



Press Release

Avani, Praveen, Harvinder help increase India's medal tally at the Tokyo Paralympics to 13

New Delhi, September 3: After a medal-less two days, India got back the medal momentum, clinching three medals on Friday. It all started with our golden girl Avani Lekhara clinching a bronze medal in the Women's 50m air rifle 3 positions SH1 event. Praveen Kumar followed it up with a silver in the Men's High Jump T64 event and recurve archer Harvinder Singh bagged the bronze in the men's individual open category.

Avani, who earlier won the gold in the 10m air rifle SH1 event, became the first Indian woman to win multiple medals from a Paralympic Games. She shot a total score of 445.9 in the 50m rifle 3 positions final. Avani, who also works as an Assistant Conservator of Forest with the Govt. of Rajasthan, has had been training under Suma Shirur at the JDA Shooting Range in Jaipur prior to the Tokyo Games. She has been wheelchair-bound since a road accident in 2012.

18-year-old Praveen Kumar, whose one leg was short since birth, recorded a jump of 2.07m – an Asian record – on Friday, to take home the silver medal. He started training under the tutelage of Satyapal Singh since 2018 and went on to win the silver medal at the World Para Athletics Junior Championship 2019 in Switzerland. Right after the pandemic, Praveen won the Gold medal with a then-Asian record at the Fazza Grand Prix World meet earlier this year in Dubai.

Satyapal recounted a moment during the lockdown when Praveen had to create a makeshift training facility. "During the first lockdown, he was back at his Govindgarh village in Jewar and I used to call him up daily and guide him. He used to dig mud and train at his home. It continued for 2-3 months and following that, we got a special permission from the Sports Authority of India to return to train at the JLN Stadium in Delhi," said Satyapal. "It's great for him to win a medal at the age of 18 and the plans are in place for the Paralympics in Paris."

Praveen has been supported by the Govt of India in terms of competing in multiple international tournaments as well as financial assistance for sports-specific equipments, kits and sports science support.

Recurve archer, Harvinder Singh, meanwhile, won against Korea's Kim Min Su 6-5 in the bronze medal match in a dramatic shoot-off amid rainy conditions. It is a historic first-ever medal for India from the Paralympic Games. A gold medallist at the Asian Para Games 2018, Haryana-based archer Harvinder took fond interest in archery after watching the London 2012 Olympics. During the



lockdown Harvinder's father turned his farm into an archery range so that he can continue his practice. Harvinder is also pursuing Ph.D (Economics) in the Department of Economics, Punjabi University, Patiala.

All the three medalists are a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).

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