraj Sharma becomes India's No. 1 badminton player

JALANDHAR, OCT 19: Hard work and dedication over the past 10–11 years have finally brought Jalandhar boy **Viraj Sharma** the much-awaited recognition he has striven for. He was on Monday declared India's No. 1 badminton player in the under-17 boys' category.

Viraj shot into the limelight when he won silver in the under-17 singles final against **Nabha's Jagsher Khangurra** at the 37th Sub-Junior National Badminton Championship held in Bhubaneswar in December 2025.

Following the event, he was selected by the Infosys Foundation and is currently

training at the **Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy** in Bengaluru. Before that, he received coaching at **Rise Sports School** in Noida.

His proud parents, **Rahul Sharma** and **Sanjita Sharma**, said, "It is such a big day for us. He was just six when he started playing the game. He used to get up at 4 am every day for the morning practice session. We spent the entire day running around with him, shuttling between his practice sessions, school and the daily grind. It was coach **Parveen Kumar** who trained him during his formative years at an academy at **DAV Institute of Engi-**

neering and Technology. He was only 11 when we sent him to the academy in Noida for more professional training. Since then, there has been no looking back. He kept improving, and finally, the big day has arrived."

Rahul Sharma, who runs a sanitary hardware business in Jalandhar, said, "We just want to see **Viraj** perform well internationally in the years to come. Thankfully, he has also been selected under **Khelo India**, which will provide him with significant support."

Ritin Khanna, secretary of the Punjab Badminton Association, said, "**Viraj's**

success is another major milestone for the Punjab association. Recently, **Wazir Sharma** of Ludhiana was ranked India's No. 1 in the under-15 category. Like them, **Tanvi Sharma**, **Inayat Gulati** and **Jagsher Khangurra** are among the other star shuttlers from Punjab who have recently secured the No. 1 spot in different categories of the game."

Ritin Khanna and **MP Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer** had gone to Mohali airport the previous evening to receive **Jagsher Khangurra**, who arrived from Cairo after winning a bronze medal at the Junior World Badminton Championships.

Beleaguered Indian shuttlers led by P V Sindhu look to bounce back at French Open

PARIS, OCT 19: Indian shuttlers, led by the seasoned **P V Sindhu**, would be desperate to overcome their recent struggles and make a mark at the USD 950,000 French Open Super 750 badminton tournament that begins here on Tuesday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medalist, will face South Korea's top seed **An Se Young** in the women's singles first round, while sixth seed **Lakshya Sen** will take on Japan's **Kodai Naraoka** in the men's singles opener.

Sindhu was drawn against the world No. 1 Korean at last week's Denmark Open as well. However, following multiple last-minute withdrawals by seeded players, the tournament organisers revised the draw because of which **Sindhu** ultimately clash with Germany's **Yvonne Li**.

The Indian suffered a shock first-round defeat to the lower-ranked German. She will need to raise her game considerably to challenge **Young** in her opening match this week.

Lakshya had recovered from a back issue to beat **Naraoka** and help India secure a bronze medal in the men's team event of the Asian Games, but his form has since dipped.

The **Almora** shuttler faces the same opponent in his opening match this week and would hope to be back at his



best.

Former world No. 1 **Kidambi Srikanth** has looked sharp and troubled his opponents.

Last week, he pushed reigning world champion **Alex Lanier** hard with his superior net play before letting the match slip away.

Srikanth will be aiming to build on the momentum when he faces compatriot **Ayush Shetty** in a clash between two generations.

In men's doubles, **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy** and **Chirag Shetty** have been India's most consistent pair this year, winning titles at Singapore and

China.

However, their shock early exit from the Asian Games was a dampener, and they will hope to bounce back when they face French brothers **Christo Popov** and **Toma Junior Popov**.

The women's doubles pair of **Treesa Jolly** and **Gayatri Gopichand**, who won their maiden World Championships bronze this year, will take on Taiwan's **Lin Chih-Chun** and **Yang Chu Yun**.

In women's singles, **Tanvi Sharma** and **Isharani Baruah** will face each other in an all-Indian first-round clash.

Asian Para Games 2026: PM Modi congratulates Indian medal winners after 11-medal haul on Day 1

New Delhi [India], October 19: Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on Monday hailed Indian athletes for their medal haul on Day 1 of the ongoing Asian Para Games 2026 in Japan.

Asian Para Games 2026: PM Modi congratulates Indian medal winners after 11-medal haul on Day 1

PM Modi congratulated **Radha Venkatesh** on winning the silver medal in the Women's 1500m T12/13 event at the Asian Para Games 2026, expressing pride in her achievement and wishing her continued success in the future.

"A wonderful achievement by **Radha Venkatesh!** Proud of her for winning the Silver Medal in the Women's 1500m T12/13 event at the Asian Para Games 2026, expressing pride in her achievement and wishing her continued success in the future," PM Modi wrote in an X post.

A wonderful achievement by **Radha Venkatesh!** Proud of her for winning

the Silver Medal in the Women's 1500m T12/13 event at the Asian Para Games 2026. India celebrates her success. I wish her the very best for many more achievements in the future: PM @narendramodi

— PMO India (@PMOIndia) October 19, 2026

PM Modi also congratulated **Soumya** on winning gold in the Women's 1500m T12/13 event at the Asian Para Games 2026, praising her personal-best performance on debut and lauding her talent, dedication and determination.

"A Golden debut indeed! **Soumya** has made a spectacular mark at the Asian Para Games 2026, winning Gold in the Women's 1500m T12/13 event with a personal best time too! Delivering such an exceptional performance on debut speaks volumes about her talent, dedication and determination. Congratulations to her," PM Modi wrote in an X post.

A Golden debut indeed! **Soumya** has

made a spectacular mark at the Asian Para Games 2026, winning Gold in the Women's 1500m T12/13 event with a Personal Best timing too! Delivering such an exceptional performance on debut speaks volumes about her talent, dedication and determination. Congratulations to her: PM @narendramodi

— PMO India (@PMOIndia) October 19, 2026

PM Modi hailed **Ajeet Singh** on winning the silver medal in the Men's Javelin Throw F46 event at the Asian Para Games 2026, praising his skill and competitive spirit while wishing him success in his future endeavours.

"An outstanding display of skill and competitive spirit by **Ajeet Singh**. He has secured the Silver Medal in the Men's Javelin Throw F46 event at the Asian Para Games 2026. Congrats to him.

All the best to him for the endeavours ahead," PM Modi wrote in an X post.