

# Bhawana walks the walk, talks Tokyo

Daughter of a mason from Kelwa village in Rajasthan qualifies for the 2020 Olympics in 20km race walk

**NITIN SHARMA**  
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 15

BHAWANA JAT would have still been herding buffaloes if it wasn't for the support of her physical education teacher at school. A decade ago a young Bhawana was taking the family's only buffalo grazing when she bumped into the teacher and his trainees who were heading for a district championship. Bhawana took a chance and asked Hira Lal Kumawat if she could go along. He obliged immediately. Barefoot, she won the gold in the 3-kilometer race walk event to everybody's surprise. It was the start of a long, hard but fruitful journey for the girl from Kelwa village in Rajsamand, Rajasthan.

On Saturday, the daughter of a mason who couldn't afford a pair of shoes for the longest time clocked 1 hour, 29 minutes and 54 seconds in the 20km race walk, a timing well inside the Olympic qualification standard of 1:31:00, to win gold at the national championships and book a berth to the Tokyo Olympics. She also broke the national record which stood at 1:31:29. Bhawana's timings was a huge improvement on her 1:38.30s set in October last year during the National Open Championships and the challenge will be for her to maintain her form closer to the Olympics.

On the biggest day of her career, one of the first people the 23-year-old spoke to was her first coach Kumawat.

"I still remember that day when I was out in the field. The temperature was touching close to 40 degrees and I had walked more than seven kilometres in search of green pastures for the buffalo. That is when I saw Kumawat sir and his trainees heading for the district meet. Since all the spots were filled up, he told me I only had the option to participate in the 3km walk. *Chalna hi toh hai* (all I have to do is walk), I told myself back then," Bhawana said.

The family stayed in a one-room mud house in Kelwa village and to fund his daughter's athletics career Shankar Lal Jat, a mason who earns Rs 300 daily, had to take a mortgage and borrow money from a lender. Her elder brother Prakash Chander was a budding athlete but had to give up on his dreams and take up a job to make ends meet as Bhawana showed promise.

"When Bhawana told me about competing in district meets, I was only worried about how to get her shoes. We mortgaged our house so she could use the money for her training and diet needs. Today all the sacrifices have paid off. The fact that she



On Saturday, Bhawana Jat clocked 1 hour, 29 minutes and 54 seconds in the 20km race walk, a timing well inside the Olympic qualification standard of 1:31:00, to win gold at the national championships. Express

has qualified for the Olympics brings us a lot of joy," Shankar said.

Bhawana started formal coaching on the mud track in her village but things started looking up when she won a silver at the Junior National Athletics Championships at Vijaywada. When word spread about the talented girl from the village who had won a national medal, Hindustan Zinc factory located in nearby Dariba gave her Rs 4,000 for a pair of walking shoes.

Coach Kumawat is all praise for the hard work of his ward but a story from a few years ago, he says, showed how determined she could be when faced with the odds.

"During the Rajasthan Athletics Meet in 2011, she struck her foot on a stone and it started bleeding. But she completed the race without flinching. Kumawat said.

A silver at the national race walking

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championships in 2016 marked her out as special but a setback followed the next year when she suffered a knee injury.

Her current coach Gurmukh Sihag talks about the difficult period.

"She had suffered knee injury but we worked on improving her technique dur-

ing that time. Her hand movement was not correct and was hampering her timing. So I would make her watch videos of 2016 Olympics champion Liu Hong of China so that she is able to see what is the right way. We also focussed on strength training during her injury layoff," Gurmukh said.

Bhawana now hopes to improve her timings steadily and peak at the right time for the Tokyo Olympics. "Apart from working on my technique, which I still feel needs improvement, I will be aiming to improve my timing in next month's Asian Championships. My training will all be focussed towards doing my very best at Tokyo," she said.

The newest race walk star will also have to eke out time to fill forms and apply for a passport. From Kelwa village to Tokyo, it has been a tough journey but Bhawana has taken the setbacks in her stride and excelled when it mattered most.

# Free-flowing Sen the silver lining in India's semis loss

**SHIVANI NAIK**  
FEBRUARY 15

FLYING UNDER the radar and with a tailwind of carefree zero pressure, Lakshya Sen is rustling up quite a little storm. In a perfectly windless, harmless playing hall at Manila, Lakshya put Asian Games champion Jonatan Christie under the pump and got him to send his flick serve wildly wide. This was at 20-20 in the second set, having won the first, playing second singles of the Badminton Asia Team Championship semifinal against Indonesia against the World No 7. Having drawn out that error under pressure, the Indian 20-year-old proceeded to record a stunning 21-18, 22-20 win over the Indonesian, the biggest of his career.

"I was playing freely with no pressure. There was no drift, so it was easy to defend and I made no errors. I attacked and kept him away from the net. I had no tension when I got to know I'm playing him in the morning. I was just a junior, so he was under pressure," says the youngster, who kept Christie at bay the whole of the opening set, and then parried back a second set defence to pocket around 760 bonus points above his 3742 by scalping the Top 10 Indonesian.

