

India claims three more bronze

Aditya, Ashu and Hardeep among the medal winners

ASIAN WRESTLING

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

Having won his first two bouts comfortably, Aditya Kundu was favourite to become India's second Greco-Roman finalist at the senior Asian wrestling championship here on Wednesday. That did not happen but a semifinal setback was not enough to keep him away from the podium, adding to the host's medal tally with a bronze in the 72kg.

The 23-year old civil inspector from Chandigarh finished off his Japanese opponent Nao Kusaka in double-quick time, wrapping up an 8-0 win by technical superiority in under two minutes.

"Winning a medal in this manner in my first Asian Championship feels great. It adds to the confidence level," Kundu told *The Hindu*.

Shift in style

Like most Indian wrestlers, Kundu is a late convert to Greco-Roman but unlike others who make the shift due to their inability to break through in Freestyle, Kundu's was more out of compulsion.

"I have golds and bronze at the University Games in Freestyle but a knee injury around a few years back meant I was unable to put too much strength in my legs and decided to shift to Greco-Roman. A gold at the Commonwealth Championship in 2017 convinced me I could do well and today's win proves it was the right move," he added.

"My plan was to tire out my opponent and then attack him with my technique. I kept moving and holding him away and then went for



In control: Ashu overpowered Syria's Abdulkarim Mohammad Alhasan to give the local fans a lot to cheer about on Wednesday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

the points, my plan worked perfectly," he said.

Trained by his father Ranbir Singh at Gulzar Akhada in Zirakpur, Kundu is now hoping to drop down to 67kg and get a chance at the Olympic qualifiers – 72kg is not an Olympic category. For that, however, he would have to contend with another youngster who won a 67kg bronze here – Ashu.

Confidence pays off

At 19 and in his first senior tournament, Ashu bettered Syrian Abdulkarim Mohammad Alhasan 8-1. The native of Panchi Jatan village in So-

nipat was confident of winning, having learnt from his semifinal defeat.

"I was in too much hurry in the previous bout. This time I knew I had to defend myself well. Wrestlers at the senior level are more intelligent and you have to plan accordingly. It's been a learning experience," he added.

Hardeep completed the host's medal tally for the second day with bronze in the 97kg as India finished the Greco-Roman competition with four bronze and one gold to be placed fifth on the table. Iran topped with five gold, one silver and three

bronze.

The results (Greco-Roman): 60kg: 1. Kenichiro Fumita (Jpn), 2. Zholaman Sharshenbekov (Kgz), 3. Islomjon Bakhramov (Uzb) & Mehdi Seifollah Mohsen Nejad (Iri).

67kg: 1. Hansu Ryu (Kor), 2. Makhmud Bakhshilloev (Uzb), 3. Ashu (Ind) & Hosseini Nasrollah Assadi Kolmati (Iri).

72kg: 1. Amin Yavar Kaviyaninejad (Iri), 2. Ibragim Magomadov (Kaz), 3. Aditya Kundu (Ind) & Ruslan Tsarev (Kgz).

82kg: 1. Mahdi Asgar Ebrahimi (Iri), 2. Junhyeong Choi (Kor), 3. Jalgasbay Berdimuratov (Uzb).

97kg: 1. Mohammadhadi Abdollah Saravi (Iri), 2. Seyeol Lee (Kor), 3. Muhammadali Shamsiddinov (Uzb) & Hardeep (Ind).

Bengaluru FC loses to Maziya S&RC

AFC CUP

SPORTS BUREAU
MALE (MALDIVES)

Bengaluru FC suffered a 2-1 defeat away to Maziya S&RC in the first leg of the AFC Cup playoff round at the Maldives National Football Stadium here on Wednesday.

Cornelius Stewart scored with ten minutes left to give Maziya the advantage ahead of the return leg in Bengaluru next Wednesday.

After a goalless first period, Ibrahim Mahudhee opened the scoring for Mazi-

ya just after the hour mark, firing home from distance.

Substitute Deshorn Brown earned a penalty for BFC minutes later which Nili Perdomo converted to even matters.

But Stewart's strike meant that BFC had to be satisfied with just the away goal.

The club will play ATK in the ISL on Saturday before Maziya come calling for the second leg.

The result: Maziya S&RC 2 (Ibrahim Mahudhee 64, Cornelius Stewart 80) bt Bengaluru FC 1 (Nili Perdomo 71).

