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ROWING INDIA

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Rowing friends and colleagues,

The year commenced with the Khelo India University games at Gorakhpur. The Games marked the entry of rowing at a freshly minted rowing venue. The efforts of Mr Sudhir Sharma – Director of the competition speak volumes of the bold strides that the RFI fraternity has taken towards showing tangible outcomes.

This was followed by the Indoor Nationals at Pune, the Sub Junior and Interstate Championship at Hyderabad and the Junior Championship at Chandigarh. Congratulations to all office bearers in these states for ensuring the seamless conduct of these Nationals.

The Senior Nationals, a blue riband event of RFI, that we witnessed at ARN Pune, marked a fitting tribute to a stellar calendar year for the Rowing Federation of India.

As the nationals unveiled new talent and aspirations, the senior Indian team put months of hard work into practice as they competed with the world's best at the World Cups held in Zagreb, Croatia, and Lucerne, Switzerland. However, the showpiece event was the Asian Games held in Hangzhou, China in Sept 2023. What followed was another spectacular display of oarsmanship at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou.

This wonderful feat at the Asian Games was followed by a path-breaking performance at the Para Asian Games where our para team covered themselves in glory winning a Silver medal, the first Para medal, in Rowing.

I congratulate the Rowing team for winning precious medals which included 2 Silver and 3 Bronze at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China and one Silver in the para mixed event.



Let us put our hands together and applaud the stars, namely Olympian Arvind Singh, Olympian Arjun Lal Jat, Punit Kumar, Bheem Singh, Jaswinder Singh, Neeraj, Charanjit Singh, Naresh Kalwaniya, Nitish Kumar, Ashish, D.U Pandey, Lekh Ram, Babu Lal Yadav, Jakar Khan, Sukhmeet Singh, Parminder Singh, Satnam Singh, Para Rowers Anita and Narayanaa.

Balraj deserves a special mention who narrowly missed the bronze, but fought a race that was appreciated for sheer grit and perseverance.

The Asian Games were followed by the arduous task of setting up a rowing venue on the Chapora River of Goa for the National Games. Unmoved by the high achievements in the Asian Games, National coach Ismail Baig and his team from the army, navy, police and civilians worked tirelessly to set up the course on virgin territory where forested land and a flowing river beside it, was transformed into one of the most picturesque rowing course in the country. However, the grand finale was when the Govt of Goa partnered with RFI to launch the much-needed coastal rowing events which have been introduced as an

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Olympic event for Los Angeles, in 2028.

The Goa Games will be remembered by the participants and the organisers for the surreal experience of competing amidst the undisturbed and verdant beauty of the west coast of India.

The expansion of rowing venues has taken us into the uncharted and pristine settings of incredible India. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, our young and aspirational rowers can now boast of superb facilities and cherishable experiences of rowing in unforgettable venues.

Today, I convey my message to you for the last time as the President of the Rowing Federation of India as my 12-year-long tenure as the President and over two decades-long association with the sport draws to an end.

This isn't a goodbye, but a change that is the necessity of time and ethical protocol.

Before I conclude, I would like to share with you my own reflections on what has been a rewarding tenure at the helm of the Rowing Federation.

Behind every sportsman who dreams for national glory, there exists a President, who spends sleepless nights for those dreams to take wing.

Some dreams did take wings when Bajrang Lal rowed to a Gold in the Asiad in 2010, along with the Indian women's team bagging their first-ever medal at the same games. The memorable gold at Palembang at Asian Games 2018 and the glory at Hangzhou 2023.

We continue to compete hard at the World Cups and the Olympics. We welcome the addition of para-athletes into rowing and keep up the resolve to stay on top of the table in the Asian rowing circuit.

These are not just medals and accolades but a result of years of tireless sacrifices by the Rowing fraternity.