Both Christie and Lakshya play a fast, attacking style, and the Indian was particularly sharp in defense, embracing the challenge of the longer rallies — something which he isn't overtly fond of ordinarily. Lakshya picked a clutch of low-rung titles late last year while trudging through Europe (he was based out of Denmark), but the biggest takeaway from the European sojourn might well be the patience he's developed in these longer rallies.

One, it made him independent in making decisions. But it also added the fall-back safety valve to his game which doesn't fizzle out if he can't go boom-bang in offense and is forced to dig his heels in and grit it out. Like at 19-16, Jojo Christie would bring out a pair of flick serves to level at 19-all. But Lakshya had been absorbing the pace so well, looking confident too, that the Indonesian would blink first at deuce.

Against Christie, Lakshya got going with some pretty down-the-line smashes and got himself good net openings too, to first wrest the lead. But it's been more than just his attacking bearing as he's now notched wins against Malaysian top singles player Lee Zhi Jia and the top Thai Kantaphon Wangcharoen. The key, his coach, Vimal Kumar reckons, is him finally setting into the rhythm of the pace at this level.

"Pace is a lot of things — you need to have the finishing stroke of course, but you need to retrieve attacks. When you lift back — you should know to cross or block from both flanks. He played judiciously today," Vimal says. Jojo brought out the deceptive drops in the latter stages which caught Lakshya off guard a tad. But not for long. A cross-smash after a series of straight ones would do the trick.

Lakshya struggled to close out earlier and



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LAKSHYA SEN, ON WIN OVER CHRISTIE

would notoriously spray smashes out. On Saturday he went for the lines and it was a mark of just how freely he was playing that he erred very little. While Lakshya is not heading to Barcelona's Super 300 where points are up for the taking with Chinese skipping the meet (heading to their 15-day quarantine straight for the All England) as he wasn't entered into the tournament, he made the most of the chance to play second singles for India, with HS Prannoy and Srikanth setting off in pursuit of precious ranking points.

While Vimal says Lakshya ought to look forward to All England and grab every chance, the team is not piling pressure on him to seek Olympic qualification. He needs to be in Top 16 — he's currently No 31. "Right now I'm not thinking of him qualifying realistically. But he should just play freely and that's what we're telling him — don't look at the Olympics (lest the pressure drag him down like other singles seniors).

Targets are more of putting the systems in place: learning to think independently when travelling ("he should learn to organise sessions and not get bogged down that there's no sparing or excuses of there being no coach.) He's also got his hotel gym schedules for when he's traveling and working on his strength is a continuous process."

Playing in Indonesia and Malaysia earlier, there had been doubts if Lakshya could transition to the regular seniors circuit smoothly. "Srikanth not playing opened up a good opportunity for me. Coaches kept telling me to play calmly and not hurry. I'm happy my consistency has improved in last few months and I can keep calm in crucial times," Lakshya says. Calm till he brews up yet another storm, that is.

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4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

OA No. 1050/2018  
**CORPORATION BANK** Versus Applicant  
**SH. SYED SOHAIL HAIDER & ORS.** Defendants

To, 1. Sh. Syed Sohail Haider S/o Sh. Syed Nayab Haider, 203, New Om Shanti CGHS KK Ganguly Marg, Juhu Santacruz West, Mumbai-49  
2. Ms. Nagma Ansar Sayed W/o Sh. Syed Sohail Haider 203, New Om Shanti CGHS KK Ganguly Marg, Juhu Santacruz West, Mumbai-49  
3. Sayed Siraz Haider Zaidi S/o Sh. Nayab Haider Zaidi H. No. 68, 1st Floor, S-Block, Noida, UP  
4. Amrapali Dream Valley Pvt. Ltd. (Builder & Developer) Through its Directors 307, 3rd Floor, Nipun Towers Plot No. 15, Community Centre Karkardooma, Delhi-92 Also At : C-56/40, Sector-62, Noida, UP Also At : GH-05, Sector-Tech Zone-IV, Greater Noida, UP Also At : 83, AGCR Enclave Delhi-110092 Also At : A-905, Amrapali Green Indirapuram, Ghaziabad-201010

Whereas the above named applicant(s) has/have instituted a case for recovery of Rs.15,07,510/- (RUPEES FIFTEEN LAKH SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND TEN ONLY) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Ld. Registrar on 01.06.2020 At 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Ld. Registrar on this 03rd February of 2020

By order of this Tribunal  
For Registrar

**Partner Nation Uzbekistan**

**Uzbekistan**

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**SHRI SATYADEO NARAIN ARYA**  
Hon'ble Governor, Haryana

**Guests of Honour**  
**SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA**  
Hon'ble Governor, Himachal Pradesh

**H.E. MR. FARHOD ARZIEV**  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Uzbekistan Embassy

**SHRI KANWAR PAL**  
Tourism Minister, Haryana  
will preside over the closing ceremony

**DATE: SUNDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 2020** TIME: 2:00 PM  
**VENUE: SURAJKUND, FARIDABAD, HARYANA**

**Mela Timings : 10:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.**

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