



ATHLETICS
FEDERATION OF INDIA

A.F.I.



AFI

Newsletter



JULY 2020

AFI applauds Bahadur Singh's contribution to Indian athletics



Athletics Federation of India has placed on record its acknowledgment appreciation for Bahadur Singh who resigned as National Chief Coach after 25 years of distinguished service.

"As we stay focused on our journey to being counted on the world stage, we will always remember the immense contribution Bahadur Singh made to Indian athletics, first as a shot putter of repute in the 70s and early 80s, and then as Chief Coach since February 1995," AFI President Adille J. Sumariwalla said.

"We would have loved to see him helm the squad in the Olympic Games, but the COVID-19 outbreak forced the postponement of Tokyo 2020. He resigned in the wake of the Ministry of Home Affairs advisory restricting movement of senior citizens. We will continue to draw on his experience in planning and in monitoring training and coaching," Mr. Sumraiwalla said.

Under his stewardship, India did admirably in the Commonwealth Games 2010 Delhi when it won a dozen athletics medals, including two gold.

The 1946-born Bahadur Singh's finest moment as Chief Coach came in Jakarta in 2018 when India won 20 medals in track and field competition, including eight gold and nine silver.

"The country's best showing in Asian Games athletics instilled a belief in the community that with a bit more planning and effort, India could raise the bar and make a mark on the global stage. And Bahadur ji contributed to this rise." AFI Planning and Coaching Committee Chairman Dr. Lalit K. Bhanot said.

He also applauded Bahadur Singh's role in actualising the vision of the Federation. "He readily accepted the challenges placed before him by AFI, buying into new ideas with an open mind. Combined with his calm approach, these qualities made Bahadur ji a very successful Chief Coach," he said.

As a shot putter, Bahadur Singh won back-to-back Asian Games gold medals in Bangkok in 1978 and New Delhi in 1982 to add to the silver he won in Tehran in 1974. He also won a medal in each of the four Asian Track and Field Meets held in Marikina 1973 (bronze), Seoul in 1975 (gold), Tokyo in 1979 (bronze) and Tokyo in 1981 (silver).

He also competed in the Moscow Olympics in 1980. Bahadur Singh was given the Arjuna Award in 1976 and the Dronacharya Award in 1998. He was conferred the Padma Shri in 1983. AFI remains committed to the collective dream of upgrading India from being a force to reckon with at the continental level.



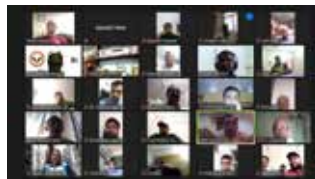
AFI LAUNCHES UNIQUE ONLINE OUTREACH FOR DISTRICT OFFICIALS IN EACH STATE



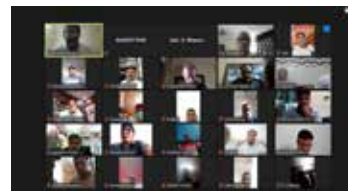
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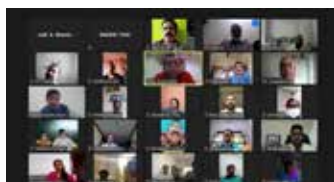
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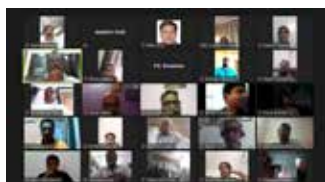
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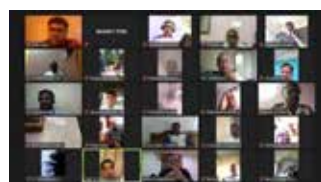
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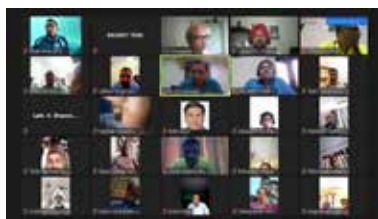
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Kerala

Athletics Federation of India resumed its focused outreach of district associations, using video conferencing facility to encourage the grassroots teams to work harder to make India a stronger athletics nation. "The districts are the backbone of the athletics movement in India and we are bound to encourage them," AFI President Adille J Sumariwalla said.

AFI started its direct outreach to all district units, through State Associations, before the outbreak of COVID-19 with meetings in Kerala and Rajasthan. "With such gatherings not feasible in the current environment, we decided to use video conferencing to motivate the district units to enhance their contribution to the evolution of track and field across the country," he said.

Beginning with Jharkhand on Tuesday, West Bengal and Haryana on Wednesday, AFI officials, including High-Performance Director Volker Herrmann and Deputy Chief Coach Radhakrishnan Nair, will interact with officials from districts associations of all States and Union Territories in the coming fortnight.

"If we have to rise from being a force at the Asian level to making a mark at the global stage, we will need every district to lend its shoulder to the wheel," he told district associations in Jharkhand. "While we want each district to have at least 25 qualified technical officials and one IAAF Level 1 coach, we are also warning them against doping, age-fraud and over-training."

