

Press Release

Kunwer Ajai Raj Singh Rana lights up opening day track and field sport with fine show

Pune, Jan 10: Punjab's Kunwer Ajai Raj Singh Rana was the star of the athletics competition in the Khelo India Youth Games 2019 here on Thursday with a 75.40m throw that earned him the Under-17 javelin throw gold.

Rana's performance made a telling statement about the quality on offer in this discipline in which Neeraj Chopra has inspired many youngsters with his feats.

Rana gave himself an early birthday present with the gold medal. The thrower who trains at the Punjab Institute of Sports will turn 17 on Saturday and finished sixth at the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires.

He ran out a fairly comfortable winner without matching the 77.22m he posted as his personal best in Delhi on December 17.

The 16-year-old Suraj Kumar (Uttar Pradesh) came up with a personal best throw of 73.42m which was enough only to keep his nose ahead of Sudama Yadav (Bihar) for second place. But the fact that these three throwers went past the 70m mark is indication of the inherent talent among young Indians in a rather technical event.

Maharashtra's tribal wonder Tai Bamhane, who clocked a personal best time of 4:25.66 in the Asian Area qualification leg of the Youth Olympic Games, was not at her best in the girls under-17 1500m final.

Having decided late to enter the competition, she tried to go past Uttarakhand's Ankita and Haryana's Pooja with a lap to go but did not have the energy to sustain her pace.

Tamil Nadu's Karuniya Muthuramalingam, who turns 19 on Friday, was another gifting herself an early birthday present with the girls Under-21 discus throw title, beating back Arpandeeep Kaur Bajwa (Punjab) and Seema (Haryana).

Arpandeeep, 19, had come here on the back of a personal best of 49.97m in the Inter-University championships. Karuniya, however, came up with an effort of 46.60m that was her best since the 48.58m she recorded at the South Asian U20 championship last May.

Both Karuniya and Arpandeeep qualified for the World Junior Athletics Championships in Finland where the Punjab thrower managed 48.17m and the Tamil Nadu girl had 43.96 to her name.