

NEWSLETTER



JAVELIN POWERHOUSE

Four Indian javelin throwers ready to showcase potential in Tokyo



The rising stature of Indian javelin will further gain cadence at the global showpiece event --Tokyo World Athletics Championships starting this weekend in Japan. While Neeraj Chopra is the defending champion, three other throwers --Sachin Yadav, Rohit Yadav and Yashvir Singh -- earned qualification through the world ranking quota system.

The 27-year-old two-time Olympic Games medallist will aim to add a third global medal in the Japan capital.

Five javelin throwers -- including Asian Games champion Annu Rani in women -- are among the 19-member Indian squad announced by Athletics Federation of India for the global event to be held from September 13 to 21.

Adille Sumariwalla, spokesperson of AFI (Athletics Federation of India) and vice-president, World Athletics, said, "Four male javelin throwers qualifying for Worlds has been part of AFI's long term strategy. A good performance in Tokyo will act as a catalyst for the 2028 Olympic Games."

Javelin powerhouse: According to Sumariwalla, the rising stature of Indian

javelin throwers came to fore at the 2023 Budapest World Championships as three of them finished in the top six with Neeraj Chopra winning the title. "We have half-a-dozen male javelin throwers who have crossed 80m in competition," says Sumariwalla. "We have good javelin throwers, but Chopra's historic gold at the Tokyo Olympic Games revolutionised the event in India."

Sachin's season and personal best of 85.16m was recorded on his way to silver at the Asian championships in Gumi, South Korea in May. Since then he has a couple of 80m-plus throws in

competition. "He (Sachin) is capable of bigger throws. In practice he crossed 88m. We expect him to improve his personal best in Tokyo," says Sumariwalla.

According to Lalit Bhanot, former AFI secretary and president SAAF (South Asian Athletics Federation), it was encouraging to see a surge in participation in the 2025 edition of the National Javelin Day across the country on August 7. "The fourth edition of the National Javelin Day attracted 4,974 competitors in various age groups. It shows the growing popularity of javelin in India," Bhanot explains.

National Javelin Day

August 7 was declared as National Javelin Day by AFI (Athletics Federation of India) because it was on this day in 2021 that Neeraj Chopra wrote a golden chapter in the history of Indian track and field at the Tokyo Olympic Games by winning the men's javelin with a throw of 87.58m.

The AFI has made it mandatory for all state units to conduct javelin competition in all age groups on August 7, Bhanot says.

Data of the 2025 National Javelin Day suggests that the Assam state emerged front runner in East Zone with 955 competitors in different age groups taking part on National Javelin Day. Mizoram (105) and Jharkhand (96) were second and third, respectively.

In the North Zone, Chandigarh attracted 235 participants while Haryana was a close second with 201 competitors. Punjab was third at 135.

Telangana (629) was the leading state in South Zone and Chhattisgarh (190) in West Zone in the fourth edition of National Javelin Day.



Kids javelin

The AFI also introduced kids javelin in the U14 and U16 age groups in 2022. Kids javelin has been a major attraction during NIDJAM (National Inter District Athletics Meet), AFI's flagship grassroots programme.

AFI plans to tap into vast middle and long distance talent in the country

The AFI (Athletics Federation of India) plans to tap into the vast middle and long distance talent across the country with potential to rise to the global level in coordination with the armed forces and para-military departments, Sagar Preet Hooda, chairman of AFI's middle and long distance project, said.

"We plan to set up small groups of experts who will be entrusted with different work for the development of middle and long distance in the country," he said.

"A comprehensive roadmap for the project will be chalked out soon. One of the goals will be to scout talent during the armed forces and paramilitary recruitment drives," Hooda said..

The recent success at the continental and international competitions by runners from the armed forces, including Asian Games medallist Gulveer Singh and 3000m steeplechase specialist Avinash Sable, has shifted focus to fresh army recruits having potential to excel at world level.

Army's Avinash Sable became the first Indian to win a medal in steeplechase, a silver, at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. Sable also won steeplechase gold at the Hangzhou Asian Games held in China in 2023. He regularly competes in the prestigious one-day Diamond League series. Sable's national record of 8:09.91 in steeplechase is highly creditable at global level.

Gulveer Singh, also from the Indian Army, is the first Indian to clock sub-13 minutes in the 5,000m. His time of 12:59.77 ranks him high in the global ranking system. He has qualified on

entry standard (13:01.00) for the Tokyo World Athletics Championships, which starts in Tokyo on September 13.

"Excellent performances by Indian Army runners at the international stage has raised the bar," Hooda added. "To sustain the outstanding results of the middle and long distance runners in the recent past, AFI is chalking out plans to have a steady flow of talent."

In the first phase to scout talent, says Hooda, the AFI team in coordination with the armed forces and para-military departments will shortlist athletes having potential.

"The selected probables will be under observation for three-four months at their respective units," Hooda said. "The list will be pruned in the second phase of the project. Those selected for the next phase will undergo training under experts appointed by AFI at different centres, including NCOE."

In a virtual meeting held recently under the chairmanship of Hooda, a decision was also taken to restructure the competition programme at grassroots level to encourage budding athletes having potential to climb up the domestic ladder.

The AFI roadmap should give opportunity to young athletes. "There is also a proposal to set up high altitude training centres," he said.

