



Athletics  
Federation  
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# NEWSLETTER

## GUJARAT RAISES NIDJAM BAR



Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Bhai Patel was chief guest at the opening ceremony of 19th edition of NIDJAM held in Ahmedabad from February 16 to 18.



Competitors lineup at BIB collection centre on opening day of NIDJAM



Competitors attend seminar on "youngsters should avoid early specialization".

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# HOSTING NIDJAM ADDS ANOTHER FEATHER TO GUJARAT'S CAP



Galaxy of stars were present at NIDJAM.

**The 19th edition of the National Inter District Junior Athletics Meet (NIDJAM) held at Gujarat University Campus eight-lane synthetic track between February 16 to 18 in Ahmedabad has further raised the bar of the largest grassroots programme in the world.**

**A**ll stakeholders, including Government of Gujarat and Sports Authority of Gujarat worked tirelessly to ensure the flagship event of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) turned out to be memorable for one and all.

Ajay Patel, Gujarat's seasoned sports administrator and member of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), was the main architect to showcase the NIDJAM project to the people of Gujarat. "The 2024 NIDJAM was a collective effort of all the people," Patel said.

The 2024 edition of NIDJAM attracted 7,000 budding athletes and officials from 619 districts of the country. Sebastian Coe, president



**An anti doping seminar was conducted during all three days to update knowledge of the coaches and athletes on harmful side effects of doping.**

of World Athletics, was impressed by the overwhelming response to the 2024 edition of NIDJAM. He was unable to attend the competition in Gujarat, but via a video message was all praise for the organisers.

Several elite athletes, including India's Olympic and world champion in men's javelin throw, Neeraj Chopra, have been part of the NIDJAM in their formative years of athletics, Adille Sumariwalla, president of AFI, said.

"NIDJAM is a big platform to scout potential athletes that can bring laurels to the country in the near future," Sumariwalla added.

According to the AFI president, the Talent Identification panel had shortlisted more than 900 youngsters during the 2023 edition of NIDJAM held in Patna for advance coaching camp.

"A similar exercise to scout talent was conducted in Ahmedabad," Sumariwalla added. "A talent identification panel of 25 coaches were present in Ahmedabad. The selected athletes will be invited for an advance camp in near future."

The AFI invited foreign guests during the three-day event, including Cathrine O'Sullivan,

Director, Kids Athletics at the World Athletics--the world governing body of track and field.

Parama Siven Sammaynaden, Neelkaunt Bhujun (Mauritius), Palitha Fernando (Sri Lanka), Helio Gesta Demello (Brazil) and Rajeev Vikram (Nepal) were the other foreign guests in Ahmedabad.

To apprise budding athletes on the harmful side effects of using performance enhancing drugs banned by World Anti Doping Agency (WADA), the AFI conducted seminars on all three days. Issue of overtraining and early specialisation was also deliberated. "Seminars were conducted to update the knowledge of budding athletes and accompanying coaches with the teams," the AFI president added.

Olympian and 2003 world bronze medalist in women's long jump, Anju Bobby George, also apprised budding athletes about the guidelines of Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse in Sports (SAHAS).

The AFI also invited Arjuna Awardees in athletics to witness the 19th edition of NIDJAM. Former outstanding international athletes interacted and shared their experience with the competitors.

# Neeraj Chopra, Parul Chaudhary honoured at TOISA function in Lucknow



India's Olympic and world champion Neeraj Chopra. (Right) Parul Chaudhary.



**It was big boost to the track and field in the country as Olympic and World Champion in men's javelin throw, Neeraj Chopra, was declared sportsperson of the year during a glittering Times of India Sports Award (TOISA) ceremony held in February in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was the chief guest on the occasion. Overall 37 outstanding sportspersons were awarded during the function.

Neeraj Chopra was also awarded male Athlete of the Year in track and field discipline. While Parul Chaudhary was awarded female Athlete of the Year in athletics.

India's star javelin thrower, Neeraj Chopra, had a brilliant 2023 season. He won gold at the Budapest World Athletics Championships held in Hungary from August 19 to 27. It was first by an Indian

athlete. At the previous edition of the World Athletics Championships, he had won silver.

Neeraj Chopra was also successful in winning back-to-back men's javelin throw Asian Games titles at the Hangzhou, China held in 2023.

India's long jumper Anju Bobby George was the first athlete to have won medal—a bronze at the 2003 World Athletics Championships in Paris, France.

India's leading female middle and long distance runner Parul Chaudhary too had a good run in 2023. She gave a good account of herself at World Championships in Budapest, setting national record in women's 3000m steeplechase and qualifying for the Paris Olympic Games. At the 2023 Asian Games she won gold in women's 5,000m and silver in 3000m steeplechase.

# Winning indoor shot put title was a good start to 2024 season, says **Tajinderpal Singh Toor**

**India's Asian Games champion, Tajinderpal Singh Toor, was excited to have started his 2024 season on expected lines at Tehran's Asian Indoor Championships held in Iran from February 17-19.**

"Winning back-to-back gold medals at the Asian Indoor Championships added to my confidence," the 29 years old Asian Games champion from Punjab said. "Since the main focus is the Paris Olympic Games in July, it was a satisfying performance in February."

