



# THE AFI BULLETIN

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## ASIAN INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS



# A GOOD BEGINNING

# Asian Indoor Championships: A stepping stone to excel at Asian Games in Japan

**A**sian Indoor Athletics Championships held from February 6 to 8 in the Chinese city of Tianjin proved a happy hunting ground for the Indian contingent, particularly for 27-year-old Tejaswin Shankar who won the heptathlon gold with a continental best point tally of 5993. It is a good start to an exciting 2026 season that features the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in July and the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in September. India with five medals — one gold — finished sixth in the medals table.

China topped the medals tally with 34 medals — 10 gold, 11 silver and 13 bronze.

Shankar's main goal this year is to improve the colour of medal at the Asian Games in Japan. He won silver in the 2023 edition in China. "Given his current form he (Shankar) should be one to watch during the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games starting September 19 in Japan," chief national athletics coach Radhakrishnan Nair said.

In each of the seven disciplines (60m, long jump, shot put, high jump, 60m hurdles, pole vault and 1,000m), Shankar raised the bar. His performance of 2.23m in high jump during the combined event could have also earned him gold in the individual high jump.

Two-time Asian Games shot put champion Tajinderpal Singh Toor was also impressive in Tianjin. The 31-year-old seasoned thrower clinched silver in an exciting duel in Tianjin. More heartening was that Toor went on to



## Tejaswin Shankar's heptathlon report card in Tianjin.

**60m:** 7.11 seconds (844 points)

**Long jump:** 7.53m (942 points)

**Shot put:** 13.63m (706 points)

**high jump:** 2.23m (1021 points)

**60m hurdles:** 8.02 seconds (977 points)

**Pole vault:** 4.20m (673 points)

**1,000m:** 2:43.91 (830 points)

**Total 5993 points.** His previous best of 5650 points recorded in 2021 in USA.

record 20.05m, a season best, which will give a big boost to his confidence. "It was a satisfying tour as I was able to cross 20m in the season opening international meet," Toor said. "My

main goal this year is to stay healthy to excel at the Asian Games in September."

Kerala's 24-year-old woman long jumper Ancy Sojan was excited to win bronze (6.21m) on her debut at the Asian

Indoor Athletics Championships. "A bronze medal in Tianjin was a good start to the 2026 season," Ancy said.

In the women's high jump, India's dependable athlete—Pooja—clinched silver with a height of 1.87m.

High jumper Aadarsh Ram Jothi Shankar added a bronze medal (2.19m) to India's medal tally.



# Good start to 2026 season for Gulveer Singh and Seema

India's national record holder and Asian Games bronze medallist, Gulveer Singh, began his 2026 track season with a time of 13:15.84 seconds over 5,000m at the Sound Invite, a World Athletics Indoor Tour Silver Level Meeting in USA.

The 29 years old Indian distance runner finished third and bettered the Glasgow Commonwealth Games qualification mark of 13:19.64 seconds.

The versatile army runner did better than the 2026 Asian Games qualification standard of 13:39.18 for the men's 5,000m event. Seema is another Indian distance runner currently competing on the USA soil. She recently clocked 15:45.84 at the BU David Hemery Valentine invitational indoor meet. She finished 10th in the quality field and but fell short of Asian Games qualification mark of 15:36.58 in the women's 5,000m track race. The 2026 Commonwealth Games qualification mark in the women's 5,000m is 14:56.60.



## Glasgow Commonwealth Games athletics team final selection trials in May

The 29th National Senior Athletics Federation Competition scheduled to be held between May 22 to 25 in Ranchi, Jharkhand assume significance as it will act as final selection trials for Glasgow Commonwealth Games starting July 23 in Scotland.

While announcing the 2026 Commonwealth Games qualification standards for track and field, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) said, a limited number of athletes will compete in Glasgow. "As per protocol of the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee the number

of athletics team can't exceed 32, including 16 female athletes," AFI senior vice-president Anju Bobby George said. "Since limited number of track and field events will feature at the Glasgow edition of the Commonwealth Games, accordingly AFI will select the team from amongst those who achieve the qualification mark in their respective events in May."

At the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games Indian team won eight medals, including gold in men's triple jump through Eldhose Paul. India's star steeplechase runner Avinash Sable clinched silver.

