

Sports Authority of India

India equal best-ever medal haul from Asian Games and are now set to go above it

- **Sailors bring three medals, including one silver**
- **Boxer Amit Panghal enters final, injured Vikas wins bronze**
- **Squash women reach historic final, stun top seeds Malaysia**
- **Indian women win silver after defeat to Japan in hockey final**
- **Indian tally now 65 medals with 13 gold, 23 silver and 29 bronze**

Jakarta, August 31: India are all set to attain their best-ever medal haul in Asian Games history with two more days to go at the 18th edition of the Games. As the sailors brought home three medals, including one silver and two bronze, the women's hockey team added a silver. The men's squash team and the injured boxer Vikas Krishan also fetched a bronze each to take India's tally from 59 at the end of the Thursday to 65 by end of Friday.

Late in the evening, the Indian women fought valiantly before going down 1-2 to Japan in the women's hockey final. That silver ironically was India's 65th medal of the Games and it equaled India's best haul ever of 65.

Here in Jakarta, India's haul now stands at 65 medals, including 13 gold, 23 silver and 29 bronze and they are now sixth best in terms of total medals at these Games.

India's previous best haul in Asian Games history was 65 medals (including 14 gold, 17 silver 34 bronze) in Guangzhou, China in 2010.

India, will however will need two more gold to touch the best-ever gold haul of 15 achieved in 1951 at the inaugural Asian Games in New Delhi. Indians do have a chance of getting there as Amit Panghal is in 46-49kg boxing final and the women's team is playing Hong Kong in Squash Team final.

One more medal, though a bronze, is possible from the men's bronze play-off against Pakistan on Saturday.

In 2014 at Incheon India had 57 medals, including 11 gold, 10 silver and 36 bronze in 2014.

On Friday, the Indian sailors took three medals, including one silver, while the Indian women's team in squash pulled off one of the biggest upsets of games in their discipline beating defending champions and strong favourites Malaysia 2-0 in the semi-finals of the event.

Joshna Chinappa taking on 9-time Asian Games medallist Nicol David won in five gruelling game at 12-10, 11-9, 6-11, 10-12, 11-9. That win set the trend as Dipika Pallikal beat Low Wee Wern 11-2, 11-9, 11-7 in straight games to take India in the final.

Vikas Krishan was injured and could not come for his semi-final thus securing the bronze medal awarded to the semifinalists, while the Indian men's squash team went down to Hong Kong and finished with a bronze as well.

Saturday will see Indian women's squash team and boxer Amit Panghal fight for gold.

SAILING – One silver and two bronze from sailors

The Indian sailors, who have been toiling over for more than a week during their 15 races came up with three medals – one silver and two bronze.

Varsha Gautham and Sweta Shervegar clinched silver in the 49er FX Women's event and Harshita Tomar took bronze in the Open Laser 4.7.

Varun Thakkar and KC Ganapathy won a bronze in the 49er men's event.

The 20-year-old Varsha and 27-year-old Sweta combined to produce a total score of 40 after 15 races to finish second at the Indonesia Nationa. Their position of fourth in the 15th race was discarded as 14 best are selected. They finished second behind runaway winners, Lim Min Kimberley of Singapore, who won each of their 15 races and with one discarded their winning total was 14 points.

The Indian duo finished second in five of their races and were third in another six. They were fourth on three occasions and one of those was discarded for a total of 40 points net, which was two better than bronze medallists Thailand's Nichpa Waiwai and Kamonchanok Klahan.

The Indian men in the 49er, Varun Thakkar and KC Ganapathy grabbed the bronze with a superb effort in the final race, which they won ahead of Oman's Waleed Al Kendi and Musab Al Hadi, who had a slight edge over the Indian before the final race. The Indians needed a gap of at least three places and Oman finished fourth as Indians won it and both were tied at 43.

The Indians, who finished first in five of their races were awarded the bronze medal, while Oman were fourth and they had three wins in 15 races.

The second bronze came from Bhopal's swimmer-turned-sailor Harshita Tomar despite her 12th place finish in the 12th and final race. She was the top woman finisher in the race that is open to both men and women. Harshita's total from 11 best races out of 12 was 62, while her teammate Govind Bairagi was fourth in the final race and also fourth in the final standings with a net of 67 in 11 best races. His finishes in the three races from 9th to 11th races, where he finished 13th, 11th and 14th cost him a better finish.

Harshita said, "It is a great feeling to win a medal for the country. I can't explain it. It has been a great learning experience for me," said Harshita, a former swimmer.

Muhammad Fauzi Kaman Shah of Malaysia took the gold with 20 net points as she won seven of the 12 races and China's Wang Hianxiong was second with 42 net points.

Indian women lose Hockey final

Japan edged out the Indian women's team 2-1 to win the Asian Games women's hockey gold for the first time history. Nevertheless, the Indian women, who won their only gold back in 1982, turned in their best performance since reaching the final in 1998 at Bangkok.

Meanwhile, the Indian men, who won gold in 2014, will play Pakistan in the play-off for bronze medal on Saturday.

