



THE AFI BULLETIN

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



**ON RIGHT
TRACK**

Moving ahead one step at a time, says Tajinderpal Singh Toor

The performance of two-time Asian Games shot put champion, Tajinderpal Singh Toor, in the last two months has been encouraging. The 31-year-old thrower from Punjab is undergoing rigorous training sessions with an aim to attain peak performance at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in September.

On his way to the men's shot put gold at the recent Indian Open Throws Competition at Patiala's National Institute of Sports, the national record holder was steady in his performance. What was more heartening was that his three throws were above 20m. His best throw was 20.51m.

Toor's other two throws were 20.02m and 20.07m. "I'm satisfied with my performance," Toor said. "That I did well although I didn't push at this time of the year gives a big boost to my confidence."

The multiple medal winner at the continental level began his 2026 season on a bright note, winning silver at the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in

Tianjin, China in February. His best throw was 20.05m.

Toor's national record of 21.17m was recorded in June 2023. His main goal this year is to stay healthy and successfully defend his title at the Asian Games, which starts on September 19. "The plan is to move forward one step at a time," the national record holder added.

Going by his current performances,

Toor is within AFI's (Athletics Federation of India) qualifying criteria of 20.36m for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

However, athletes have to achieve CWG qualification criteria at the May 22 to 25 National Senior Athletics Federation event in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

The June 24 to 28 National Inter State Senior Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar will be the main competition to select the national team for the Asian Games in September. The AFI Asian Games qualification criteria for men's shot put is 19.41m. "The main task at hand is to maintain good health and stay away from injury," Toor added.



Rising javelin thrower **Shivam Lohakare** ready for an exciting season

A rmy's promising javelin thrower Shivam Lohakare is in an upbeat mood. The athlete from Maharashtra is ready for an exciting 2026 season that features the Glasgow Commonwealth Games (July 23-August 2) and the Asian Games in Japan (September 19-October 4). "My goal this season is to wear the Indian jersey. For that I need to perform consistently in the coming months," the 22-year-old javelin thrower said.

In the season opening meet---Indian Open Throws Competition held in Patiala on March 7 and 8--- Lohakare was winner of the men's title with a distance of 81.08m.

Lohakare has just four years experience in the event. However, he had an excellent run in 2025. In all the four competitions he competed, he was consistent in recording plus 80m throws. His personal and season best of 84.31m was achieved in the Inter-Services Athletics Meet.

The men's javelin competition in India has great depth. Star thrower and two-time Olympic Games and

world championships medallist, Neeraj Chopra, whose season's best and national record is 90.23m, tops the field. Sachin Yadav, who finished a creditable fourth (86.27m) at the 2025 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo, was the second best in 2025.

Seasoned campaigner Rohit Yadav is another strong contender for Commonwealth Games and Asian Games berths.

The CWG (Commonwealth Games) qualification mark for men's javelin is 82.61m. The criterion for Asian Games is 77.87m.

Lohakare is aware of the highly competitive domestic season. However, he has chalked out the roadmap and knows that nothing short of 84m in the upcoming competitions can cement his place in the national team. He will be competing in the Indian Open Series to further sharpen his skills for the May 22 to 25 National Senior Athletics Federation meet, to be held in Ranchi. "My future goals are realistic. I'm confident of achieving them," he said with an air of confidence.



On a comeback trail, Kishore Kumar Jena clinches bronze

The 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games silver medallist in men's javelin throw, Kishore Kumar Jena, was a satisfied man on clinching bronze medal at the just concluded Indian Open Throws Competition at Patiala's National Institute of Sports in Punjab. The Odisha's international javelin thrower was on a comeback trail after a long lay-off to due nagging ankle injury.

The competition in Patiala was his first after nearly seven-eight months. His bronze winning performance of 74.75m was far off his personal best of 87.54m recorded on his way to silver at the 2022 Asian Games held in China in 2023. He expressed his satisfaction on winning bronze on his return to competition saying he was working hard to regain his lost form. "This season is important for me. I hope to stay healthy to qualify for the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in September," the Odisha's international javelin thrower said.

