

## Press Release

### **Maharashtra pull away in medals race, as Delhi and Haryana lie second and third**

**Pune, Jan 11:** Hosts Maharashtra pulled away from the rest as they took their gold tally to 32 even Delhi despite the efforts of their judokas and swimmers were left eight behind at the end of the Friday, as the Khelo India Youth Games went into the first weekend.

Maharashtra are close to the century with 32 gold, 24 silver and 35 bronze at a total of 91, while Delhi with 24 gold, 17 silver and 20 bronze are second. Lying in the third spot is Haryana with 18 gold, 20 silver and 26 bronze.

Hosts Maharashtra have been turning in a fine all-round performance as they bagged seven gold from athletics, three each from swimming and wrestling besides two each from judo and weightlifting.

Delhi had a fine day at the pool with four gold and another three from judoka, but the host state had far more and widespread firepower to get to the top.

In shooting, there was a big upset, as Telangana's Dhanush Srikant upstaged two-time Junior World Cup bronze medallist Punjab's Arjun Babuta in the men's under-21 10m air rifle final. He then sought help to communicate with eager media persons since he is hard of hearing from birth.

He was a picture of consistency through the day, topping the qualification with 629.7, his best score. He showed nerves of steel in the final where he was ahead of competition after each shot. The 16-year-old, who has been shooting for just over two years after becoming a Taekwondo Dan 2, is a product of the Project Leap that Olympic medallist Gagan Narang's Gun for Glory runs.

Even though Maharashtra and Delhi were bagging medals in the race to the top, Balakumar Nithin (Tamil Nadu) set the KIYG track alight at the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex athletics stadium with a personal best-equalling 100m dash in the boys Under-21 category. Nithin clocked 10.76 seconds, the same as when he took bronze at the All-India Inter-Universities Championship in Moodbidri and raised his right arm aloft, aware that he had sealed what seemed like an improbable win after 70m. A sluggish start saw him trailing badly but the Chennai-based 19-year-old was eventually a comfortable winner.

Four other runners dipped in under 11 seconds in what was a fast race. Karnataka's Prajwal Mandana lost the lead and earned silver, one-tenth of a second behind Nithin. The Mohammed Riaz-trained sprinter drew satisfaction from the victory.

The bustling Nisar Ahmed, who was persuaded by his coach Sunita Rai to compete here despite being in off-season training, won the Under-17 sprint in a slowish 10.96 that led a Delhi 1-2 with Anshul taking silver ahead of Andhra Pradesh's Bharat Yadav.

Karnataka's A.T. Daneshwari beat Maddali Supriya yet again for the title of the fastest girls Under-21 athlete here in 11.99 seconds, which came after her win in the National Junior Athletics Championships in Ranchi.

Delhi girl Prachi Tokas surprised favourite Khushi Dinesh of Karnataka in the girls U-17 Freestyle event, to win her second successive gold as Delhi swimmers dominated the pool. Of the 11 golds at stake on Friday Delhi won four, Karnataka and Maharashtra three each and Tamil Nadu one.

For Khushi it was a second successive silver medal after the 200m freestyle while Prachi Tokas earned her first gold in the 800m freestyle on Thursday.

After Kushi topped the heats in 4:45.18, Prachi turned the tables in the final and won in 4:37.99 despite trailing early.

In the women's U-21 400m freestyle, Tamil Nadu's Bhavika Dugar claimed her second gold in comfortable fashion clocking 4:41.43. She had won the 800m freestyle title yesterday.

Wrestling powerhouse Haryana continued their domination on the third day of the Games.

The state grapplers, who have already won 11 gold medals, added a further five along with six silver and four bronze medals. So far, Haryana lead the tally with 43 medals under their belt with 16 gold.

Their five winners were Jyoti (50kg, U-21) and Anju (53 kg, U-21) among women, while Parvinder (65 kg, U-21), Vijay (71 kg, U-21) and Deepak (92 kg, U-21) among men.

Manipur maintained their reputation in weightlifting picking two gold, but hosts Maharashtra picked as many to give them a strong competition. Between the two states, they accounted for four of the six gold on offer during the day, while Uttar Pradesh and Assam grabbed one each.

Out of the 19 gold medals so far, Maharashtra lead with six gold followed by Mizoram with three, while Orissa, Assam and Manipur have two each. Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh each have won one apiece so far.

On Friday it was Ranjit Chavan and Rupa Mahadev Hangandi who brought glory for Maharashtra in the men's 73 kg junior category and the women's 59kg junior category while L. Sadanand Singh in the men's 73kg youth and S. Bindyarani Devi from womens' 55kg juniors did the winning for Manipur.