

Why did Tejaswin Shankar do a Novak Djokovic after winning CWG decathlon medal

NEW DELHI, AUG 7:

After completing a victory lap of the Scotstoun Stadium to celebrate a decathlon bronze medal, Tejaswin Shankar stood in the middle of the arena to relish the moment. Then he did what Novak Djokovic famously does after winning Wimbledon.

Tejaswin, the first Indian to win a Commonwealth Games medal in decathlon, plucked some grass from the turf and chewed it. Severe pain because of tendinitis in his right knee — or jumpers’ knee in athletes’ parlance — had forced Tejaswin to pull out of the high jump. His chances of a decathlon medal seemed all but over, but redemption was swift.

“It was surreal. For a few seconds, I was still wondering how I won a Commonwealth medal with one-and-a-half legs. I started walking to the stand where my wife and mom were



sitting. Someone gave me an Indian flag. We took a victory lap. An Indian security guard said he felt proud. I felt like it was a movie. Then I went to the

infield, and like Djokovic, ate some grass,” Tejaswin told. Olympic medalists Damian Warner (silver) and Lindon Victor (gold) were among the

12 competitors. Before he shed tears of joy, Tejaswin had bawled like a child three days earlier when his knee acted up. Video clips of him crying in the mixed zone emerged, but that is only half the picture.

“When I walked into the mixed zone, I was asked a question. I spoke three sentences. I went behind a banner, and started sobbing like a baby. I am usually good at keeping my emotions to myself. I was 100 percent convinced that the decathlon was also over for me,” Tejaswin said.

Decathlon was scheduled to start two days later. That night, Tejaswin was on ChatGPT searching for a ray of hope. He slept only at 3am and woke up by 6am. He spent the morning thinking how he would spend time around Indian teammates in Glasgow, knowing that he had done nothing of note.

“Gold is just a trailer”: CWG 2026 medallist Sharmila Dhankar sets sights on Asian Games, Paralympics

NEW DELHI, AUG 7:

Indian para-athlete Sharmila Dhankar said that the Commonwealth Games 2026 gold medal is “just a trailer, and the movie is yet to come,” while expressing her happiness over her achievement. Dhankar scripted one of the most inspiring stories of the 2026 Commonwealth Games by clinching the gold medal in the women’s shot put F57 event, completing a remarkable journey from surviving domestic violence to standing atop the podium in Glasgow. The 40-year-old Indian para-athlete produced a season-best throw of 9.81 metres, comfortably finishing ahead of Ghana’s Zinabu Issah, who claimed silver with a best effort of 8.65m. Nigeria’s Eucharua Iyiazi settled for bronze with a throw of 8.19m, while fellow Indian Shilpa finished fourth. Speaking to ANI, Dhankar said her Commonwealth Games gold medal was only the beginning, with her next targets being the Asian Games and ultimately an Olympic gold. She credited her mother and the government for their support in her journey. “This Commonwealth gold is just a trailer. The movie is yet to come. The next target is the Asian Games. After that, I’ll set my target straight for the Olympics, for a good gold. I am very happy with the gold medal. I give credit to my mother. And also to our government. They’ve supported a lot,” she said.

She also expressed pride after becoming India’s first-ever para-athletics gold medallist at the Commonwealth Games, saying she was unaware of the historic significance of her achievement. She added that she feels fortunate to have achieved several firsts in her journey, including becoming Haryana’s first female conductor. “I feel very happy.

‘I’ll fight with everything’: Sarfaraz’s cryptic post after SL Test series snub



MUMBAI, AUG 7:

Sarfaraz Khan’s absence from the Indian Test team and him seemingly not being in the running for a spot at all has been a topic of discussion since he last played a match in November 2024 against New Zealand. Sarfaraz boasts a first class average of 64.73 in 62 matches but has played just six Tests thus far for India, the last of which came in November

2024. His last involvement with the Indian team was on their 2024/25 tour of Australia for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which they lost 4-1.

The 2019 Telugu film ‘Jersey’ with a caption that read: “I may not fit in, but I’ll fight with everything I’ve got.” Sarfaraz’s 150 in the first Test of that series against New Zealand was one of few bright points as India suffered a his-

toric, and rather humiliating, 3-0 defeat in the series. Sarfaraz was however criticised for his performance in the rest of the series, getting a highest score of just 11 runs.

While he remained part of the Indian set up after that, the Mumbai batter has been out of the overall squads since their 4-1 defeat to Australia in the 2025/26 Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Eyebrows were then raised when he was kept out of the Indian squad that faced South Africa A ahead of the two-match Test series between the two countries. India ended up losing that series 2-0 as well. India are currently playing a three-day warm-up game in Colombo before their two-match Test series against Sri Lanka. The first Test starts on August 15 and will be played in Galle.

This will be the first Test series that India play in Sri Lanka in over a decade.

Inspired by cricket star Shane Watson, archer Sahil Jadhav gears up for Asian Games challenge



MUMBAI, AUG 7:

An archery target and a cricket pitch may seem worlds apart, but for Indian compound archer Sahil Jadhav, the lessons of a former Australian all-rounder have become part

of his preparation for the biggest competition of his career. For Sahil Jadhav, it was a book by star cricketer Shane Watson that provided the spark of inspiration as he gears up to take on the conti-

nental elite at the Asian Games 2026, according to a press release.

“I started reading a book called ‘The Winner’s Mindset’ by Shane Watson around a month ago. My initial intent was to reduce the time I spent scrolling my phone.