Tajinderpal Singh Toor won the gold medal with a distance of 19.72m, while his best throw of 20.35m was a no mark in Tehran.

The Punjab's international thrower has a personal best of 21.77m recorded last year during a domestic competition in Bhubaneswar, Odisha ahead of the delayed Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. The Indian thrower went on to successfully defend his Asian Games shot put title in China.

The 29 years old thrower said he will commence his outdoor season with domestic events. "The main goal will be to inch closer to the Paris Olympic Games automatic qualification standard of 21.49m," the Asian Indoor champion said.

In the build-up months to the Paris Olympic Games, Tajinderpal Singh Toor said he has no plans to change his diet or training. "My training will remain the same as it was during the 2023 season that earned me a personal best of 21.77 and later in the year Asian Games title," he said from his training base in Patiala.

At the 2024 Asian Indoor Championships the



Tajinderpal Singh Toor

Indian team overall finished fifth with three gold and one silver medal.

Asian Games medalist and national record holder in women's 100m hurdles, Jyothi Yarraji, claimed gold in 60m hurdles in Tehran. Harmilan Bains was victorious in the women's 1500m. Distance runner Ankita added the 3,000m silver medal to the team's tally.

At the World Indoor Championships held in Glasgow from March 1 to 3, India's long jumper Jeswin Aldrin finished 13th, while triple jumper Praveen Chithravel 11th.

While at the Taicang World Race Walking Tour held earlier this month in China, India's Priyanka Goswami clocked 1:29.19 to finish overall seventh. The elite race walkers preparing for upcoming competitions are training in Pretoria, South Africa.

# Odisha's sprinters hog limelight during three-day National Junior U20 meet in Lucknow

Odisha has emerged as a new hub of sprinting prowess in the country, this was evident from the performance of athletes from the state during the three-day 22nd National Junior U20 Federation Athletics Championships held from March 8 to 10 at Lucknow's Sports Authority of India (SAI) Center in Uttar Pradesh.

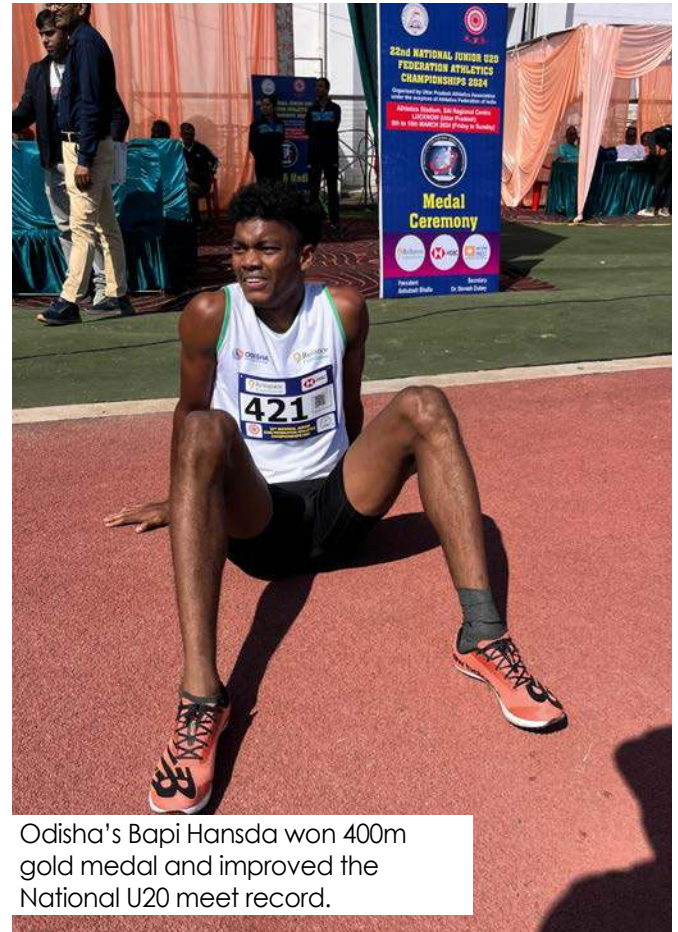
Sprinter Dondapati Mrutyam Jaya from Odisha raised the bar as he ran a scorching 21.59 secs to win 200m gold in men's group and bettered the Asian U20 qualification time of 21.60 seconds. He was the only 200m sprinter to have breached the Asian qualification time in the meet. He also won gold in 100m with a time of 10.67 seconds, while the Asian qualification time was 10.50 secs.

Quarter-miler Bapi Hansda from Odisha also etched his name in record books by setting a national U20 meet record in the men's 400m race. On his way to winning gold in 400m, Bapi Hansda clocked 46.90 seconds, which was better than the previous record of 46.93 seconds. The Asian Qualifying Mark in the men's 400m is 48.10 seconds.