## Commonwealth Games qualification chart

### QUALIFICATION STANDARD FOR COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2026

Entry Standards (Men)	Events	Entry Standards (Women)
10.16 sec	100 M	11.17 sec
20.61 sec	200 M	23.06 sec
44.96 sec	400 M	51.36 sec
1:45.00 sec	800 M	1:57.88 sec
3:30.82 sec	1500 M	4:05.09 sec
13:19.64 sec	5000 M	14:56.60 sec
27:39.03 sec	10000 M	31:14.14 sec
8:30.26 sec	3000 M SC	9:27.41 sec
13.39 sec	100 M/100 M Hurdles	12.67 sec
50.27 sec	400 M Hurdles	54.67 sec
2.22 m	High Jump	1.92 m
8.05 m	Long Jump	6.84 m
16.89 m	Triple Jump	14.25 m
5.25 m	Pole Vault	4.45 m
20.36 m	Shot Put	17.62 m
64.56 m	Discuss Throw	56.85 m
73.09 m	Hammer Throw	66.80 m
82.61 m	Javelin Throw	59.79 m
39:06.28 sec	Race Walk	44:44.58 sec
7787 pts.	Decathlon/ Heptathlon	6095 pts.
40.17 sec	4X100 M Relay	43.86 sec
4X400 Mixed Relay	3:16.00s	

# Six national relay teams to compete at **World Athletics Relays** in Botswana

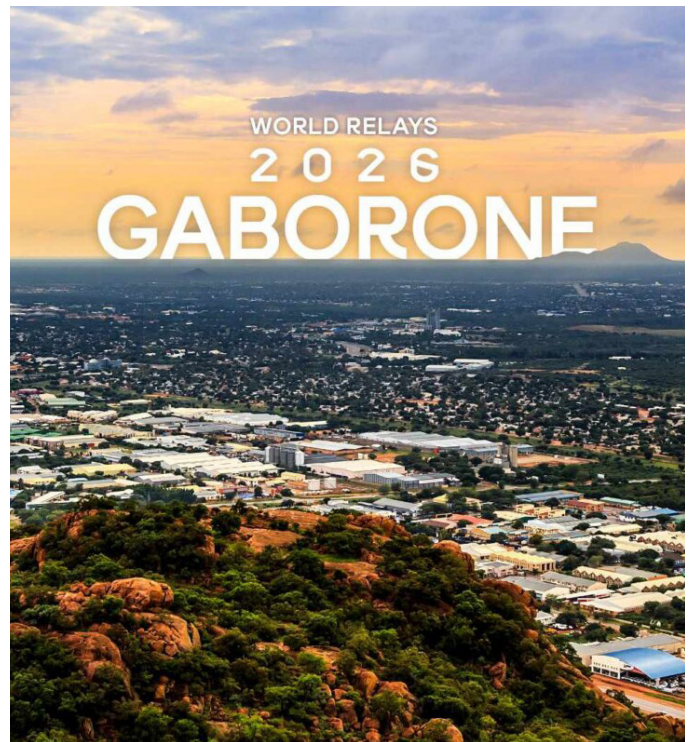
The AFI (Athletics Federation of India) will field six national teams for the 2026 World Athletics Relays in Gaborone, Botswana. The final selection of the Indian teams will take place on March 28 in Chandigarh, Bahadur Singh Sagoo, president AFI said.

Competition in Botswana will be held in women 4x100m and 4x400m relay. The men 4x100m and 4x400m relay. Mixed 4x100m and 4x400m relay. A maximum of 24 teams will be entered in each of the event during the relay extravaganza scheduled to be held on May 2 and 3 in Botswana. As per World Athletics, qualification period started January 1, 2025 and will end April 5 2026.

Top 24 teams as per world ranking system during the qualification period are eligible to compete in Botswana. Top eight teams in relay competition at 2025 Tokyo World Championships have qualified. Other teams will be through top list of world ranking system.

India's women 4x100m relay team by virtue of 43.86 seconds clocked during 2025 Asian Athletics Championships in South Korea is currently ranked 23rd in the "Road to Botswana".

The women 4x400m relay team clocked 3:34.18 in Asian Athletics Championships in 2025 and is currently ranked at 25th spot in the global list.