I have been fortunate to lead this fascinating sport through difficult challenges. I have been witnessing the daily toil of our rowers and the sacrifices of our coaches. It has inspired me to wage a lone battle against the many odds that have at times questioned our credibility and our sincerity towards our mission. On most times we have prevailed.

Podium finishes in distant lands are followed by the echo of our beloved national anthem. Tears of joy, and happiness and contentment at the sight of our tricolour make our hearts swell with pride.

What about defeat and failure?

We, at the Rowing Federation, are neither immune to defeat nor believe in the permanence of victory. We believe in the process, to stay humble, to dream big and to enjoy the highs and help one another when the chips are down.

As a collective, we are one who have shared passion for the sport. I am therefore in no doubt that this moment of transition is the dawn of a new and exciting beginning for rowing in India.

I was lucky to have many fellow travellers on this journey, some were mentors, some colleagues, some opponents and many well-wishers. Before I bid farewell to a significant part of my life, my rowing family, a few people in this vast household deserve a special mention.

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My mentor Col CP Singh helped me achieve the impossible, succeed where others would fail, and inspire me with his constant encouragement and unwavering devotion to the sport of rowing.

My very patient and tolerant Secretary General Mr MV Sriram put up with my very demanding work schedule and met all targets in time. I wish him the very best as he finishes his tenure as Secretary General.

My colleagues in the EC, Nababuddin, Col Rajpal, Mr Bhaskar, Souvik, KK, Chiranjit, Jasbir, Jacob, Manjunatha, Subhashis, Sudhir Ji, Ashok Mehta, thanks for your positive support.

I would like to remember and acknowledge the important rowers to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. We share a fraternal bond that has been fostered over many rowing careers, years of camaraderie and so many memories. Today, many of you have turned into coaches, umpires, and technical officials. You are the pillars of this fantastic sport who continue to inspire the next generation of rowers.

Your faith in my leadership and your relentless dedication to the rowing course is a trophy I will always carry with me.

I remember with pride, Olympians Manjeet Singh, Devinder Khandelwal, Sandeep, and the outstanding scullers Bajrang, Sawarn Singh, Dattu. Also the Arjuna Awardees Saji Thomas, Jenil Krishnan, Satish Joshi, to name a few. My prayers and praise for the Late Dharmesh who served his time as an oarsman and soldier with supreme distinction.

Senior Jury members Mr Naren Kothari, Mr Heblekar and Mrs Smita Shirole.

The backbone of the federation, the capable coaches – Dronacharya Ismail Baig and Jose, Arjuna Awardees Dalvir Singh and Inderpal Singh. Ratheesh, Bhaskar Reddy, Rajesh Yadav, Gurdarshan, Para coach Mohd Azad, Karambir, Bijender Singh, Mujeeb Rahman, Lakshmi, who excelled as players first and coaches later.

The hardworking Technical Officials Vinod Krishna and Babu John.

Farewell to all of you dear friends. My best wishes to the Rowing fraternity and especially the young rowers who are the torchbearers of a rich sporting legacy. As we witness changes at the helm, I am only assured that the Rowing family will continue to keep those dreams kindled and ready to take flight.

Rajlaxmi Singh Deo

Vice President, Indian Olympic Association (IOA)
President, Rowing Federation of India



PRIME MINISTER FELICITATES ROWERS OF THE ASIAN PARA GAMES 2023

The Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, interacted with and addressed India's Asian Para Games contingent at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi on November 1. The programme was an endeavour by the Prime Minister to congratulate the athletes for their outstanding achievement at the Asian Para Games 2022 and to motivate them for future competitions.



Addressing the para-athletes, the Prime Minister said that he always looks forward to meeting them and sharing their experiences. "You bring along new hopes and renewed enthusiasm whenever you come here," the Prime Minister said. He emphasised that he was here only for one thing, and that is to congratulate the para-athletes on their successes. He underlined that he was not only following the developments at the Para Asian Games very closely but also living through it. He lauded their contributions and also congratulated their coaches and their families. The PM expressed gratitude on behalf of 140 crore citizens of the country.



