

Sports Authority of India

India set to overtake 2014 tally at Asian Games as Arpinder and Swapna Barman win gold medals

- **Swapna becomes first Indian to win Heptathlon in Asian Games**
- **Arpinder first Indian to win triple jump since 1970**
- **Sharath-Manika take bronze in Mixed Doubles table tennis**
- **Boxers Vikas and Amit reach semi-finals to ensure medals**
- **Squash women reach semis, assured of medal**

Jakarta, August 29: Swapna Barman became the first Indian to win the women's heptathlon gold minutes after Arpinder Singh became the first Indian since 1970 and the third overall to win a gold in the men's triple jump. Those two gold medals took India's tally of gold at these Asian Games to double figures.

Earlier Dutee Chand set the tone with a silver medal in 200m in a blistering run of 23.20 seconds. It was her second silver after the 100m silver a few days ago.

That meant a total of two gold and one silver from athletics while the Mixed Doubles pair in Table tennis of Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra received a bronze following a semifinal defeat.

The two gold medals pushed the gold tally to 11, the same as 2014 in Incheon, while the total is now 54 medals, with 11 gold, 20 silver and 23 bronze.

At the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon India won 57 medals which included 11 gold, 10 silver and 36 bronze.

Indians were in sight of a few more medals as their athletes put themselves in line with an excellent showing during the day.

Vikas Krishan (in 75kg), assured himself of a third Asian Games medal while Amit Panghal is sure of his maiden medal in 46-49kg as the Indian men's boxing squad assured themselves of two medals.

The men's and women's squash teams are also assured of a medal, as they both reached the semi-finals.

In Table tennis Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra lost in the semi-finals but got a second medal, a bronze, from the sport, where Asian competition is virtually world class.

ATHLETICS:

Swapna secures gold

The 22-year-old Jalpaiguri-born Swapna Barman, who has six toes on each feet, totalled 6026 points to push China's Wang Qinling (5954) to second place with a gutsy performance that saw her time 2:21.13s and that was better than Wang's 2:21.79s. The 800m was one of Swapna's weaker events.

Meanwhile, India's other entry in heptathlon, Purnima Hembram (5837 points) timed 2:19.09s, but Japan's Yuki Yamasaki (5873 points) with 2:17.75s edged her to the bronze medals and Purnima finished fourth.

Barman, who always had difficulty in finding wide enough shoes for her feet, is a story of grit and determination. Her mother works on a tea estate, while her father is down and out of work because of a stroke since 2013.

Swapna, who uses most of her money to tend medical expenses for her father and build her house, has been training at the Sports Authority of India in Kolkata.

For Swapna this gold medal added to the gold she won in Asian Championships in Bhubhaneshwar in 2017.

"The wins and the money have helped my family and SAI has been a huge help for me and my family. I am so thankful to everyone from the federation and SAI," said Swapna, minutes after the gold medal.

The 25-year-old Arpinder finally fulfilled the potential he has had showed early in his career. Indians have won the triple jump gold only twice before, the first was Mohinder Singh in 1958 and then in 1970, his namesake, but no relation, Mohinder Singh Gill won gold in 1970 in Bangkok. The last Indian to win a medal in triple jump was S Balasubramaniam in New Delhi in 1982, when he finished third.

Arpinder, bronze medallist at the 2014 Commonwealth Games and fourth this year in Gold Coast, had also won the bronze in 2013 Asian Championships in Pune.

On Wednesday, Arpinder opened the competition with a foul, but leapt to 16.58m, which might have held on for the bronze. Later in his third attempt he went better to 16.77m which turned out to be the winning one. The fourth one was 16.08m and he fouled his last two jumps.

Dutee Chand ran a superb race, finished second to Nigerian-born Bahrain athlete Edidiong Odiong, who timed 22.96s.

Manjit Singh and Jinson Johnson, who led a 1-2 in men's 800m a day earlier also qualified for the 1,500m comfortably. Manjit won the first heat easily after breaking away from 250 metres and timing 3:50.59, ahead of China's Luo Yuxi (3:50.69s). Finishing third was Alasdik Mikhou, a Moroccan-born Bahraini runner.

In the much faster second heat, Johnson was content with second in 3:46.50s, as Mohammed Tiouali, also a Moroccan-born Bahraini won in 3:46.40s.

