

IN BRIEF

**Gujrathi draws with Hari, stays in lead**

**PRAGUE**  
Vidit Gujrathi played out a draw with compatriot P. Harikrishna in the seventh round of the Prague Chess Festival's Masters category here to maintain a one-point lead over the field. With five points, he is ahead of Russian Nikita Vitiugov and Alireza Firouzja.

**The results (seventh round):** P. Harikrishna 3 drew with Vidit Gujrathi 5; David Anton Guijarro (Esp) 3.5 drew with Markus Ragger (Aut) 3; Nikita Vitiugov (Rus) 3 drew with David Navara (Cze) 3; Alirez Firouzja (Iri) 4 bt Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol); Sam Shankland (USA) 3.5 bt Nils Grandelius (Swe) 2.5. **PTI**

**HFC wallops NEUFC**

**GUWAHATI**  
Hyderabad FC brought its ISL season to a conclusion with a thumping 5-1 win against NorthEast United FC here on Thursday.  
**The result:** NEUFC 1 (Andrew Keogh 35) lost to Hyderabad FC 5 (Liston Colaclo 12, 41, Marcelinho 13, 88, Mohammed Yasir 55).

**City sees off West Ham**

**MANCHESTER**  
Manchester City posted a 2-0 win over West Ham in the Premier League on Wednesday.  
**The result:** Manchester City 2 (Rodri 30, De Bruyne 62) bt West Ham 0.

**Amandeep stays on top**

**BENGALURU**  
Amandeep Drall remained in the lead after another steady round of golf on the second day of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour (Leg 4). Amandeep shot 1-over 71 at the BGC here on Thursday to sign for a two-day total of 140 and lead Vani Kapoor by two strokes. Oviya Reddi climbed from tied eighth overnight to tied third after shooting the day's best round of 68.  
**Top scores: 140:** Amandeep Drall (69, 71); **142:** Vani Kapoor (71, 71); **145:** Oviya Reddi (77, 68), Asmitha Sathish (A) (73, 72); **147:** Neha Tripathi (74, 73); **148:** Khushi Khanijau (77, 71).