Amandeep Drall in the van

GOLF

SPORTS REPORTER
BENGALURU

Amandeep Drall, with three birdies in the last eight holes, secured the lead at the end of the first day of the fourth leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour at the Bangalore Golf Club here on Wednesday.

Two-over after the first eight holes, Amandeep found birdies on 11th, 15th and the 16th to finish at one-under 69. It was the only under-par score of the day.

Vani Kapoor was two-un-

der through the first eight holes but dropped shots on ninth, 11th and 16th to finish at 71, two shots behind the leader.

Local amateur Asmitha Sathish had no birdies but dropped shots on second, fourth and 16th for a card of 73. Neha Tripathi (74) is fourth while Gursimar Badwal and Anousha Tripathi occupied the fifth spot together. Pranavi Urs, winner of last two events on the Hero WPGT, had a rough start with one birdie on the third and then had eight bogeys in the remaining 15 holes.

Football — India to host 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup

Championship to be expanded from eight to 12 teams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KUALA LUMPUR

India will host the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup. India was awarded the tournament by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC)'s Women's Committee here on Tuesday.

It was felt that India, which will also host the FIFA Women's U-17 World Cup later this year, was best placed among the three bidders – Chinese Taipei and Uzbekistan were the other competing candidates – to maximise the promotion of the women's game.

The venues proposed by

India – D.Y. Patil Stadium, Trans Stadia Arena and Fardard Stadium – are also being used in the FIFA tournaments, the AFC said.

Best opportunities

AFC's Women's Committee chairperson Mahfuza Akhter Kiron said: "India offers the best opportunities to build the event commercially as well as increasing the value and India is also committed to developing the women's game and while all three were strong bids, India stands out."

The committee decided that the expanded AFC Wo-

men's Asian Cup – from eight to 12 teams – will be played in three groups of four teams with a minimum of 25 matches with eight teams qualifying for the newly introduced quarterfinals.

The committee agreed that the minimum length of the competition would be 17 days and that the administration would be mandated to organise the relevant play-off matches depending on the AFC slots at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.

The tournament dates are likely to be in late October and early November 2022.

Keshavan to promote winter sports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Shiva Keshavan, the first Indian representative to compete in luge at the Winter Olympics, is aiming to build an academy to nurture talented youngsters and is in talks with a couple of State governments.

"My idea is to have a residential complex with all the multi-sports facilities and since (it will be) in the mountains, we will have access to the ski area, ice hockey," Keshavan told reporters here. "It can be built over time. So, I'm speaking to a couple of State governments to give land or get some sponsors."

The sport is getting bigger: Catherine

Says the Women's T20 World Cup will be a game changer

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

As a coach with the Ultimate Pace Foundation, Catherine Dalton has made quite a few trips to India, holding camps at Bangalore, Pune, Hyderabad and Delhi. One of the few bio-mechanics expert to be associated with fast bowlers, she expects the forthcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup to be the game changer for women's cricket.

"There is high expectations as far as quality is concerned. The buzz can be felt worldwide," she told *The Hindu* from London. "It's going up. The game is getting bigger. With the World Cup coming up we are going to see some fantastic cricket. It's exciting time for women's cricket. There is place for women's cricket which has increasingly become competitive."

Catherine has had very pleasant experience of coaching in India. "I have never experienced any resistance as a woman coach. When I went to India I wasn't sure how I would be received by the players. The players warmed to me very quickly



Guiding force: Catherine Dalton says working with Deepak Chahar has helped both of them. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

because they could see they could learn something from me. I was fortunate to have a good understanding of the game, particularly of the bio-mechanics of the fast bowling."

Like many in India, Catherine also picked up the game watching her father and brothers play. "When I was younger I used to be taken to our local cricket club where my brother played lots of cricket. I decided to join and fell in love with the game. I was nine years old at that time. I just got hooked to cricket. I also played tennis and a huge amount of football. I just wanted to bowl

fast because I wanted to do things quickly," said Catherine, who also played football for West Ham Club.

"When I was 17, at a cricket camp, I decided to give cricket a full go. That was the turning point I switched from football to cricket."

The biggest highlight for Catherine was working with Deepak Chahar when she was invited by the Rajasthan Cricket Association a few years ago to do a specific fast bowling camp. "I learnt a lot from him and hopefully passed on some of my knowledge to him as well," said Catherine, named Middlesex Player Of The Year in 2013.