Union Minister for Youth and Sports Affairs, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur; President of Paralympics Committee of India, Smt. Deepa Malik; Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, Shri Arjun Munda; and Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports, Shri Nisith Pramanik were present on the occasion.

Our rowers, Anita and Narayana Konganapalle, won silver in the PR3 Mixed Doubles Sculls Category at the Para Asian Games.



CLEAN WATER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AT HUSSAIN SAGAR ROWING CAMP

In a significant initiative to promote clean water awareness, Mr. Ken Lee, an esteemed International Rowing Umpire renowned for conducting canal rowing events in over 100 cities worldwide, landed in Hyderabad. Hailing from Yangzhou, China, Mr. Lee orchestrated a unique Clean Water Awareness Campaign at the Hussain Sagar Rowing Camp.

The campaign, held in collaboration with the Indian rowing team members and staff, was aimed at raising awareness about the importance of clean water and environmental conservation. Mr. Lee, with his extensive experience in global rowing events, brought a wealth of knowledge to the event, emphasizing the need for water preservation.

The Hussain Sagar Rowing Camp served as the backdrop for this momentous occasion, as rowing enthusiasts and environmentalists alike gathered to participate in the campaign. The event featured interactive sessions, workshops, and demonstrations led by Mr. Lee, providing valuable insights into sustainable water practices.

Mr. Ken Lee, known for his passion for promoting environmental causes, expressed his delight at being part of such an impactful initiative in Hyderabad. He underscored the urgency of addressing water-related challenges and the role of sports communities in fostering environmental responsibility.



UMPIRE SEMINAR AND EXAMS 2024

The Telangana Water Sports Academy at Hussain Sagar Lake in Hyderabad hosted the National Rowing Umpire Seminar and Examination 2024 between February 8th and 10th, 2024. The program was inaugurated with a speech by RFI President Rajlaxmi Singh Deo, followed by sessions on Revisions of Rules and the status of RFI. A Q&A session was also hosted, followed by a written test and practicals.

Twelve umpires, including Vinod Krishnan from Kerala, Kudrat Ali (SSCB), Vikram Singh (SSCB), Mohd Azad (Uttar Pradesh), Tejash Shinde (Maharashtra), Lokesh Kumar (Uttar Pradesh), Azhar Hussain (West Bengal), Paul Jeb Rover (Tamil Nadu), Sayali Tejas Shinde (Maharashtra), Jegan S (Karnataka), Pooja (Haryana), and Y. Kiran (Telangana), successfully completed the RFI Umpire Exam 2024. These accomplished individuals are now qualified to officiate national-level rowing events throughout the country.

RFI President Rajlaxmi Singh Deo, former President Col CP Singh, and India's national rowing coach Ismail Baig extended their congratulations to the successful candidates during a felicitation ceremony.



INDIAN ROWERS WIN SILVER AT ASIAN PARA GAMES, HANGZHOU

Indian rowers Anita and Narayana Konganapalle bagged a silver medal in PR3 Mixed Doubles Sculls in the ongoing 4th Asian Para Games.

Thirty-four-year-old Narayana hails from Peapully village in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. He won two gold medals, in the 2022 Senior National Championships and the 2023 Senior National Championships, respectively. He also won two gold medals in the 2022 Open Sprint National Rowing Championships and the 2023 Open Sprint National Rowing Championships. Besides, he has also shone in the international arena. In the 2019 World Para Rowing Cup II, he won a bronze medal, followed by another bronze medal the same year at the Asian Rowing Championships. His best outing turned out to be the 2022 Asian Rowing Virtual Indoor Championships where he won the gold medal. In the 2023 World Para Rowing Cup II, he bagged another bronze medal.

The 28-year-old Anita, hailing from Jhotwara in the Jaipur district of Rajasthan, started her rowing career in December 2022 at the ARN Pune. In no time, she has shown immense promise.