The men 4x100m relay had clocked 38.75 seconds last year in June in Taipei and the world ranking is 24.

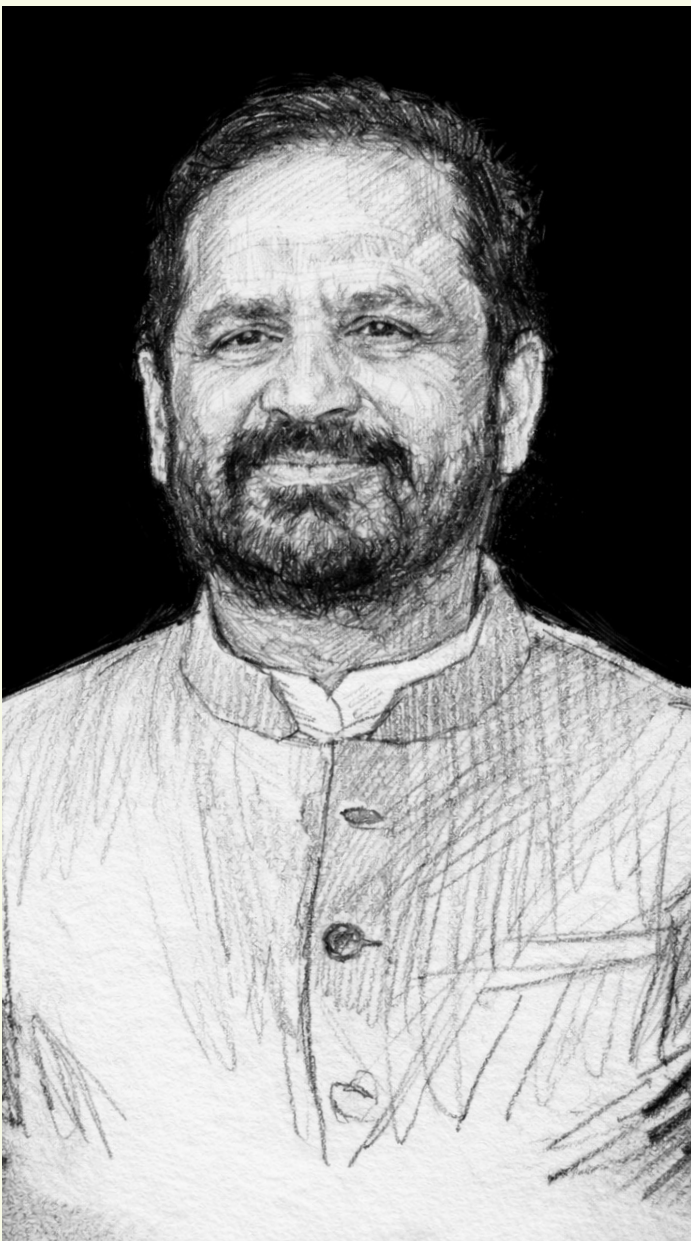
The men 4x400m relay team performance of 3:03.67 clocked last year in May at the Asian Athletics Championships has earned them a global ranking of 26.

The mixed 4x100m relay team is yet to start their campaign. The mixed 4x400m relay team time of 3:14.81 has placed them 22nd in world ranking.

The world ranking is subject to change and final ranking will be announced at the end of the qualification period (April 5, 2026).

# Athletics fraternity pays homage to veteran sports administrator

## Suresh Kalmadi



**A**thletics fraternity from across the country remembered former AFI (Athletics Federation of India) president Suresh Kalmadi, who passed away in the first week of January, for his outstanding contribution in track and field in general and sports in particular.

Kalmadi was also president of the Asian athletics body for nearly a decade starting 2000. The Indian sports administrator was also a member of the World Athletics Council.

Several officials of states and district units affiliated to the AFI virtually joined a condolence meeting held on January 17 in Delhi.

Kalmadi was also at the helm of the IOA (Indian Olympic Association) for a long time and was instrumental in ushering in several reforms, including the revival of National Games. Any tribute to Kalmadi's illustrious career as a sports administrator will be incomplete without mentioning the hosting of Afro-Asian Games in Andhra Pradesh and the 2008 Youth Commonwealth Games in Pune. He was also chairman of the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games. He will always be remembered for his unwavering commitment to the cause of Indian sports.