Hooda says the main target in future will be the World Championships, Olympic Games and Diamond League, and not continental competition. "We have set realistic yet bigger goals for our young generation of middle and long distance runners," he said.



AFI to give logistical support to state units in 2026 to increase visibility



The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) proposes to spread out the domestic calendar to different parts of the country from next year to increase fan following, Bahadur Singh Sagoo, AFI president, said. "There is a proposal to give more logistical support to the organising state in the next calendar year," Sagoo added. "Since there is a possibility to have as many as 40 competitions in the next calendar year. The competitions will be spread out to improve the visibility of track and field in the country."

Apart from the domestic calendar, AFI also plans to conduct global competition on home soil to give more exposure to the athletes in 2026.

The inaugural edition of Neeraj Chopra Classic, a Gold Level World Athletics event, was held in Bengaluru in July. The Continental Tour Bronze Level meet was held in

Bhubaneswar in August. Both the competitions were qualifying events for the Tokyo World Athletics Championships, which starts on September 13.

Logistics support has become an important factor as over a period of time the cost of organising competitions has increased. Hence, there is a proposal to financially assist the local organising committee for smooth conduct of meets.

"The parent body will financially support the host units and make payments for TSR; technical officials and live-streaming," the AFI president added. "Financial support will lessen the burden on the local organising unit."

"AFI will closely monitor the regional competitions and ensure the guidelines are followed properly," Sagoo said.

Packed 2026 domestic calendar will feature close to 40 competitions

To further strengthen the domestic ecosystem, the AFI (Athletics Federation of India) propose to increase the number of competitions in the 2026 calendar year. The number of competitions are expected to reach 40 in the next calendar year. For a record, the AFI had included eight Indian Open Athletics meets this year.

“Regional competitions were introduced to infuse more strength to ecosystem and there was good response,” chief national athletics coach Radhakrishnan Nair said.

In 2023 AFI introduced a one-day relay carnival. The elite Indian athletes preparing for the 2024 World Athletics Relay in Bahamas used the domestic relay platform to evaluate their performance.

While at the 2025 edition of the relay carnival in Chandigarh, top sprinters representing Reliance improved the decade old national 4x100m men’s relay record to 38.69 seconds.

As part of its programme to build a solid domestic foundation, the AFI will add more Indian Open Athletics meetings in 2026 season that will also feature two major multidiscipline competitions--- Commonwealth Games and Asian Games. “The next season will feature as many as 40 domestic competitions,” Nair added. “There is also a plan to conduct more regional events in South and North Zone.”

In the 2025 season, the AFI shortlisted more than 15 venues across the country to conduct the regional level events. The main



venues were Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Regional meet was also held at Anju Bobby Sports Foundation in Bengaluru.

“Regional competitions in the neighbourhood gave more opportunities to promising athletes to showcase their potential. Having quality competition in the backyard saves time as well as money as the athlete has to travel short distance to compete.”

“Regional competitions got good response this season. Hence there is a plan to further increase the number to provide opportunities to young athletes,” chief national athletics coach added.

World Athletics Level 3 course in November

The World Athletics Level 3 course, a pilot education advance course, in multi discipline will be conducted at Patiala's National Institute of Sports (NIS) from November 25 to 28, Radhakrishnan Nair, chief national athletics coach said.

"The four-day advance course will be conducted in India for the first time," Nair added. "The WA education course will be conducted in combined events, middle and long distance, throws and jumps."

The advanced course is being conducted in India to upgrade knowledge of coaches. A group of 10-12 candidates will be shortlisted for each course.

The WA has also set the eligibility criteria. Candidates having passed Pre-Level 1 and Level 2 courses will be eligible for WA Level 3 education course. "Candidates having experience of coaching junior or senior national teams will also be eligible," chief national athletics coach said.

Coaches education and technical official programmes are among other verticals AFI has been working to strengthen the ecosystem. "Collective efforts of all the stakeholders have enabled AFI to achieve a target set each year for the development of track and field in the country," the chief national athletics coach said. "The AFI is regularly conducting WA Level 1 and Level 2 coaches education courses across the country."

National meet

Top sprinters will be in focus during the Open National Athletics Championships scheduled to be held in Ranchi (Jharkhand) from September 27 to 30, Radhakrishnan Nair, chief national athletics coach said. "Top sprinters will be selected to prepare the 4x100m national relay team in both men and women's group," Nair added.

Meanwhile, Ranchi will be the venue for the SAAF Championships in October.

Indian team for World Athletics Championships Tokyo 2025

Men: Animesh Kujur (200m), Gulveer Singh (5,000m/10,000m), Tejas Shirse (110m hurdles), Praveen Chitravel, Abdulla Aboobacker (triple jump), Murali Sreeshankar (long jump), Sarvesh Kushare (high jump), Neeraj Chopra, Sachin Yadav, Rohit Yadav, Yashvir Singh (all javelin throw), Servin Sebastian (20km race walk), Ram Baboo, Sandeep Kumar (35km race walk).

Women: Pooja (800m/1500m), Parul Chaudhary, Ankita (3,000m steeplechase), Annu Rani (javelin throw), Priyanka (35km race walk).



Indian Oil Corporation Limited