AFI has been in the forefront of battling the twin scourges of doping and age-fraud that hurt Indian sport. "We have identified over-training of athletes as another primary reason for the disappearance of some young talent. We are now endeavouring to convince officials at the grassroots level to tell coaches to guard against the three dangers," Mr. Sumariwalla said.

"We are delighted with the positive response we have had from the meetings so far, though the road ahead is exciting and challenging at the same time. The district units realise that AFI is keen to decentralise the administration of athletics by sharing responsibility with those working at the grassroots," he said.

Since the inception of MILO National Inter-District Junior Athletics Meet (NIDJAM) in 2003, AFI has been the only National Sports Federation to conduct a national-level meet for districts, bearing the expense of travel, board and lodging of their teams. MILO NIDJAM has emerged as AFI's flagship and the largest grassroots programme.

AFI Planning Committee Chairman Dr. Lalit K. Bhanot reiterated that officials of all district associations bear great responsibility in drawing more youngsters to athletics. "We are aiming to get each district to be self-sufficient when it comes to technical conduct of their meets and coaching athletes in the early stages of their development," he said. "We are encouraging the district officials to rope in as many former athletes in getting them to take up the AFI Pre-level 1 coaching programme so that they all adhere to the right training principles at the grassroots level," he said.

"It is an important aspect of coaching the under-14 and under-16 athletes who participate in MILO NIDJAM," he said. It is also the only Federation to reach out to district units to not only encourage them to conduct regular meets and training for their athletes but also to ensure greater transparency.

Jinson Johnson's Confidence remain high despite long break from training

India's premier middle distance runner Jinson Johnson has begun logging the miles in the Netaji Subhash Southern Centre in Bengaluru, neither the tendon injury nor the lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic denting his single-minded focus. "I have always drawn my confidence from the hard work that I put in during training and I know I can do it again," he says.

"It has been a unique phase, spending two months largely confined to my room in the Sports Authority of India facility in Bengaluru. "I did some fitness work, including skipping and a lot of exercises with the fitness band. I have followed the routine suggested by AFI High Performance Director Volker Hermann and am feeling good," he says.

The 29-year-old Armyman from Kottayam has not resumed training on the synthetic track but is focusing on developing endurance. "I am running longer distances on loop on a mud-trail. I had to stop training quite suddenly in the end of March and I am aware that it will be risky to get back to normal athletic training in a hurry," he says.

Jinson Johnson believes that the return to sporting activity after lockdown is a bigger challenge for middle- and long-distance runners. "We have had no mileage during lockdown. And it is a bit like starting from the scratch. Then again, without exception, everyone has had to go through this experience," he says.

He is physically and mentally one of the toughest Indian athletes. "I ran four successive days in the Asian Games in Jakarta, winning a silver in 800m and gold in 1500m. I got the confidence that I could deal with such challenges only from my hard training. I know I can get back to training with similar intensity," he says.



He recalls he ran the 1500m final in the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast in 3:37.86 to break Bahadur Prasad's record that had stood for 23 years. "I clocked 3:39.69 in the Federation Cup in Patiala just over a month before the Commonwealth Games. Later, I broke Sriram Singh sir's 42-year-old 800m record in Guwahati. All these were a result of my training," he says.

He is looking forward to returning to competition but is uncertain when that would happen. "I will have to wait for a bit before my competition schedule is ready," he says, having had to undergo a month's rehab to recover from a tendon injury that he suffered during training in Colorado Springs, United States of America, in November last year.

"I am aware the tendon will take a bit more time to heal completely. But I am staying positive and not letting any doubts creep in," says the man whose last competitive race was on October 26 at the World Military Games in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where he finished fifth in the 1500m. "I had no doubt at all since the virus outbreak surfaced a month or so after we left the city."

He is aware that is ranked 55th on the Road to Tokyo charts for the 1500m. "The whole planning changed because of the injury. I now have got some extra time to qualify. I am confident that with Volker guiding me, I will be able to attempt the 3:35.00 qualifying standard to secure direct entry," he says, knowing that 25 men have already qualified via the safest route.

Webinars uplift mood of ultrarunners



The Indian ultrarunning community, waiting for things to get back toward normalcy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, was the beneficiary of some practical advice in two interesting webinars, organised by the AFI Ultrarunning Committee, in the past few weeks.

The 2015 IAU World 24 H championships bronze medal winner and coach of British athletes Robbie Britton, spoke about training progression, training and racing motivation to develop a competitive edge in a webinar on June 17. He offered a lot of insights, drawing from his experience as ultra-runner and coach.