# Indian women pin three gold medals in freestyle

Divya, Pinki and Sarita triumph while Nirmala comes off second-best

**ASIAN WRESTLING**

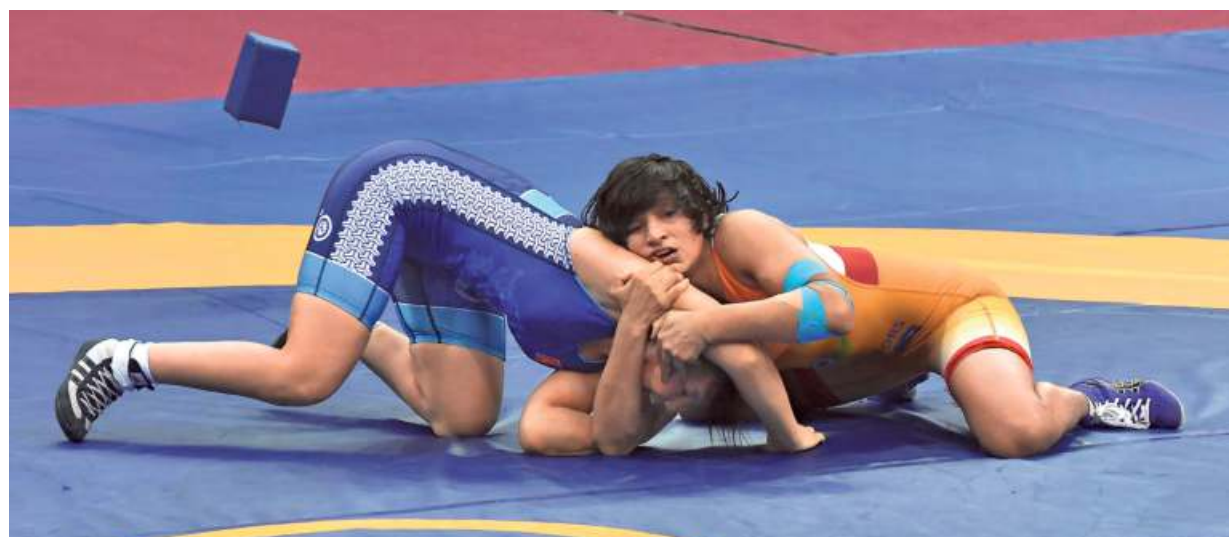
**UTHRA GANESAN  
NEW DELHI**

The absence of Chinese and North Korean wrestlers was expected to impact the quality of the women's section at the senior Asian Championships and India was the biggest beneficiary, winning three gold medals and a silver on Thursday.

With Japan also sending a largely second-string squad – barring former World champion Mayu Mukaida – the Indians were favourites for medals. Barring the 50kg, the other four weight categories in action on the day had seven or fewer competitors, forcing the organisers to conduct bouts in Nordic (round-robin) format.

**Emphatic wins**

Asian Games bronze medalist Divya Kakran was the first to ensure a gold in the 68kg, winning all four of her bouts in the morning session by



**Taking advantage:** Pinki cashed in on Dulguun Bolormaa's passivity to emerge on top. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

pinning her opponents.

"I had to win by fall to get five points from all my bouts because the Japanese was winning all her bouts by big margins, so I took the risk even though my coach told me I didn't have to."

She admitted the absence of China made a difference.

"Yes, it did benefit but if you have just five wrestlers, it becomes tough because you have to fight everyone and win big," she added.

In the evening session, Pinki (55kg) and Sarita (59kg) added to the gold tally but not before being pushed by their Mongolian opponents.

While Pinki won 2-1 in a largely defensive bout that saw all three points being scored through the opponent's passivity, Sarita had to dig deep in the final 15 seconds for a 3-2 victory.

"I already had a slight elbow injury and it got aggravated a bit in the morning so

I wanted to be cautious. Also, I am simply happy to win my first medal, that too gold, in the competition," Pinki said.

On her part, Sarita said she was confident even when Battsetseg Altantsetseg took a crucial point with 21 seconds left to level 2-2, lifting her out for the winner.

Nirmala Devi won silver after going down 2-3 to Japan's Miho Igarashi in the 50kg. "I tried my best but she was very strong and also had very good defence. I need to work on my leg defence a lot more now after of the Olympic qualifiers," she admitted.

Kiran was the only disappointment for the host on the day, crashing out of the medal rounds in the 76kg after losing two of her three bouts in the morning.

**The results: 50kg:** 1. Miho Igarashi (Jpn), 2. Nirmala Devi (Ind), 3. Valentina Ivanova Islamova (Kaz) & Dauletbike Yakhshimuratova (Uzb).

**55kg:** 1. Pinki (Ind), 2. Dulguun Bolormaa (Mgl), 3. Marina Zuyeva (Kaz); **59kg:** 1. Sarita (Ind), 2. Battsetseg Altantsetseg (Mgl), 3. Madina Bakbergenova (Kaz); **68kg:** 1. Divya Kakran (Ind), 2. Naruha Matsuyuki (Jpn), 3. Delgermaa Enkhsaikhan (Mgl); **76kg:** 1. Hiroe Minagawa Suzuki (Jpn), 2. Aiperi Medet Kyzy (Kgz), 3. Elmira Syzdykova (Kaz).

## Good day for Sharath Kamal

**HUNGARIAN OPEN**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BUDAPEST**

India's A. Sharath Kamal entered the quarterfinals of both men's doubles and mixed doubles at the ITTF World Tour Hungarian Open on Thursday.

Sharath partnered Manika Batra to a marathon 11-8, 9-11, 6-11, 11-9, 11-7 victory over home hope Adam Szudi and Szandra Pergel.

