

Sports Authority of India

Airman Deepak Kumar guns down silver, as Vinesh Phogat reaches final in 50 kg wrestling

- **Manavjit and Lakshya reach Trap shooting final**
- **Pooja Dhanda (57kg) and Sakshi Malik (62kg) to fight for bronze**
- **Kabaddi team stays in track for gold medal**

Jakarta/ Palembang, August 20: Shooting and Wrestling continued to hold the spotlight and Indian hopes on the second morning at the 18th Asian Games here in Indonesia.

As on the first day, shooting fetched the first medal of the day, when Deepak Kumar, who studied for almost a decade in a Gurukul in Dehradun and turns to yoga for spiritual and mental balance, shot his way to a silver medal in the men's 10m Air Rifle Individual. It was India's third medal of the Games and it brought India's haul to one gold, one silver and one bronze. Deepak is supported by the Government's Target Olympic Podium Scheme.

Meanwhile wrestler Vinesh Phogat made up for her past disappointments by reaching the final of the 50kg freestyle competition, and assured herself of at least a silver. Her opponent in the final will be Japan's Irie Yuki, who was a bronze medallist at the 2018 Asian Championships in Bishkek, where Vinesh reached the final before losing to China's Lei Chun, who did not come here. Instead China entered Sun Yanan, who lost to Vinesh in the first round.

Shooter Deepak, who is employed with Indian Air Force, was sensational in the finals and leapt to second place with elimination looming. He clinched the second spot while compatriot Ravi Kumar, missed out on bronze and eventually finished fourth.

Deepak had earned the fifth spot in the qualification round while Ravi was placed fourth. But in the final, Deepak was in fine form and finished second as others fell off. Compatriot Ravi Kumar finished fourth scoring 205.2. China's Haoran Yang bagged gold with an Asian Games record score of 249.1.

There was further good news from the shooting ranges, as 42-year-old Manavjit Singh Sandhu and 20-year-old Lakshya Sheoran qualified for the six man final in the Trap event. Sandhu and Lakshya were both among the four shooters with 119 and two others had 118.

The women wrestlers came to the fore, when Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and Pooja Dhanda took defining steps towards a medal each, by entering the semi-finals.

Vinesh began with a massive morale boosting win over tough rival China's Sun Yanan. It was against Sun in the 2016 Rio Olympic quarter finals that the Indian was fighting when she dislocated her knee and went out of action till early 2017.

Sun had crashed into the upper central region of the abdomen and that led to Vinesh injuring her right knee and it turned out to be an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tear. This time Vinesh got her revenge as she won 8-2 and made the 1/8 finals, where she beat veteran 34-year-old Korean wrestler, Kim Hyungjoo 11-0 in another one-sided clash, which ended midway through the second period.

With a place in the final at stake, Vinesh once again dominated her semi-final as she outclassed Dauletbike Yakshimuratova of Uzbekistan 10-0. That meant she had not conceded a point in two successive bouts enroute to the final.

Olympic bronze medallist, Sakshi Malik lost a narrow 62kg semi-final to Aisuluu Tynybeoka of Kyrgyzstan 7-8 after a tight battle through the bout. Tynybeoka is a bronze medallist from the 2014 Asian Games in 55 kg and had won the Asian Championships in 58 kg in 2016 and 2017.

Sakshi earlier beat Ayaulym Massymova of Kazakhstan 10-0 in the 1/4 finals and before that she outclassed Thai Srisombat Salinee 10-0 in 1/8 finals. Sakshi will now meet North Korean Rim Jong Sim for the bronze medal.

Pooja Dhanda, 26, silver medallist at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, lost her semi-final but still has a chance to fight for the bronze in the play-offs to be held in the evening. Earlier in the quarters she beat Nabira Esenbaeva of

Uzbekistan 12-1 on technical points and before that in the 1/8 final, she outclassed Thai girl, Orasa Sookdongyor 10-0 in an one-sided fight that ended in 64 seconds. Pooja takes on Katsumi Sakagami of Japan for the bronze medal.

As for Vinesh who is also supported by the TOPS scheme, if she wins later in the day, it would be an early birthday present for the Rohtak girl, who turns 24 on Saturday, August 25.

Vinesh had won the gold medal at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in 48 kg and another gold in 50 kg at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games this year. Vinesh, who had a bronze in 48kg at the Incheon Asian Games in 2014, has also won medals in each of the last six Asian Championships - three silver medals (2015, 2017, 2018) and three bronze (2013, 2014, 2016).

Earlier in shooting, Seema Tomar finished sixth in the women's Trap Shooting final after shooting 12 out of 25 targets.

Badminton: Women lose to Japan in Team event

India's women's challenge ended at the hands of the Japanese as they lost 1-3 in the women's Team quarter-finals. The lone point for India came from PV Sindhu, who beat Akane Yamaguchi 21-18, 21-19 in two straight games in 44 minutes. That was the first match of the tie.

Thereafter Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota combined to beat N Siki Reddy and Arathi Sara 21-15, 21-6 in 34 minutes to make matters level.

Saina Nehwal gave the 2017 World Champion Nozomi Okuhara a tough time despite losing the first game 11-21. The Indian saved four match points before winning the second game at 25-23, but in the third Okuhara, a returning machine, overran Saina 21-16 to take Japan to a 2-1 lead. The match lasted 71 minutes and featured a number of long rallies.

The second women's doubles saw a rare sight of Sindhu playing with Ashwini Ponappa, but they were no match for Misaki Matsumoto and Ayaka Takashima who won 21-13, 21-12 in 39 minutes.

Basketball: Third loss for Indian women

Indian women were beaten 104-54 in women's 5x5 basketball by Unified Korean team, which was the latter's second win in three games. India have lost all three games so far, the earlier ones being to Taipei 61-84 and Kazakhstan 61-79.

Taipei lead the pool with three wins in three matches, Korea are second and Kazakhstan third and India fourth and Indonesia are fifth.

In the other pool Japan and China have two wins each, though China have played only two matches and Japan three.

Handball: India beat Malaysia in men's handball

India, who had lost all their three preliminary matches, won their first match of the Games, as they started action for classification rounds. India beat Malaysia 45-19 and the other teams with them are Taipei, Pakistan and Indonesia.

In the preliminary matches to decide the top two in each group, India lost to Bahrain (25-32), to Iraq (29-40) and Taipei (28-38).

Kabaddi: Second win for Indian women

Defending champion Indian women scored their second win 33-23 in women's kabaddi competition on Monday. The Indian team twice dismissed the entire Thai team and also logged five bonus points.

India beat Japan 43-12 in their first match. Sri Lanka have won two of their three matches so far. The other teams in the Group are Indonesia and Sri Lanka and India will play both on Tuesday.

In the other Group, Iran have won both matches and have one more left against Taipei. Taipei and Korea have both won one match each and have one game still to play. Taipei meet Iran and Korea meet Bangladesh in their next clash.

The Indian men, who have already beaten Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are scheduled to meet Korea in the evening in their third league match.