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Athletics Federation of India

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NEWSLETTER



ONE STEP AT A TIME

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BUSY AFI 2025 CALENDAR TO OPEN WITH CROSS COUNTRY championships in January

The Athletics Federation of India's 2025 calendar will kick start with the national cross country championships in January. The first major domestic track and field competition is scheduled for April, Chief National Athletics Coach, Radhakrishnan Nair, said about the tentative calendar.

The inaugural edition of the Indian Open World Athletics Bronze Level Continental Tour is scheduled for August, Nair added. "The Continental Tour will be a good opportunity for the Indian team to showcase their potential on home ground before the world championships in September," he said.

The chief national athletics coach said elite Indian race walkers will not compete in the Asian Race Walking competition in Nomi, Japan in March as the main focus will be World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. "The core group of Indian race walkers clock a good time in March but aren't able to repeat the performance later in the season," Nair explained. "Since the main focus in 2025 is the global competition in September, we have decided not to send the elite team to Japan in March."

The national race walking competition



would be organised in April. The Senior National Federation Cup is also scheduled for April and will act as a qualification event for the bi-annual Asian Athletic Championships, which will be held from May 27 to May 31 in Korea.

The national team will also compete in international events to prepare for the World Athletics World Championships from September 13-21, the chief national coach said.

"The AFI has also introduced regional competition from next year to give more exposure to athletes on the fringes. The regional competitions will commence from April," Nair revealed.

The AFI flagship event - NIDJAM (National Inter-District Athletics Meet) will take place in February and the Indian Open throws and jumps competitions will be held in March.

In the 2024 edition of NIDJAM more than 6,000 athletes from across the country participated in U14 and U16 age group. This year participation will be more, chief coach said.



Foreign experts to conduct one-day advance workshops in January

One-day online workshops to update the knowledge of Indian coaches will be conducted by foreign experts next month, Ravinder Chaudhry, secretary of the AFI (Athletics Federation of India) said.

"The online workshops under the aegis of AFI will be conducted by foreign experts from across the globe in the first week of January next," Chaudhry said. "The main goal is to strengthen the ecosystem at the grassroots level in the country."

The registration for the online workshops opened on December 10, the AFI secretary added. Loren Seagrave of USA and Jonas Doodoo from England will conduct workshops in sprints and hurdles. The main topic will be the latest methodology of speed training.

Klaus Bartonietz, former coach of India's double Olympic Games medallist Neeraj Chopra, and Don Babbitt of USA will conduct a one-day online workshop on throws.

The workshop on middle and long distance will be conducted by Gunter Lange (Germany) and Scott Simmons (USA).

Georgian Valeri Obidko will conduct a seminar on jumps. Seminars on strength and conditioning and general training methodology will also be conducted.

AFI's youth development restructure to boost ecosystem, **says Adille Sumariwalla**

“ Whenever there is a debate or seminar on track and field development, one topic that often crops up is the youth programme,” **Adille Sumariwalla, president of Athletics Federation of India**, explained. “Youth is the foundation of all grassroots programmes across the world. To strengthen the national ecosystem in athletics the AFI has restructured the youth (U18) competition to avoid early specialisation and over training.”



An Olympian and a vice-president of World Athletics, Sumariwalla said that India's governing body of athletics will enter the national team in selected events for the Youth Asian Championships in the future. “This is to avoid early burn out,” he explained. “All stakeholders including parents and coaches have a role to play in guiding youngsters in the right direction.”

Long distance events, including 10,000m and 3000m steeplechase, have been excluded from the youth national competition. “It has been observed that the majority of the outstanding athletes in the youth category aren't able to graduate to the senior level. This is because of wrong training and pushing budding athletes too hard, too soon,”

Sumariwalla said. “Even World Athletics has scrapped the World Youth Championships as young athletes weren't able to showcase their potential at the senior level.”

The AFI coaching pathway, Sumariwalla said, aims to update the knowledge of the experts to follow up the best practice to nurture potential athletes at the grassroots level.

To improve the coaching ecosystem in the country AFI started Coaches Education Programme in early 2018, he added. “The coaches programme includes AFI Pre Level 1 coaching course. World Athletics Level 1 and Level 2 specialised courses with an aim to have 40,000 coaches by 2036,” Sumariwalla explained.

My next goal is to break 27-minutes in 10,000m, says Gulveer Singh



Army's 26-year-old Hangzhou Asian Games bronze medallist, Gulveer Singh, is eagerly looking ahead to an exciting 2025 season. After rewriting national records in both the men's 5,000m and 10,000m in the 2024 competitive season, his next major goal is to improve his current 10,000m national record of 27:14.88 by more than 15 seconds.

