

Sports Authority of India

Sindhu marches into Asian Games badminton final

- **Sindhu to meet World No. 1 for gold**

Saina Nehwal secures bronze

- **Indian women's hockey team wins 4th match, gets to semi-finals**
- **Boxer Vikas win easy against Pakistan's Tanveer**

Jakarta/ Palembang, August 27: An all-India badminton final at the Asian Games women's singles remained elusive, as World No. 1 Tai Tzu Ying put out Saina Nehwal in straight games 21-17, 21-14 in just under 35 minutes.

However, a little later, World No. 3 PV Sindhu quelled a strong challenge from World No. 2 Akane Yamaguchi in three hard-fought games to enter another major final in her young career. Sindhu won 21-17, 15-21, 21-10 in 65 minutes.

While Tai leads in head-to-head clashes against Sindhu, the Indian can take heart in the fact that Tai lost one of the five matches she has played – against Ratchanok Intanon in the Team event. Tai has a 9-3 head-to-head lead over the Indian, who last beat the Taipei star in the Olympics in 2016 on her way to the final.

Sindhu looked somewhat slow to start with but got back into her stride soon despite Yamaguchi attempting to attack. Sindhu opened a 11-8 lead and then 17-12 and finally 20-17 at which point Yamaguchi hit a smash wide to give Sindhu the game.

Sindhu started well in the second game and led 7-4 and then 10-6, but then Yamaguchi won six points in a row to go ahead 12-11. She stretched that to 16-13 and 18-15, before three points in a row to force the match into the decider.

Despite Yamaguchi seemingly having swung the momentum her way, Sindhu came out strong in the decider to lead 4-3 and then 7-3, as she started alternating

net dribbles with more decisive smashes. The lead swelled to 10-5 and finally 16-8, before finally clinching the set and match 21-10.

Playing Tzu Ying, who possesses a superior head-to-head record against her, Saina decided attacking the Taipei girl's backhand was the best route to stem her losing streak. Tzu Ying went up 4-1, but was caught up 8-8 and it was close till 11-10. It was then that the Chinese Taipei player took four straight points to get to 15-10 and slowly moved to 19-16 before winning 21-17.

In the second set Tzu Ying moved ahead early at 5-1, but Saina closed to 6-7 and 11-12. At 13-all and then 14-13 Saina was briefly ahead in the match, however Tzu Ying forged a strong come back and clinched the set 21-14 to mark her passage into the final. A bronze medalist from the 2014 Asian Games, she has now improved on that by reaching the final.

Both Saina and Sindhu are supported by the Government's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).

Boxing

Vikas Krishan, one of India's big hopes in boxing opened with a solid 5-0 win over Pakistan's Tanveer Ahmed in the men's 75 kg category. Vikas dominated the bout and gave his opponent no chance. The 26-year-old Vikas, who is supported by the TOPS scheme, is a Commonwealth Games gold medallist and also won the 2010 Asian Games gold in the 60 kg category. Four years ago in Incheon Asian Games he took the bronze, losing to eventual gold medallist Zhanibek Alim Khanuly of Kazakhstan. Vikas was also fifth at the Rio Olympics.

Hockey – Indian team top Pool, safely through to semi-finals

The Indian Women's Hockey Team registered its fourth straight win, outplaying Thailand 5-0, after being held goalless for the first two quarters.

The Indian women who have won heavily in their league matches so far, 21-0 against Kazakhstan and 8-0 against Indonesia and then 4-1 against Korea, have scored 38 goals and conceded just one against Korea. That puts them on top of the Pool B and sends them to the semi-final.

The only time Indian women have won the Asian Games gold was in 1982, when women's hockey made its maiden appearance at the Games. India has reached the final once since then. India won bronze in 1986, 2006 and 2010.

After being held goalless for first two quarters it was Captain Rani who gave her team the first goal in the 37th minute. She added the second in 46th before Monika made it 3-0 in the 52nd minute. Rani's third goal gave her a hat-trick and India their fourth goal, before striker Navjot Kaur (55th) rounded off the scoreboard.

Indian women will meet the second placed team of Pool A and that will be either Japan or Malaysia.