Earlier in the morning, with just the 800m event to go, Swapna Barman moved into a perfect position to go for the gold medal in women's heptathlon. She recorded a personal best of 50.63m in javelin throw. Purnima Hembram was not too far behind a bronze medal spot as she was only 18 points behind the third-placed athlete prior to the start of the 800 metres.

With six of the seven events over the gruelling seven-event competition finished, Swapna, nursing a facial injury, had accumulated 5218 points in comparison to China's Wang Qinling (5155) for a 63-point lead.

Swapna's effort in the events prior to the 800 metres were as follows: First day: 100m hurdles (13.98s – 981 points); high jump (1.82m – 1003 pts); shot put (12.69m – 707 pts); and 200m (26.08s – 790 pts). Second day: Long jump (6.05m – 865 pts); and Javelin (50.63m – 872 pts).

Swapna Barman fouled her final attempt in javelin, but despite that she turned her 155-point deficit into a lead before the final event, the 800m. Her first two throws exceeded her previous personal best and her best of the day was 50.63m and that put her in the lead in women's heptathlon.

Purnima also got a personal best at 45.48m in javelin but Japan's Yuki also released a fine 46.48m to move into third, one place ahead of Purnima.

Earlier, Swapna Barman cleared 6.05m in her second attempt at long jump, but was still behind Chinese Wang's 6.44m.

Earlier in the morning, Khushbir Kaur missed out on a medal as she finished fourth in women's 20km race walk. She timed 1:35:24 while the bronze went to Japan's Kumiko Osada in 1:35:02s.

The top two Chinese Jiayu Yang and Shijie Qieyang were both times in 1:29:15, a new Games record. Yang was awarded the gold.

India's other entry Soumya Baby was disqualified after three warnings for losing contact.

In men's section, both KT Irfan and Manish Rawat were shown the red card after three warnings. China's Wang Kaihua won the gold in 1:22:04.

BOXING

Vikas Krishan and Amit Panghal enter semi-finals; assured of medals

Vikas Krishnan becomes the first Indian boxer to have three medals from the Asian Games, as he assured himself of a medal in the 75kg category on Wednesday. A little earlier Amit Panghal also entered the semi-finals of the 46-49 kg category, giving the Indian boxing campaign an excellent push.

The 26-year-old from Bhiwani Vikas, who has one gold and one bronze from the last Asian Games was considered a prodigy, when he turned up on the National scene around 2010.

He has kept that promise. He was a gold medallist at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, when he was just 18 in the lightweight (60kg) and in Incheon in 2014, he picked a bronze in Middleweight (75kg). He won a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast this April and on Wednesday, Vikas became the first Indian to win three medals in boxing at the Asian Games.

Vikas entered the semi-finals of the 75 category with a hard-fought win over China's Tuoheta Erbieke Tanglatihan. The Indian won 3-2 on a split decision.

Both Vikas and China's Tanglatihan were wary of each other in the first round, and the Indian made the first move with a left hook. Soon after that the Chinese, too, started finding his rhythm. The worry at that stage was a cut that seemed to have opened up over Vikas' left eye. But the Indian managed it well.

In the second round Tanglatihan was more dominant as he took advantage of Vikas's eye cut. Yet, the Indian defended it well once again.

As the final round began, Vikas realising that the first two rounds were close, went all out with aggression. Starting out with some solid scoring punches, he did well to defend when the Chinese used his reach to try and pin Vikas to the ropes. The tight defense helped Vikas eke out a narrow win.

A little before him, Amit Panghal won his light flyweight (46-49kg) bout with a comfortable 5:0 verdict over North Korea's Kim Jyeong Ryeong in a fairly one-sided bout.

Panghal dominated the first period in quarter-final as his left-handed hook created havoc. He also did well to keep out of the reach of the desperate lunges from the North Korean.

Panghal maintained a steady pace in the second, despite the North Korean Kim Jyeong using better speed.

Panghal came out flying in the third period and left nothing to chance and finished off Ryeong in the third.

In women's flyweight (51 kg) India's Sarjubala lost to China's Yuan Chang in the quarter-finals.

In men's 64kg, Dheeraj lost to Mongolia's Chinzorig Baatarsukh 5-0 on points.

TABLE TENNIS

Sharath-Manika win bronze in Table Tennis mixed doubles

Achanta Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra went down fighting to the fancied Chinese pair of Wang Chuqin and Sun Yingsha 4-1 in the semi-finals of the Mixed Doubles in Table Tennis.