Later, Sharath paired up with G. Sathiyam to register yet another hard-fought 11-6, 11-8, 8-11, 9-11, 11-9 win over Japan's rising stars Shunsuke Togami and Yukiya Uda in men's doubles.

**The results:** **Pre-quarterfinals: Men: Doubles:** A. Sharath Kamal & G. Sathiyam bt Shunsuke Togami & Yukiya Uda (Jpn) 11-6, 11-8, 8-11, 9-11, 11-9; Hang Siu Lam & Nam Pak Ng (HK) bt Harmeet Desai & Manav Thakkar 13-11, 11-8, 11-13, 6-11, 11-2.

**Mixed Doubles:** Sharath & Manika Batra bt Adam Szudi & Szandra Pergel (Hun) 11-8, 9-11, 6-11, 11-9, 11-7.

## Leipzig beats Tottenham

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON**

Tottenham needs another Champions League escape act to reach the quarterfinals after Timo Werner's penalty earned RB Leipzig a deserved 1-0 last 16, first leg win in London.

Spurs captain Hugo Lloris kept his side in the tie with a string of important saves, but last season's finalist faces a huge task to turn the tie around in Germany on March 10.

**The results:** Atalanta 4 (Hateboer 16, 62, Ilicic 42, Freuler 57) bt Valencia 1 (Cheryshev 66); Tottenham Hotspur 0 lost to RB Leipzig 1 (Werner 58-pen).

## Chawrasia, Lahiri among strong home-grown golfers for India Open

**RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI**

Some established names and rising stars will join the European Tour regulars when the 56th edition of \$1.75 million Hero Indian Open tees off at the DLF Golf and Country Club at Gurugram on March 19.

Almost all the leading Indian names and a couple of past champions like S.S.P. Chawrasia (2016 and 2017), Anirban Lahiri (2015), Jyoti Randhawa (2000, 2006 and 2007) along with Shubhankar Sharma, Shiv Kapur, Gaganjeet Bhullar, Rashid Khan, Udayan Mane and others will be part of the field that has some tough overseas challengers.

Though the final list of entries is yet to be finalised, defending champion Stephen Gallacher (Scotland), Andy Sullivan (England), Joost Luiten (Netherlands), Thomas Bjorn (Denmark), Yuta Ikeda (Japan) besides some young talents like Justin Sub (US), Akshay Bhatia (US), Nicolai Hojgaard (Denmark) and Mathew Jordan (Great Britain) are part of the field.

The winner of the event receives \$291,660 (approximately ₹2.08 crore) while the 70th finisher takes home \$3,200 (₹2.29 lakh).

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Kapur said, "I've marked three or four weeks to peak this season. Indian Open week is among them. I'm

playing three weeks leading up to it – New Zealand next week, then Malaysia and Thailand – working my way back, planned it in such a way that travelling gets reduced. Playing in Dubai has helped me prepare for challenges that courses like the DLF sort of presents – with sloppy, fast greens."

Mane, winner of three successive titles on the domestic PGTI Tour recently, could well follow Rashid Khan to the Tokyo Olympics this year. He said, "Indian golfers do not have any great 'home advantage' of playing at the DLF course. It is a modern course and many players in both continents have adjusted to the chal-

lenges such courses offer. We do have the crowd backing us. But over all, it is a fair test for everyone.

"I am looking to make my game better. I am just looking to improve and sharpen my sword for, when ever the day comes of me winning, that's the ultimate goal of learning more about my swing, my game, polish and re-polish my skills. I am going to come three days before Indian Open and get myself as acclimatised to the weather and the golf course."

Shubhankar said, "I've had a few good results recently but I really want to do well here. DLF was once my home course and it will be great to do well there."



**The prize:** Shubhankar Sharma, Udayan Mane and Shiv Kapur pose with the Hero Indian Open trophy on Thursday. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

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