The Indians had a bronze medal in Incheon, but the way they had played in the league, they had looked like contenders for the gold.

The ninth-ranked Indians were higher ranked than Japan but they missed more chances than they should and the toughest one to swallow was the last gasp chance Vandana Katariya had to equalise. With barely a few seconds left on the clock, Vandana, who had scored freely in earlier matches, failed to push it home, off a fine through from Navneet.

In a match that was fast paced it was the Indians, who had a chance to go 1-0 up with a nice break from the midfield. It was barely three minutes into the game when Rani found Navneet, who however could not control and then Rani had a second chance but was unable to score.

Japan hit back and had a shot, but goalkeeper Savita was up to the task and India turned the game around and won a penalty corner, but Gurjit Kaur's flick was well saved by the Japan goalkeeper.

A minute later Japan won their first penalty corner and they struck off it. Shihori Oikawa scored off and it was 1-0 for Japan.

The Indians stung by the reverse went all out to find the equaliser, but were unable to do so. Vandana found her reverse going wide and then Monika failed to reach the ball in time to have a shy at goal.

Eight minutes into the second quarter, off a counter the hard-working Navneet finally found an unmarked Neha Goyal, who found the target and the scores were level. It was one of those moments when the Japanese defence was left without any answers.

Though both teams played fast it was the Indians who had more shots – seven to Japan's two. They had one penalty corner each and Gurjit was unable to score while Oikawa succeeded.

Into the third quarter, Vandana missed a good scoring opportunity and then her next shot was saved by the Japanese goalkeeper. A few minutes later it was Savita's turn to bring about a fine save as the pendulum swung from one end to another.

Just as the third quarter was drawing to an end, Japan won their second penalty corner and this time Japan came out with a variation and Motori Kawamura found the target and made it 2-1 to send the Japanese into the final quarter with the lead.

The Indians went all out on attack and with just over three minutes on the clock, they expectedly took goalkeeper Savita off and brought Deep Grace Ekka to attack with 11. With a minute to go, Indians thought they had a penalty corner, which the umpire thought otherwise. Not even a referral could get India that penalty corner, though it did appear the Indian girls did deserve it.

Into the final minute, Vandana failed to connect what seemed like yet another great opportunity and then few seconds later, time ran out.

Squash – Joshna, Dipika script history as Indian women reach final

India's leading squash stars, Joshna Chinappa and Dipika Pallikal wrote out of the finest chapters in Indian women's squash history with a stunning 2-0 win over top seeds and favourites Malaysia.

Chinappa taking on 9-time Asian Games medallist Nicol David won in five gruelling game at 12-10, 11-9, 6-11, 10-12, 11-9.

Soon after Dipika Pallikal, who like Joshna won a bronze in singles, beat Low Wee Wern 11-2, 11-9, 11-7 in the second singles match to wrap up the win for India.

The other two members of the team are Sunayna Kuruvilla and Tanvi Khanna. The entry in the final assured them of a silver medal.

The Indian women will meet Hong Kong in the final. Hong Kong beat Japan 2-0.

The Indian men, however lost to Hong Kong in the semi-final and settled for a bronze. In the first singles, Lee Ho Yin beat Sourav Ghosal 11-7, 11-9, 13-11 to take the lead. That was built upon by Au Chun Ming, who beat Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu in four games. Chun Ming won 11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 11-3.

The women's semi-final result augmented the solid show in the individual competition, where India's top three stars – two among women Dipika and Joshna and Saurav Ghosal among men already bagged bronze medals in the singles events. The men's team also won a bronze. With one more medal on the way, India will have as many as five medals from the sport.

BOXING – Amit Panghal enters final, injured Vikas pull out of semi-final

Boxer Amit Panghal entered the final of the 46-49ks category with a razor thin split decision 3-2 over Filipino Carlo Palaam to ensure himself a silver medal. Later, Vikas Krishan pulled out of his semi-final on account of injury and took home a bronze, which was his third medal in three Asian Games. He won a gold in 2010 and silver in 2014 also.

TABLE TENNIS – Challenge comes to an end in quarter-finals

In the morning Sharath Kamal was the first Indian to lose in the round of 16 going down to Taipei's Chihyuan Chuang 2-4. The two were locked 2-2 after the first four games, as they won alternate games. Chuang won the first at 11-7, but lost the second 9-11. He again won the third 12-10, but Sharath pulled back in a marathon fourth games at 16-14. Then the Taipei player pulled away 11-9, 11-9 in last two to wrap up the match and end Sharath's challenge.

Later, in the women's singles, Manika Batra lost her round of 16 clash to China's fancied Wang Manyu in five games 1-4. Wang won 11-2, 11-8, 8-11, 6-11, 11-4.

Finally, the Indian challenge ended in the men's singles round of 16 when Sathiyam Gnanasekharan went down to Japan's Kenta Matsudaira also in five games after winning the first at 11-9. The Japanese won the next four games at 11-4, 11-9, 11-6 and 12-10.

Earlier the Indian men won a team bronze, while Sharath Kamal and Manika won a bronze in Mixed doubles.