Jena said the last couple of months were a good learning experience. He had to sit out on the bench and watch others perform at the top level. "I learned to stay calm when I was undergoing rehabilitation," Jena said. "Training has been good in the last few weeks. The number of domestic events ahead of the final selection trials for Asian Games will be a good opportunity to further improve competitive skills," he added. Based out of Mumbai, Jena says he is working on his strength as well technique to perform consistently in upcoming competitions.

Indian distance runners excelled at Asian Cross Country in Fukuoka

Indian distance runners gave a good account of themselves in the 18th Asian Cross-Country Championships held last month in Fukuoka, Japan.

The Indian team won four medals, including an individual silver medal in the senior men's category. The national cross-country team also claimed three bronze medals including third place finish in the senior women's team event. India also won third place in U20 men and women's section. India's Harmanjot Singh gave a good account of his speed endurance in the individual



10km race. The army's promising distance runner fought for gold. But had to settle for silver. His silver-medal winning time was 29:21. The eventual winner—Ryuji Miura of Japan clocked 29:20 to win gold.

In the senior women's 10km, Soniya was the leading Indian runner. She finished fifth with a time of 35:24.

Indian athletes also won three bronze medals in the team events. In the U20 women's team championships (6km), India finished third with 22 points, behind Japan (9 points) and China (20 points).

India's U20 men's team also won bronze securing 25 points. Host Japan claimed gold (6 points), China with 19 points took home silver.

India's fourth medal—a bronze came in the women's team event (10km). Japan won gold (6 points) followed by China (17 points) and India (22 points).

Race walkers adapted to new distance introduced this season at **Indian Open Race Walk Competition**

It was a smooth transition for race walkers at the Indian Open Race Walk Competition held last month at Chandigarh picturesque Sukha Lake course, as a new distance in senior group was introduced by AFI (Athletics Federation of India). As per guidelines of the World Athletics—distance of 21km (half marathon walk) and 42km (full marathon walk) were introduced. In the 2025 edition the competition was organised over 20 km and 35 km distance.

Punjab's race walker Sahil emerged winner of men's half marathon walk (21km) at 13th edition of Indian Open Race Walk Competition held last month at Chandigarh picturesque Sukha Lake course.

In a thrilling finish, Sahil, 24, had enough in the tank to hold off the challenge of experienced race walker like Servin Sebastian (Tamil Nadu) to win the gold medal with a time of 1:25:48.00.

Servin Sebastian settled for silver with a time of 1:25:50.00. Bronze went to Hardeep of Haryana whose finishing time was 1:26:03.00.

The women's 21km title went to Haryana's experienced race walker Ravina. The 29 years old edged past her two younger rivals—24 years old Munita Prajapati of Uttar Pradesh and 23 years old Manis Negi of Uttarakhand to take home the gold medal with a time of 1:39:15.00.

Haryana's promising teenager and World U20 medallist, Aarti, who has graduated



to senior level finished fourth with a time of 1:43:15.00.

In the men and women's full marathon walk (42km), Ram Baboo of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab's Manju clinched gold medals, respectively.

Baboo, 26, clocked 3:09:17.00 to win the gold medal in the men's full marathon walk introduced from this season.

Manju's winning time of 3:33:24.00 was nearly four minutes faster than Priyanka Goswami who finished second with a time of 3:37:25.00.

Manju and Baboo had won bronze in the 35km mixed race walk team event at the 2022 Asian Games in China.

Results: Men: Full marathon walk (42km): Ram Baboo (Uttar Pradesh) 3:09:17.00, Sandeep Kumar (Haryana) 3:11:18.00, Resham Midhun (Telangana) 3:12:11.00.

Men: 21km half marathon: Sahil (Punjab) 1:25:48.00, Servin Sebastian (Tamil Nadu) 1:25:50.00, Hardeep (Haryana) 1:26:03.00.

Men: 10km race walk: Nitin Gupta (Uttar Pradesh) 41:44.00, Rishikesh P (Tamil Nadu) 43:11.00, Bilin George Anto (Kerala) 43:53.00

Women: Full marathon walk (42km): Manju (Punjab) 3:33:24.00, Priyanka Goswami (Uttar Pradesh) 3:37:25.00, Payal (Uttarakhand) 3:39:57.00.