Despite the loss, the Indian pair was assured of a bronze medal and it is the second medal in table tennis. The two medals were the first ever for India in Asian Games table tennis and signified a strong progress for the sport.

Wang and Sun won the close first game at 11-9 and then the second at 11-5. But the Indian pair pulled back in the third with a plucky performance at 13-11. However, the Chinese packed a punch too many in next two games winning 11-4 and 11-8 to enter the final and end India's challenge in Mixed doubles.

Earlier Kamal and Manika led the way in table tennis by entering the semi-finals of the Mixed doubles. Sharath (36) and Manika (23) beat North Korean pair Ji Song An and Hyo Sim Cha after coming back from a one-game deficit twice in the match.

The Indians lost the first game 4-11, but hit back to win the next at 12-10 after being two games points down. But they lost the third again at 6-11. Then they rallied brilliantly to win the last two games at 11-6 and 11-8 for a 3-2 win in a tough 42-minutes encounter.

Earlier in the quarter-finals, too, they came through a grueling five-setter before winning 11-7, 7-11, 11-8, 10-12, 11-4 in 43 minutes beating a strong pairing from South Korea Lee Sangsu and Jeon Jihee. The Korean girl, Jihee won a bronze in the event with a different partner four years ago.

In the round of 16 they took just 11 minutes to outplay teenaged Malaysian pair Javen Choong and Karen Lyne Dick of Malaysia 11-2, 11-5, 11-8.

Also, on Wednesday, Anthony Amalraj and Madhurika Patkar went down to Hong Kong pair, Ho Kwan Kit and Lee Ho CHing losing in four games 6-11, 7-11, 5-11, 4-11. The Indians won the first game but were unable to maintain the tempo thereafter.

Earlier Amalraj and Patkar entered the Last 16 stage of the mixed doubles table tennis event beating Indonesian pair Prasetya Donny Aji and Lilis Indriani 11-4, 11-13, 11-8, 11-9.

Amalraj and Patkar won the first game 11-4 in just five minutes with the longest rally lasting just five strokes. But the Indians dropped the second game 11-13 levelling the two teams at one game apiece.

Amalraj and Patkar got back into control by winning the third game 11-8 in seven minutes and then wrapped up the match 11-9 in the fourth game.

SQUASH

India turned in a fine showing at the Asian Games squash as both the men's and women's team entered the semi-finals of the team competition. That assured both of them of at least a bronze each. Earlier, India had won three individual bronze medals from Dipika Pallikal, Joshna Chinappa and Sourav Ghosal.

In their last league match, Indian men outclassed Thailand 3-0 to keep a clean slate and record their fourth win in as many matches. They have one last match against Malaysia left. Even a defeat will not halt their entry into semi-finals.

Saurav Ghosal, who had an individual bronze and was rested in the earlier matches, beat Thailand's Poonsiri Phuwis 11-8, 11-4, 12-10, before Ramit Tandon beat Phatraprasit Arnold 11-2, 11-3, 11-6. Mahesh Mangaonkar beat Jivasuwan Natthakit 11-0, 11-6 11-2 complete a 3-0 drubbing.

The Indian men had beaten Qatar (2-1), Singapore (3-0), Indonesia (3-0) and then today it was Thailand (3-0).

Earlier, the women's team comprising Joshna Chinappa, Dipika Pallikal Karthik, Sunayana Kuruvilla and Tanvi Khanna, who did not play, continued its unbeaten run, defeating China 3-0 in penultimate pool match.

The final set of league matches tomorrow will decide whether India can top its group in the men's and women's sections.

India had won four medals in the last edition at Incheon, Korea and it included a maiden silver in women's team and a gold in men's team event.

Indian women's squash team beat China 3- in Pool B match and assured themselves of a semi-final berth, which assures them of another medal. This was India's fourth win in succession.

India are likely to meet Malaysia in the semi-final while Hong Kong will take on either Japan or Korea in the other semi-final.

Sunayna Kuruvilla set the trend with a straight games win over China's He Xinru 11-3, 11-6, 11-3 in 13 minutes. Thereafter Dipika Pallikal, who won a silver in individual, won her match against Duan Siyu 11-1, 11-4, 11-9 in 14 minutes and finally Joshna Chinappa rounded off the win with a 5-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-6 in the toughest match of the day, which lasted 31 minutes.

The Indian women had beaten Iran (3-0), Indonesia (3-0) and Thailand (3-0) in their earlier matches. They have one match left against Hong Kong, who have also won all their matches against the same teams by the same margin.