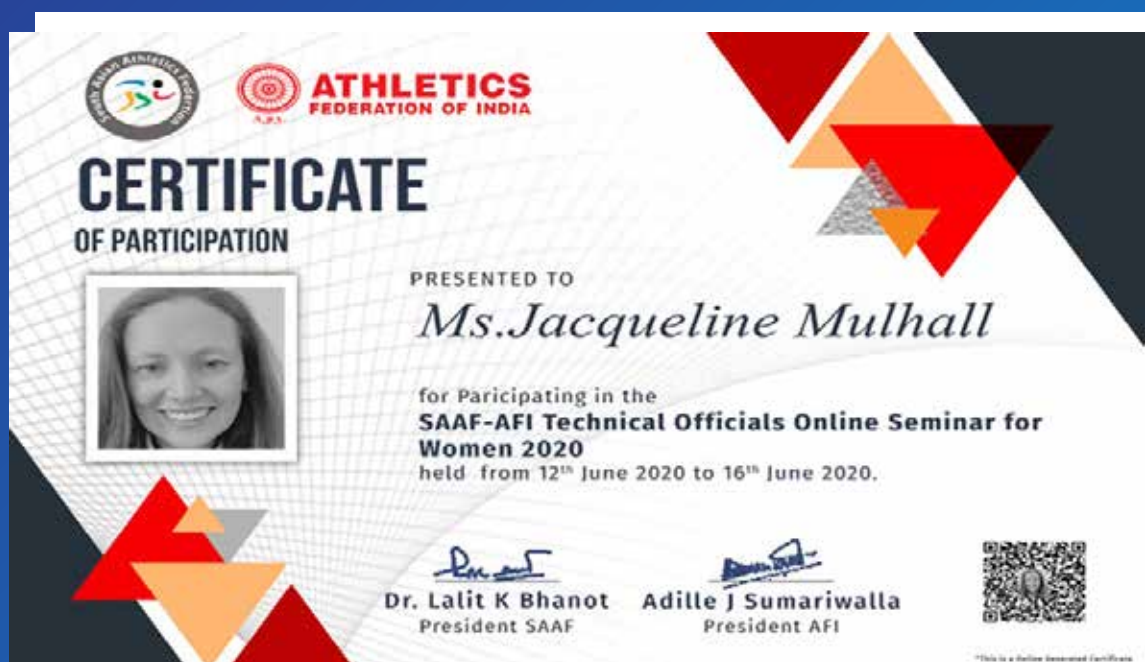
Robbie Britton highlighted the scientific aspects of race nutrition and periodisation of training for ultrarunning across disciplines. The session was informative and an eye-opener for runners and crew members of the Indian team who attended the interactive webinar.

A fortnight earlier, AFI High Performance Director Volker Hermann threw light on the concepts of planning and periodisation. He stressed the need for individual plans for each runner, customised for specific events. He highlighted several performance determining factors to be considered by the runners.

Volker Hermann also stressed the importance of the balance between load and recovery in training, asking the runners to check the progress of the training programme and make adjustments. The runners are hoping that they would get a chance to train with him.

The sessions cheered the runners after the International Association of Ultrarunners (IAU) President Nadeem Khan announced that most ultrarunning events slated for the year had been cancelled or postponed. The decision meant financial losses for some athletes as well as others in the ecosystem. They all understand that safety of runners had to be put before all else.

Personalised certificates for AFI technical officials available for download



New Delhi, June 28: Athletics Federation of India has made available Certificates of Participation for those who took part in the world's biggest online seminar for technical officials of a single sport in April this year. Nearly 1000 participants attended the AFI-South Asian Athletics Federation's joint initiative held from April 25 to 30.

"We are delighted to have led the way in the use of technology for information sharing and advancing knowledge among technical officials. And, in keeping with the demands of the current situation, we are making the certificates available online so that each participant can download his or her certificate against the AFI UID," said AFI President Adille J Sumariwalla.

"The Technical Officials will simply have to log in to their zone on the AFI website with their respective AFI UID and password to be able to view his or her certificate on the left-hand side on the dashboard and download it," he said. "The certificate comes with the participant's photograph and is bar-coded to both lend it a personal touch and prevent misuse.

"At AFI, we have been in the forefront of the use of technology, even in terms of getting all athletes to register themselves with their biometric data to make our processes easier," he said. "The seminar reduced travel expenses and helped us face logistic challenges even while reaching larger audiences by embracing technology," he said. World Athletics President Lord Sebastian Coe, who delivered the keynote address on the opening day of the six-day seminar has said athletics would simply not function at any level without the contribution of technical officials "It would be unrecognisable without one of our sport's most endearing aspects, the enshrining of the volunteer contribution 24x7," he said.

The seminar was made possible with meticulous planning and execution. It prompted Lord Coe to comment that it was the largest gathering of technical officials that he had ever attended. He was in the forefront of those who praised AFI and SAAF for taking the initiative of engaging technical officials in such a manner.

The technical experts – Luis Saladie (Spain), Chris Cohen (UK), Pierce O'Callaghan (Ireland), Luca Verrascina (Italy), Dr. Judit Krisztina Horvath (Hungary), Yukio Seki (Japan) and Kwan Kee (Hong Kong) – who helmed the seminar were of the view that SAAF-AFI officials had set the bar high in the world's track and field community by using technology to enhance knowledge.

Besides the Technical Officials seminar participants that made history, in the past few weeks, AFI has conducted a Starters' Seminar, a Women Technical Officials Seminar, and a Technical Delegates Seminar to ensure that the quality of conduct of athletics meets when competition resumes is of a higher standard than before. AFI also became the first National Sports Federation to hold a special general meeting online.

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