

Sports Authority of India

Ravi Kumar and Apurvi Chandela finish 3rd, fetch India's first medal

- Palembang brings the cheers for Indian contingent
- Rowers, Om Prakash / Sawarn Singh show good form
- Men and Women's Kabaddi teams stay on course to maintain golden streak

Jakarta/ Palembang, August 19: Situated 600 kilometres to the south of Jakarta, Palembang, the capital of Sumatra province provided the cheer for the Indian contingent on the opening day of the 18th Asian Games. India opened their medal count with a bronze medal besides which they made the finals in some of the rowing events. Both Shooting and Rowing are being held in Palembang.

While Jakarta is hosting the majority of the disciplines, some of the events are being held in Palembang, which also hosted the 2011 South East Asian Games.

India's shooters, Ravi Kumar and Apurvi Chandela opened the Indian medal account with a bronze in the 10m Air Rifle Team Mixed event on Sunday, the opening day of the 18th Asian Games at the Jakabaring International Shooting Range. Both Kumar and Chandela are supported by the Government's flagship Target Olympic Podium Scheme.

Chinese Taipei pair, Lin Yingshin and Lu Shaochan won the gold medal, despite being fifth and last to make the final. Lin Yingshin is the winner of the Munich World Cup earlier this year, was also second at the World Cup in Changwon Korea. Lu Shaochan had finished second in men's 10m Air Rifle at the Munich World Cup.

China's Zhao Ruozhu and Yang Haoran took the silver, while Kumar and Chandela grabbed the bronze.

The Indian pair was second after the qualifying stage, but slipped to third, as they were the second team to be eliminated assuring them of the bronze. Taipei went on to beat China for their first gold of the Games.

South Korea, who topped qualifying finished fourth in the final, while Mongolia, who were third in the qualifiers, were fifth and last.

There was some good news coming in from Trap ranges, too. Veteran 41-year-old Manavjit Singh Sandhu, a World Champion from 12 years ago, and a multiple medallist from Asian Games, began his search for an Asian Games gold medal, by taking a share of the lead after first three sets in the men's Trap event. He opened with a perfect 25 and followed that up with 24-23 to lead at 72 alongside Pakistan Aamer Iqbal (24-25-23). India's other entry in the event, young 20-year-old Lakshay shot 22-25-24 for a first day's total of 71 in fifth place.

Also, in Trap shooting, Shreyasi Singh (71) and Seema Tomar (70) opened the first day of Women's Trap event in second and fourth positions. Shreyasi, who celebrates her 27th birthday on August 29 during the Games, is a bronze medallist in Double Trap team (with Shagun Chowdhury and Varsha Vaman) from the 2014 Asian Games. The leader was Mariya Dmitriyenko of Kazakhstan, who shot 75 out of 75. Mariya was part of part of Kazhak team that won the team gold four years ago.

Korean Gee-eun Kang, double medallist from 2010 Games in Guangzhou, was lying third, in between the two Indian shooters.

In the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team, India's teenage star, Manu Bhaker and Abhishek Verma, tied for the fifth place, but were knocked out of final contention by the Kazakhstan team.

Rowing – Om Prakash and Sawarn Singh reach final in Double Sculls

At the Jakabaring Sports Complex, Palembang in rowing, Double Sculls, Om Prakash and the 2014 Asian Games bronze medallist, Sawarn Singh, reached the final by winning their heat in 7:10.26, more than two seconds ahead of Japanese pair, Keita Yamao and Tomozaku Kuribara. The final is scheduled for Thursday.

Dattu Baban Bhokanal came second in Heat 1 of Single sculls, finishing behind Japan's Ryuta Arawaka. Dattu will now go through the repackage on Tuesday to try and earn a place in the final.

In Men's Pair, Malkeet Singh and Gurinder Singh finished third in their heat in 7:37.20, but reached the final.

In Men's lightweight Fours, Bhopal Singh, Jagvir Singh, Tejash Hanamant, Shinde, Pranay Ganesh Naukarkar came second in their heat, behind China's foursome and will need to go through the repackage to try and make the final.

In Women's Pairs, Sanjukta Dung Dung and Harpreet Kaur finished 5th with a timing of 9:02.88 and will now row in the repackage, while in Women's Double

Sculls, Sayali Rajendra Shelake and Pooja will get to compete in the final despite being sixth in their heat.

Wrestling – Sushil Kumar loses opening bout

There was disappointing news from the wrestling arena, as one of India's icons, Sushil Kumar, who has twice won an Olympic medal, but never an Asian Games gold, will have to remain without one as he lost his opening bout to Bahrain's Adam Batirov.

Sushil took a 2-0 lead in the bout but was docked a point soon after, after being cautioned. Batirov, 33, picked up the pace after the break and sped to a 5-2 lead. Sushil did snatch a point back but could not find a clincher, losing his opening bout 3-5.

The loss puts Sushil Kumar out of contention for a gold medal at these 18th Asian Games. However, he can fight for a bronze through repechage if the 2017 Asian Indoor Games gold medallist Adam Batirov reaches the final.

Russian-born Batirov, started representing Bahrain from 2016 and is the younger brother of Mavlet Batirov, who won gold medals in 2004 and 2008 Olympic Games.

However, Sandeep Tomar won his 57 kg prelim bout 12-8 against Turkmenistan's Rustem Nazarov.

Kabaddi – Men outplay Bangladesh; Women beat Japan

Indian men and women, who have never won anything less than a gold medal in kabaddi at the Asian Games began with comfortable wins in their opening matches at Theatre Garuda on Sunday.

The men, who have won every time since the sport was introduced in 1990 in China, are looking for their eighth successive gold medal in the sport. They outplayed Bangladesh 50-21 for their first win.

Meanwhile, the Indian women gunning for third straight gold medal in kabaddi, opened with a smooth 43-12 win over Japan at Theatre Garuda and will next meet Thailand, bronze medallists from 2014 Incheon Games.