The mixed doubles pair claimed a podium finish with the timing of 8:50.71. To further boost their morale, Mrs. Deepa Malik, President of the Paralympics Committee of India, was present at the venue.



ROWING AT THE 37TH NATIONAL GAMES, 2023 IN GOA

The 37th National Games of India witnessed a spectacular display of rowing prowess with SSCB rowers securing six gold medals. The rowing events unfolded at the picturesque Chapora River in Goa from October 31 to November 1, 2023.

The rowing competition at Colvale showcased intense battles across 12 finals, with SSCB securing a clean sweep in the men's category and Madhya Pradesh showcasing its prowess in the women's category, securing three gold medals. Kerala and Haryana added to the diversity of champions, with two gold medals and one gold medal, respectively.

The 37th edition of the National Games commenced with a grand opening ceremony that drew the presence of esteemed members of the Rowing Federation of India, including President Rajlaxmi Singh Deo, Past President Col C.P. Singh Deo, Competition Director & National Coach Ismail Baig, and MLA Pravin Arlekar, who graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The ceremony set the tone for an eventful and competitive series of games in Goa, showcasing the nation's sporting talent and camaraderie.



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In the intensely competitive Men's Single Sculls competition, Balraj Panwar from Services clinched the gold medal.

Battling against stiff competition, Satnam and Parminder Singh of Services clinched the gold medal in the men's double sculls.

The Men's Quadruple Sculls event was also conquered by the Services quartet of Satnam Singh, Parminder Singh, Jakar Khan, and Sukhmeet Singh.

Babu Lal Yadav and Lekh Ram clinched the gold medal in the Men's Pairs event for the Services team.

Services again clinched the gold medal in the Men's Fours, backed by a stupendous performance by Jaswinder Singh, Bheem Singh, Ashish, and Punit Kumar.

Arjun Lal Singh and Arvind Jat of the Services won the gold medal in the Lightweight Men's Doubles Sculls category.



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In the highly competitive Women's Single Sculls event, Khushpreet Kaur from Madhya Pradesh secured the gold medal.

In the face of stiff competition, Poonam and Rukmani from Madhya Pradesh clinched the gold medal in the women's double sculls event.

The team from Madhya Pradesh, comprising Vindhya Sankath, Poonam, Khushpreet Kaur, and Rukmani, emerged victorious in the Women's Quadruple Sculls event.

Vijinamol B and Aleena Anto from Kerala won the gold medal in the Women's Pairs event.

Kerala achieved another gold medal in the women's fours, with a remarkable performance by Rose Mariya Joshi, Arundhati V J, Vincy Joseph, Aswathi PB, and Meenakshy VS.

Savita and Diksha of Haryana won the gold medal in the women's lightweight double sculls category.



COASTAL ROWING AT THE 37TH NATIONAL GAMES, 2023 IN GOA

The 37th National Games of India also witnessed a tough contest in the coastal rowing segment, with the competition unfolding in three categories on November 5th and 6th, 2023.

President of the Indian Olympic Association and MP Dr. PT Usha graced the finals of the coastal rowing events and presented the medals to the winners, accompanied by RFI President & IOA Vice President Mrs. Rajlaxmi Singh Deo.





Salman Khan of the Services team bagged the gold medal in Coastal Men's Solo competition.

Haryana's Suman Devi secured the top spot in the final of Coastal Women's Solo category.



In the mixed doubles category, Punjab's Jaspinder Singh and Harpreet Kaur and Odisha's Shagandeeep Singh and Sanjukta Dungdung were jointly announced the winners



24TH SUB-JUNIOR & 6TH INTER-STATE CHALLENGER SPRINT NATIONAL ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS, HYDERABAD

The RFI organized the 24th Sub-Junior National Rowing Championships and the 6th Inter-State Challenger at Hyderabad's Hussain Sagar from November 18 to 22, 2023.