# Hosting major track and field competitions will spur development of our own athletes, says **Adille J Sumariwalla**

It was good to join World Athletics Head of Bidding---Mark Hurst---and Director of Competitions and Events---Marton Gyulai---last month during their visit to Ahmedabad in Gujarat and Bhubaneswar in Odisha.

India is bidding to host the 2028 World Athletics U20 Championships at Ahmedabad's Karai Stadium. Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Indoor Stadium will be the venue for the 2028 World Athletics Indoor Championships. The team of the global governing body of track and field had a good interaction with all the stakeholders, including state officials, as part of their assessment of the readiness of the two cities to host the global competitions in future.

India has shown expression of interest to host 2027 Asian Indoor Athletics Championships.

My heart fills with pride when I see how India is eager to host global competitions. Hosting important athletic competitions will spur the development of our own athletes; creating a generation of confident and fearless sportspersons to rub shoulders with the world's best on Indian soil.

I've no doubt that hosting major global and continental events effectively and efficiently is a form of sports diplomacy that India must pursue vigorously. Some may connect bidding for the above two global competitions with securing the rights to host the 2036 Olympic Games in India. I believe

**India has officially expressed its interest in hosting the 2027 Asian Indoor Athletics Championships, aiming to strengthen its global sports presence and promote athletics development nationwide.**

that hosting global events will help project India's image in a grand manner.

I'm also delighted at the prospects of young Indian athletes, particularly Tejaswin Shankar, after their overall performances at the recent 12th Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in China. Shankar won gold in heptathlon with a continental record of 5993 points.

Sadly, we lost India's seasoned sports administrator and former president of the Athletics Federation of India, Suresh Kalmadi, on January 6. Kalmadi was also president of the Asian athletics body and member of the World Athletics Council.

During his tenure as the president of IOA (Indian Olympic Association) he ensured that the National Games enjoyed the pride of place in our calendar. India's Olympic sports owe him a debt of gratitude, indeed.

# SRY gene test mandatory to compete in domestic competitions

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has made it mandatory for athletes competing in the female category in domestic competitions to undergo a one-time SRY gene test. The decision to undergo SRY gene test at the domestic level was taken recently during the Executive Body Meeting of the federation, said AFI president Bahadur Singh Sagoo.

“All the affiliated state units have been informed of the new guidelines to compete in the female category,” the AFI president added.

The SRY gene test can be conducted either through cheek swab or blood test.

The AFI 2026 domestic calendar is packed. There are 40 competitions, including the newly introduced Indian Athletics Series.

The season got underway with 60th National Cross-Country Championships held on January 24 in Ranchi, Jharkhand. The 13th edition of the Indian Open Race Walking Competition will be held on February 21 and 22 in Chandigarh.

However, the main track and field competition—24th National Junior Athletics Federation Competition will be held between April 24 to 26 in Mangalore, Karnataka.

At the global level—World Athletics Relays in Botswana in May and World Athletics U20 Championships in Oregon, USA-- are among major competitions of this year.

Last year in July the World Athletics Council approved new regulations to compete in the female category for all competitions sanctioned by the global track and field governing body.

The new regulation came into effect from September 1, 2025 and was applicable for



athletes wishing to compete in the female category at the 2025 Tokyo World Athletics Championships.

“All athletes wishing to compete in the female category at the World Championships are required to undergo a once-in-a-lifetime test for the SRY gene — a reliable proxy for determining biological sex,” the world governing body of track and field had said.

Indian athletes competing in the female category at the September 13 to 21 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo had to undergo a one-time SRY gene test.

Steeplechase runner Parul Chaudhary, Priyanka (35km race walk) and Annu Rani (javelin throw) had qualified for the Tokyo World Athletics Championships through the world ranking quota system.

## National cross-country team to compete in Japan

### Indian squad:

#### Men: 10km:

Harmanjot Singh.  
U20: 8km: Aditya  
Gurjar, Abhinandan  
Suryavanshi, Karan  
Ramesh Saranade.

#### Women: 10km:

Nandani Gupta, Ujala,  
Soniya, Munni Devi.  
U20: 6km: Versha,  
Mani Yadav,  
Sonam Kumari, Aarju.

