

## Press Release

### Patiala lad Sartaj Singh wins 3-position gold in a tight finish at Khelo India Youth Games

**Pune, January 15:** Sartaj Singh (Punjab) hung on to his lead by the skin of his teeth to beat a charge by National Junior Champion Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar (Madhya Pradesh) and won the gold medal in the 50m 3-position rifle competition in the Khelo India Youth Games 2019 at the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex here today.

The 16-year-old from Patiala, who has to travel to Chandigarh twice a week for training, shot 447.2 in the final, riding on the lead he had opened up with 151.7 in kneeling and 150.5 in prone. When they shot the standing series, Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar, a World Junior Championship finalist last year, started to slowly but surely bridge the 3.3-point gap with the leader.

Son of a tissue culture farmer, Sartaj Singh Tiwana was aware that his lead had dwindled to 0.6 points when only the two of them were left in the fray. The Madhya Pradesh lad, who goes through his routine and takes his shots pretty quickly, shot 9.6. Sartaj Singh Tiwana could hear the cheering for Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar and responded with a 9.1 that was enough to give him gold.

“I was excited to be on the cusp of winning a big title for the first time and could feel my heartbeat cause involuntary movement of my hand in the standing elimination series. It was my mistake,” he said. He competed in two Junior World Cups last year, shooting 1131 to finish 12th in Sydney and despite improving his score to 1144, finished 39th in Suhl, Germany.

He showed dignified delight in beating National Junior Championships gold medallist, Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar and Harshit Binjwa, both Madhya Pradesh lads with plenty of support from the large contingent packing the gallery. And the two Tamil Nadu shooters, Sam George Sajan, who finished sixth after topping qualification, and Amar Chakravarthy Kishore as well.

Telangana's 13-year-old Esha Singh and Maharashtra's Harshada Nithave won the girls under-17 and under-21 10m air pistol gold medals respectively. Esha Singh was unstoppable in the final, shooting 241.3 points, including 14 10s. A niggle in the back saw her finish third in qualification with 565, including just 12 10s. Her physiotherapist worked on her to be ready for the final.

Harshada Nithave, who won the Asian youth bronze medal in 2015, had also finished third in qualification today but asserted her intention from the start of the under-21 final. She led Yuvika Tomar (Uttar Pradesh) by 1.9 points after 10 shots. Her rival reduced it to 0.6 after six more shots. An 8.9 with her 28th let Yuvika down and Harshada held on to win gold.

#### **The results (finals):**

**Boys under-21 3-position rifle:** 1. Sartaj Singh Tiwana (Punjab) 447.2; 2. Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar (Madhya Pradesh) 447.1; 3. Harshit Binjwa (Madhya Pradesh) 436.1

**Girls under-21 10m air pistol:** 1. Harshada Nithave (Maharashtra) 236.3; 2. Yuvika Tomar (Uttar Pradesh) 235.6; 3. Sweta Devi (Punjab) 211.8.

**Girls under-17 10m air pistol:** 1. Esha Singh (Telangana) 241.3; 2. Anushka Patil (Maharashtra) 234.7; 3. Shravari Bhoir (Maharashtra) 213.6.