Hosted by the Telangana Rowing Association, the Sub-Junior National Championships featured competition in 10 categories, while the Inter-State Challenger saw action in 8 categories.

Maharashtra secured the top spot with two gold and four bronze medals in the Sub-Junior Nationals.

Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, topped the medal tally in the Inter-State Challenger with two gold and two bronze medals.



43RD JUNIOR NATIONAL ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS, CHANDIGARH

Nineteen states participated across eight events in the 43rd Junior Rowing National Championship hosted by the Chandigarh Rowing Association on behalf of the Rowing Federation of India at Sukhna Lake. The competitions were held from December 7th to 11th, 2023.

The championship was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Director of Sports UT Chandigarh, Sorabh Kumar Arora and Guest of Honour, Joint Director of Sports Dr. Sunil Rayat.

The closing ceremony was presided over by Chief Guest Justice Sudhir Mittal and prizes were given away to the Army Boys Sports Company who topped the medal tally in the Championships, followed by Haryana and Madhya Pradesh.

SSC rowers emerged as winners by securing two gold medals and one silver medal at the 43rd Junior National Championships.



41ST SENIOR & 25TH OPEN SPRINT NATIONAL ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS

A total of 27 states from across India participated in the 41st Senior & 25th Open Sprint National Rowing Championships, held at the Army Rowing Node in Pune, from January 28th to February 3rd, 2024.

The event featured competitions across 28 categories, embracing all seven Olympic rowing disciplines for both men and women. There were 318 participants in the men's category and 156 in the women's category.

For the third consecutive year, the championship benefited from the support of the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC), co-hosting the event and providing various forms of assistance.

The opening and closing ceremonies featured distinguished guests, including chief guest CME Commandant Lt Gen AK Ramesh, PCMC Additional Commissioner Vijaykumar Khorate, Rowing Federation of India President Rajlaxmi Singh Deo, RFI Secretary MV Sriram, RFI Treasurer Nababuddin Ahmed, and Organizing Committee Chairman Commandant AS Kanwar.

In terms of medals, the Services Sports Control Board led with three golds and two silvers, followed by Madhya Pradesh with three golds and two bronzes. Odisha claimed third place with two golds, a silver, and two bronzes.



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In the men's competition, Balraj Panwar maintained his outstanding form to win the gold medal in the Single Sculls event. Kulwinder Singh and Karamjit Singh of the Services won the gold medal in the Men's Doubles Sculls event.

The Army team's Ravi, Jaspinder Singh, Gurpartap Singh, and Manjeet Kumar clinched the top spot in the Quadruple Sculls event. Babu Lal Yadav and Lekh Ram secured the top position in Men's Pairs, while Jaswinder Singh, Bheem Singh, Punit Kumar, and Ashish won gold in the Men's Fours event. They also won the Eights' and Light Weight Men's Double Sculls events.

The Men's Open Double Sculls category saw Ravinder and Lokesh of Chandigarh winning the gold. Meanwhile, the Men's Coxless Fours was won by the Chandigarh team of Sukhdeep Singh, Gulshan Kumar, Ajeet Kumar, and Aditya Singh.



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In the women's competition, Khushpreet Kaur of Madhya Pradesh won the gold medal in the single sculls event. Thangjam Priya Devi and Hobijam Tendenthoi Devi of Manipur won the gold medal in the Women's Doubles Sculls event.

Madhya Pradesh's Vindhya Sankath, Poonam, Khushpreet Kaur, and Rukmani clinched the top spot in the Quadruple Sculls event. Gurbani Kaur and Diljot Kaur secured the top position in Women's Pairs, while Kerala's Rose Mariya Joshi, Varsha K B, Aswathi P B, and Meenakshy V S won gold in the Women's Fours event.

The Kerala team again showcased their dominance in the Women's Eights event. Madhya Pradesh's Poonam and Rukmani brought home the gold again in the Women's Light Weight Double Sculls event.





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