Women: 21km half marathon: Ravina (Haryana) 1:39:15.00, Munita Prajapati (Uttar Pradesh) 1:39:26.00, Mansi Negi (Uttarakhand) 1:42:58.00

Women: 10km race walk: Reshma Patel (Uttar Pradesh) 46:19.00, Mary Margaret K (Delhi) 47:18.00, Akshaya K (Kerala) 51:49.00.

Men U20: 5km: Tushar Panwar (Uttarakhand) 19:59.00 (improved his own U20 national record of 20:07.00 set last year), Himanshu Panwar (Uttarakhand) 20:08.00, Praveen (Rajasthan) 20:12.00.

Women U20: 5km: Manisha (Rajasthan) 23:24.00, Yogita (Haryana) 23:49.00, Simran Gusain (Uttarakhand) 23:58.00.

Overwhelming response to AFI Level 2 Coaching Course

More than 90 coaches successfully completed AFI (Athletics Federation of India) Level-2 Coaching Course. The coaching courses are part of the education pathway to improve quality coaching across the country. The main goal is to have qualified coaches in each of the districts across the country, chief athletics coach Radhakrishnan Nair said. "The coaching courses were conducted in sprints, jumps, throws, middle/ long distance and combined events," the chief athletics coach added. "Ninety-three coaches successfully completed the AFI Level 2 course."

Earlier the AFI also conducted the first World Athletics Level 3 Advance Course in Patiala. The inaugural edition of World Athletics Level 3 Advance Course was held in December last and was organised in combined events, jumps and middle and long distance. The four-day course attracted 33 candidates.

Nine candidates attended the combined events course. Twelve candidates each were present for jumps, and middle and long distance.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT



AFI Research & Development Wing to scout talent; pathway to strengthen grassroots programme

The AFI (Athletics Federation of India) has set up a Research & Development Wing to scout talent at grassroots level. “Research & Development Wing will also collect details about the athletics pockets in the country,” chief national athletics coach Radhakrishnan Nair said. “Due to geographical factors, each region in the country supports certain disciplines to flourish. Inputs by experts will be valuable to further strengthen grassroots development in the country.”

Among northern Indian states, Punjab and Haryana are more popular for throws. Sprints and jumps are more prominent disciplines in the southern states.

“The AFI will also coordinate with former international athletes and the current core group of athletes to get important feedback to strengthen grassroots programmes,” Radhakrishnan added.

Last month, AFI made it mandatory for athletes competing in the female category in domestic competitions to undergo a one-time SRY gene test. The decision to introduce the test at domestic level was taken during a recent AFI executive body meeting.

Last July, World Athletics announced a new regulation (SRY gene test) for female athletes. It came into effect on September 1, 2025.

Indian Athletics Series to kick start from April; more opportunities for athletes at regional level

The 16-leg series scheduled to be held from April to September, according to AFI president Bahadur Singh Sagoo, will enable the competitors to travel less and at the same time have a good platform in their own backyard to showcase their potential.

“The Indian Athletics Series spread over six months is expected to give more opportunities to aspiring athletes to polish their skills ahead of the major domestic track and field competition,” the AFI president added. “The Indian Athletics Series are part of a comprehensive 2026 annual domestic calendar that features as many as 40 competitions.”

The AFI has set a minimum qualification standard for each of the 16-part Indian Athletics Series to encourage more participation at the regional level.

The AFI had also conducted workshops to apprise coaches and officials about



the packed 2026 national domestic calendar. Workshops were held in Trivandrum, Patiala and Bengaluru. All the coaches were advised to chalk out training plans accordingly and peak at the right time to earn berths for Glasgow Commonwealth Games (July 23 to August 2) and Asian Games in Japan (September 19 to October 4).

State units annual competition calendar

The AFI (Athletics Federation of India) has made it mandatory for all affiliated state units to plan the 2026 annual competition calendar. The annual schedule will enable the athletes to plan according to compete in their respective events.



AFI STATE UNIT CALENDARS

SCAN TO VIEW

Athletics Federation of India Executive Council Meeting