Haryana's Aarti also raced to glory in the women's 10,000m race walk event while Madhya Pradesh's Ekta Pradeep Dey improved the national U20 women's 3,000m steeplechase record.

Aarti clocked 47:21.04 to win gold in the women's 10,000 race walk event. On her way to winning gold she bettered both the meet record of 48:25.90 and national record of 47:30.94. She has also qualified for Asian U20 meet scheduled to be held next month in Dubai.

Ekta Pradeep Dey ran a well-judged pace to win gold medal in the gruelling 3,000m steeplechase. She clocked 10:10.08 seconds on her way to winning gold to better the Asian U20 qualification



Odisha's Bapi Hansda won 400m gold medal and improved the National U20 meet record.

time of 11:30.00 and she also improved the national record of 10:29.50 seconds.

Away from the track Uttar Pradesh javelin throwers hogged the limelight. Dipanshu Sharma claimed gold with a throw of 68.89m, while Rohan Yadav clinched silver with a throw of 68.29m.

Uttarakhand's Ajeet Kumar Yadav took home bronze with a throw of 66.94m. All three throwers bettered the AQM of 65.49m.

On all three days of the competition several athletes in their respective events were on course to earn tickets to Asian U20 competition.

# Haryana's quarter-miler satisfied with rehab programme, limping back to normal

Haryana's international sprinter Himanshi Malik is limping back to normal routine work. The 21 years old had to undergo right knee surgery in December last to get rid of the pain she had experienced while running in the build up weeks to the Hangzhou Asian Games held in China in 2023.

"I've started walking without support since mid-February," Himanshi said. "I'm happy with the progress and should be able to fully recover by the end of March."

Himanshi will be 22 this April and was hopeful of celebrating her birthday by jogging a few laps of the 400m track. The upcoming sprinter said, the doctor has advised her not to rush back to practice. "I'm in no mood to take risk and aggravate the knee again," the Rohtak based quarter-miler said.

Last year in June she clocked 51.78 seconds to finish second at the 2023 Inter-State Athletics Meet held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. She also qualified for the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games held in 2023 in China. However, a month prior to the Asian Games she experienced a mild pain in her right knee. She was a member of the national women's 4x400m relay team. She took precautions not to further aggravate the pain.

Post Asian Games she consulted medical experts and was advised knee surgery. She had to undergo surgery in December 2023 to get rid of the pain. "I took complete rest in January and wasn't allowed to put any pressure on the knee for better recovery," Himanshi said. "The rehab programme will continue until March."

According to Himanshi she has been regularly visiting her doctor and is satisfied with the progress. "I've started walking without support and can climb stairs," she added. "I'm taking precautions and going for rehab drills every day."



**Himanshi will be 22 this April and was hopeful of celebrating her birthday by jogging a few laps of the 400m track.**



Himanshi Malik during rehab session.

# After elbow surgery in July last, javelin thrower Rohit Yadav back to normal training

**Uttar Pradesh's international javelin thrower, Rohit Yadav, has resumed normal training after a brief hiatus due to rehabilitation of right elbow surgery. The talented 22 years old javelin thrower had to undergo surgery to treat a ligament tear in July 2023.**

"I've recovered 80 percent. I'm going through normal practice sessions at National Institute of Sports in Patiala," Rohit Yadav said. "But haven't started training with javelin."

He has started normal training though, but is away from the throwing arena. "I'm not touching javelin until March as I've to compete either in May or June," he added.

The Uttar Pradesh javelin thrower had a good run in 2023. In May he recorded a throw of 83.40m at the senior domestic meet in Ranchi, Jharkhand. While in June at the Inter State Athletics Meet held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, he recorded a throw of 83.28m.

His consistent performance on the domestic circuit added to his confidence of making the cut for the 2023 Budapest World Athletics Championships held in Hungary from August 19 to 27.

But his dreams were shattered as a painful elbow forced him to take a temporary break from practice. To get rid of the pain he had to undergo surgery in July 2023.

He missed out both World Championships and Asian Games in Hangzhou as he was out of action for long.

At the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games he finished sixth with a throw of 82.22m.



Javelin thrower Rohit Yadav.

He was also a finalist at the 2022 Eugene World Athletics Championships held in Oregon, USA.

Rohit Yadav has chalked out his immediate future plans for the 2024 season. He plans to follow moderate practice sessions until March. "I don't want to rush back to hard training," the javelin thrower said from his training base in Patiala.

Hopefully he should be seen in action in May or June. The Inter State Athletics Meet in June in Haryana will be the last domestic qualification event for the Paris Olympic Games. "I will try my best to make the cut," he added.

# Ahmedabad edition of NIDJAM attracted more than 7,000 athletes and officials



Adille Sumariwalla, President AFI apprising budding athletes on the harmful side effects of using performance enhancing drugs banned by World Anti Doping Agency (WADA),



Huge dining hall could accommodate more than 1,000 athletes in one batch.



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