



Storming back: Sambo Lapung broke the clean and jerk record of 187kg in his final attempt to aggregate 333kg. • RAJEEV BHATT

A new record — and gold — for Lapung

Rakhi Halder clinches women's 64kg crown

NATL. WEIGHTLIFTING

Y.B. SARANGI KOLKATA

Services lifter Sambo Lapung scripted a new National record of 188kg in clean and jerk on his way to the gold medal in the men's 89kg in the National weightlifting championships at the Khudiram Anusilan Kendra here on Wednesday.

Lapung, who had secured the silver medal in 81kg last year, hoisted 145kg to take a one kg lead over R.V. Rahul in snatch. Later, he broke the clean and jerk record of 187kg in his final attempt to aggregate 333kg.

Hailing from Arunachal Pradesh, Lapung — a former National champion in 69kg — won a National title after four years. "I switched to 89kg immediately after the last Nationals. I was getting injured for lowering my body weight too much. Am

happy to create a new record," said Lapung.

Railways' Rahul was second with 323kg, while Ram Karan Prajapati — another Services lifter representing Uttarakhand — got the third place with 314kg.

Below-par show

Despite her below-par performance, local girl Rakhi Halder won the women's 64kg crown with 210kg.

Rakhi's effort earned her a comfortable victory as her nearest competitor Harjinder Kaur registered 200kg.

However, the total of 210kg was below her best showing of 218kg, including 95kg in snatch and 123kg in clean and jerk, in the Qatar Cup Olympic qualifying event in December.

The 26-year-old, who lifted 93kg in her final snatch attempt, managed 117kg in her first clean and jerk effort. Gritting her teeth, she

tried to raise the bar in her next two attempts — including her bid to do 125kg in the last — but did not get the desired result.

"My sore left thigh prevented a smooth action. I will try to improve and qualify for the Olympics," said Rakhi, who had totalled 214kg in the World championships in Pattaya in September last.

The results: Men, 81kg: 1. Papul Changmai (SSCB) snatch 145kg, clean and jerk 172kg, total 317kg; 2. Amarjit Guru (RSPB) 137kg, 172kg, 309kg; 3. U. Sivaprakash (Pud) 136kg, 171kg, 307kg. **89kg:** 1. Sambo Lapung (SSCB) 145kg, 188kg [NR, Old 187kg, Harshad Wadekar], 333kg; 2. R.V. Rahul (RSPB) 144kg, 179kg, 323kg; 3. Ram Karan Prajapati (Ukd) 138kg, 176kg, 314kg.

Women, 64kg: 1. Rakhi Halder (WB) 93kg, 117kg, 210kg; 2. Harjinder Kaur (Chd) 90kg, 110kg, 200kg; 3. K. Roshilata Devi (Mani) 80kg, 107kg, 187kg.

Chinese for Asian meet: nod awaited

WRESTLING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Even as the world grapples with the Coronavirus and its spread, the Wrestling Federation of India is confident of the government agreeing to allow the Chinese delegation for the upcoming Asian Championships here.

India has stopped e-visa facility for Chinese visitors and there are doubts on their participation due to health concerns since wrestling is a contact sport with a high possibility of infection. "Chinese officials have claimed that the 40-member delegation has been tested and quarantined, and cleared of any infection. Even if they do come, they will have to follow the due process of being tested on arrival," WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh said here on Wednesday.

He added that the federation had already written to the MEA and was confident of getting a positive response for both the Chinese and Pakistan delegations. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, however, said a final call would be taken by the MEA in consultation with the Health Ministry. "We cannot take any risk, especially in an Olympic year. It is an extraordinary situation and we will act accordingly," Rijiju said.

The Asian Championships will be held from February 18-23.

Asked about Sushil Kumar's chances of making it to Tokyo 2020, Brij Bhushan insisted that the federation would not allow a repeat of the 2016 fiasco and controversies that saw India go unrepresented in the 74kg category at Rio.

Jeremy looks to give his best in Asian championships

'I am trying to improve two to five kg in every event'

Y.B. SARANGI KOLKATA

For Youth Olympics gold medalist weightlifter Jeremy Lalrinnunga, winning his maiden National title was an emotional moment. The 18-year-old quickly put on the traditional Mizoram attire, a black and white checked half-sleeved shirt and a matching bandana, for the medal ceremony.