"The main goal for the 2025 season will be to achieve World Athletics automatic qualification time of 27:00.00 in the 10,000m event for the World Athletics Championships in Japan," Gulveer said.

After a short break, he will start his 2025 campaign and his first race would be as early as March on the USA circuit. "The USA circuit is competitive. It will be a good opportunity to clock a good time in the season's first race," he said. "I should be able to achieve 27 minutes flat for the 10,000m in March."

The distance runner from the army was the first Indian to run the 10,000m under 28 minutes.

He twice improved his 10,000m national record. His personal best for the 25-lap race, 27:14.88, was clocked in Japan in November.

In September, Gulveer improved the national 5,000m record to 13:11.82 seconds.

The automatic time to qualify for the 2025 World Athletics Championships for men's 5,000m is 13:01:00.

The qualification window for 10,000m started on February 24, 2024 and will be open till August 24, 2025.

The athletes can also qualify for the World Athletics Championships, scheduled from September 13 to 21, through world ranking points.

Gulveer was a member of the core group of runners that was based out of Colorado Springs, USA in the 2024 season.

Despite enjoying a good run for the major part of the 2024 season, he wasn't successful in qualifying for the Paris Olympic Games held between July 26 to August 11.

"Missing the Paris Olympic Games was a rough patch. I've moved on and am enjoying good fitness," Gulveer said.

Junior national is breeding ground to scout potential athletes, says chief junior national athletics coach

Junior national competition is a good platform to scout talent, N Ramesh, chief junior athletics coach said. "Several athletes improved meet and national records in their respective age groups during the four-day competition in Odisha," the chief athletics coach added. "Outstanding athletes in the past have been drafted into National Center of Excellence (NCOE) under the aegis of Sports Authority of India (SAI) from time to time," the chief junior athletics coach added. The four-day 39th National Junior Athletics Championships from December 7 to 11 was indeed a good opportunity for promising athletes to showcase their potential.

Punjab's Asian U20 silver medalist Amanat Kamboj hogged the limelight by erasing more than a decade old record in the women's U18 discus throw event on the opening day of the meet. On her way to winning gold in the women's U18 discus throw, the 17 years from Punjab recorded 52.89m to improve the previous meet record of 49.54m set by Navjeet Dhillon in 2012.

Haryana's World U20 bronze medalist in women's 10,000m race walk, Aarti, also continued her domination in Bhubaneswar. She won gold in the women's U20 10,000m race walk with a time of 47:21.68 seconds to better the previous meet record of 47:30.94 set by Mansi Negi in 2022.

Jay Kumar was also among those athletes who made the most of the opportunities to improve his personal best in U20 400m with a time of 46.29 seconds, a meet record. More than 2000 athletes in various age groups are competing in four-day competition. During the competition eight athletes in different age groups were rewarded for their outstanding performance and were awarded with the best athlete trophy.

(Best athletes) :

U14 boys: Bhiky Barman (West Bengal) won the kids javelin title with a throw of 60.65m.

U16 boys: Dhairya Bhanderi (Gujarat) won gold medal in javelin throw (600g) with a distance of 70.12m

U18: Kiran K (Kerala) won gold in 110m hurdles with a time of 13.64 seconds.

U20: Jay Kumar from Delhi 46.29 seconds
Women

U14: girls: Minakshi (Haryana) won gold in kids javelin with a throw of 46.81m.

U16: girls: Shourya Ambure (Maharashtra) won gold in 60m with a time of 7.60 seconds.

U18: Abhinaya Rajarajan (Tamil Nadu) won 100m gold with a time of 11.66 seconds.

U20: Sakshi Chavan (Gujarat) won gold in 200m with a time of 24.14 seconds.

Zonal meetings to strengthen state units

To strengthen state athletics activities the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) will regularly conduct meetings at the regional level. "The state units should have more World Athletics Level 1 and Level qualified coaches. To conduct district and state competition smoothly there should be more technical officials too," Radhakrishnan Nair, chief athletics coach said.

During the 39th National Junior Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar zonal meeting with state units of East and West Zones was organised to apprise the officials attending the meeting of good governance and regional competitions included in 2025 domestic calendar year.

CHAMPIONS

Haryana and Tamil Nadu were declared overall winners and runners-up at the 39th National Junior Athletics Championships held in Bhubaneswar from December 7 to 11.

