



Press Release

London 2012 high jumper Sahana Kumari asks daughter Pavana to focus on senior events

New Delhi, May 4 : Sport is in Pavana Nagaraj's blood and it is just as well that she drew upon the solid backing and advice of her athlete parents on her way to victory in the women's Long Jump competition in the U20 Asian Athletics Championships in Dubai recently.

The 18-year-old Pavana Nagaraj, daughter of women's National High Jump record holder Sahana Kumari and 2010 National Inter-State men's 100m champion BG Nagaraj, won the Asian u20 gold with a personal best Long Jump of 6.32m. It came on the back of Sahana Kumari's nudge that made Pavana Nagaraj focus more on Long Jump after having started as a high jumper.

The transition to long jump came along with her training as a Heptahlete. Sahana Kumari, who is a SAI coach, revealed she wants her daughter to stick to multi-event competition. "We want her to be in multi events so that her overall development is taken care of. This is what this generation is lacking. They are focusing on just one discipline," she told SAI media.

"I told her rather than stick to one event, she try Heptathlon to discover her strength. We want her to excel in multi events and she has to understand which event she is good at. As parents, or as coaches, we are not forcing her to take up any particular discipline. We're only supporting her so she can enjoy her journey," Sahana Kumari said.

Pavana Nagaraj, who has been supported through the Khelo India Scholarship scheme since 2018, told SAI Media that the SAI Centre in Bengaluru has played an integral role in her life. "It's my second home. I used to visit the SAI track in Bengaluru since my childhood along when my mother was training there. I joined the centre in 2017. My roots are in SAI Bengaluru," she said.

Pavana said her mother has been the backbone in her career. "She always accompanies me to competitions, and always backs me. Her support and presence has brought me this far. I don't think most athletes get to feel this, and I am really blessed. I'll always be grateful to both my parents for putting me on the right path on the field and off the field," she said.

Sahana said she was blessed too. "As a mother, I'm really happy to have a daughter like Pavana. Seeing your child succeed and realise her dream gives parents a lot of happiness. We want her to excel in the senior competitions as well. And we keep telling her to focus on the senior events, especially the Olympics as the bigger target.

"The main thing is to focus and be dedicated on what you want. The mindset that we give to her sometimes maybe irritates her but later she understands, what my parents say are actually good for me," Sahana said.

Pavana's father BG Nagaraj is also an acclaimed sprinter who won the men's 100m gold in the AFI National Inter-State Championships in Patiala in 2010. He was crowned the fastest man in India back then for recording a time of 10.50 seconds at the 2010 Asian Games trials. He currently works with the Railways.