It was a proud moment for Jeremy as he received the 67kg gold from his father Lalnnahehtlua, a National level medal-winning boxer of the 1990s.

"My father had never seen me doing weightlifting in a competition," said Jeremy.

Jeremy, third among Lalnnahehtlua's five sons, takes pride in his sport and his father's sport.

Two tattoos, depicting a lifter and a boxer with dates — July 7, 1988 (when his father began boxing) and No-



Jeremy. • RAJEEV BHATT

vember 11, 2011 (when he touched the barbell) — written in Roman numerals, adorn his left forearm.

Belief in hard work

His father underlines his family's strong belief in hard work and God. "I tell Jeremy, 'give your best, God is up there,'" said Lalnnahehtlua.

With the Olympics around the corner, expectation has

I never thought I would be part of Olympic qualifiers. The improvements have been rapid.

JEREMY LALRINNINGA

taken shape. After winning the Youth Olympics gold in Buenos Aires in October 2018, Jeremy, who increased his body weight a year ago, has successfully graduated from junior to elite level by taking part in some top events.

As he looks forward to give his best in the upcoming Asian championships, an Olympic qualifying event, Jeremy knows where he stands in terms of performance in the world level.

"I am trying to improve two to five kg in every event. The target for April is to improve 10kg each in snatch and clean and jerk. That will help me qualify for Olympics."

In the World championships in Pattaya in September last, Jeremy lifted a total of 296kg to finish 21st.

Here, he lifted a total of 299kg, including the National record of 167kg in clean and jerk.

"My target is to do 320kg in the Asian championship."

Listening to music

The Aizawl boy does not feel pressure though. Whenever he feels low, he reads the Bible or listens to Ed Sheeran and Justin Bieber.

National coach Vijay Sharma says Jeremy should use Tokyo to get a hang of the Olympics before approaching the 2024 Games as a full-grown experienced man.

"I never thought I would be part of Olympic qualifiers. The improvements have been rapid. My aim is not just to qualify for (Tokyo) Olympics, but to try for a medal," Jeremy signed off.

Every person is an ambassador for India: Rijiju

Sports Minister backs Khelo University Games to unearth more talent

GENERAL

VIJAY LOKAPALLY NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) may have invited the former captain of the Indian cricket team — Sourav Ganguly — to be the Goodwill Ambassador of the Indian contingent at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics but Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju counts every person representing India in the same role.

"For me, every Indian has to be an ambassador for the Olympics because it is a platform which determines which country stands where in sports," he said here on Wednesday. "I'm not looking for one or two person. IOA is an independent body but as

a government I look forward to every Indian as an ambassador."

Speaking on various issues, the Union Sports Minister reassured the sports fraternity there was no slashing of funds.

"If there are shortage of funds for the federations, these can always be taken up, that is why there is a provision for revision. If they need more money, they will get more money," Rijiju said.

He insisted, "You are looking from a different angle. Whatever we got in the last budget allocation, we had a jump of more than 50%. What you are comparing from the Revised Estimate (RE), if you see the original allocation in last budget, it is a historical jump. You have to see from the actual stand-



Union Sports Minister Rijiju. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

point, then you will get the complete picture."

The Sports Minister also spoke on the inaugural Khelo India University Games, featuring 177 institutes and 3340 athletes, to be held at the KIIT University Campus in Bhubaneswar from February 22 to March 1.

"I am excited to see the huge shift in the way we organise sporting events in In-

If there are shortage of funds for the federations, these can always be taken up, that is why there is a provision for revision. If they need more money, they will get more money

dia. Now we are going to have Khelo India University Games. It would happen in a mega scale, it would not be like what we used to see, where each university used to host one discipline.

"World wide the standard of University Games is high, most of the stars of the Olympics come from here. Because the age bar is higher than Youth games, the standard will be higher and we will definitely see many champions from this."

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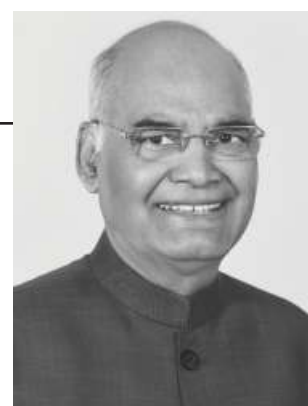
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