However, I have received valuable knowledge on how to deal with pressure and keep myself focused during competitions,” Jadhav said during an interaction with SAI Media, according. Mental strength and patience are qualities which Jadhav has required in copious amounts over his career. The 25-year-old endured seven years of disappointment before winning his first national title and breaking into the Indian squad.

“Boost for Judo in India”: Glasgow Games bronze-medallist Unnati Sharma on country’s CWG 2026 medal haul

NEW DELHI, AUG 7:

Commonwealth Games 2026 bronze medallist judoka Unnati Sharma lauded India’s four-medal haul in judo at the Glasgow Games, saying the achievement will help boost the sport’s popularity across the country. Besides Unnati Sharma’s bronze in the Women’s -63kg category, India’s judo medal tally at the Commonwealth Games 2026 included gold medals from Asmita Dey and Harsh Singh, along with a silver from Yamini Mourya, taking the country’s total to four medals.

Notably, Asmita’s gold medal came as India’s first judo gold medal of the Games. Unnati claimed the bronze medal after producing a superb Ippon victory over South Africa’s Skye Knoester in the bronze-medal contest. Unnati required just 1 minute and 7 seconds to finish the contest, executing a perfectly timed leg hook that sent her opponent onto her back for



a clean Ippon—the highest possible score in judo.

Unnati said she was delighted with India’s judo success at the Commonwealth Games, especially the two gold medals, calling it a major boost for the sport in the country. “It has been a very good feeling and it feels very good that medals have finally come in Judo and

two golds have come and it’s a very good thing, it’s a boost for Judo in India so it’s a very good thing for us,” she said. Unnati began her campaign with an Ippon win over Eswatini’s Lamulela Magagula in the round of 16 before defeating New Zealand’s Qona Christie by waza-ari in the quarter-finals.

Rakshitha Sree, the shuttler beating India’s next big things

NEW DELHI, AUG 7:

In the grand jostle of India’s next big thing in women’s singles badminton, Devika Sihag and Tanvi Sharma have taken the lead in 2026 with Super 300 titles. But there’s a hidden gem in 19-year-old Coimbatore teen Rakshitha Sree Santhosh Ramraj, who enjoys a 4-0 head-to-head against Sharma and a 2-0 win-loss advantage over Sihag.

Ranked 9th best in India and 49th in the world, the Hyderabad-based shuttler, training at the Pullela Gopichand Academy for many years, is awaiting her breakthrough. “She needs that one big tournament with a title for her confidence. Maybe this is the week. The potential is enormous,” coach B Sai Praneeth said, after she defeated last week’s champion Tanvi Sharma at the Super 300 Korea Masters quarters. She plays the semis against compatriot Ashmita Chaliha on Saturday.

The 61-minute 18-21, 21-19, 21-18 battle wasn’t devoid of a psychological edge. Tanvi, playing her 8th match in two



weeks, actually played better than she has against Rakshitha before. The Taipei Super300 winner took the opener from 8-13 down. And she did well to get into striking range, raising the ante from 13-15 down in the second to leading 17-16. But Rakshitha has that knack to impose her effortless stroke-making on a cliffhanging match. She played the decisive rallies better to tease out an escape and push a decider.

In the third, once again, Tanvi’s errors into the net – unforced but not entirely unprovoked – gave Rakshitha the 4-point surge to break the 15-all deadlock and race to the win. “I’m not concerned about Rakshitha’s win-losses in terms of her game. The game is there,” Sai Praneeth says, “what needs to get better is the body language when she is trailing.” The coach was happy with how she dealt with being

behind in points against Japanese Manami Suizu on Thursday, and how she navigated the tricky, nervy endgame phase against Tanvi.

“All these players are very young at 18/19. When they don’t get points on court, they get nervous, body language at a crucial level stoops. It will come with experience, even for Tanvi. I just tell Rakshitha to play simple. It’s easy for a coach to constantly say, but it’s tough for players,” he says of all the previous times Rakshitha hasn’t converted and fallen behind in the Indian race. “I just tell her, ‘be ready’ for the next point. 2/3 mistakes happen, it’s ok, not the end of the world. She has good strokes and power, decent speed. Tanvi’s negatives also came from pressure. Happens,” he explains.

Rakshitha has evolved into a player with an eclectic smash. It’s a power-hit, smoothly executed with deceptive menace. Coaches have consistently drilled into her the need to stay aggressive, something that doesn’t come easy to her. In

Has Gurnoor Brar done enough to be picked for Sri Lanka Tests ahead of Prasidh Krishna?

MUMBAI, AUG 7:

India arrived in Colombo with only one warm-up match before the two-Test series against Sri Lanka starting on August 15, leaving little time to settle the two biggest selection questions in their bowling attack: who partners Mohammed Siraj in Jasprit Bumrah’s absence, and who shares the spin workload with Ravindra Jadeja. At the end of the opening day of the three-day warm-up match against the Sri Lanka Cricket XI at the Nondescripts Cricket Club on Friday, Gurnoor Brar and Manav Suthar had strengthened their respective cases, while Prasidh Krishna struggled to make a positive impression.

Sri Lanka Cricket XI finished on 363/8 in 90 overs, with Nishan Fernando’s fluent 66 and Ravindu Rasantha’s authoritative 71 laying the platform through a commanding 110-run opening stand before captain Sonal Dinusha anchored the middle phase with a composed 52.

Although India fought back



steadily through the afternoon and evening sessions, the hosts ensured the visitors had to work hard throughout the day in sultry conditions that tested every bowling option under consideration.

The strongest audition for the second seamer’s role came from Brar, who looked increasingly threatening as the ball aged. After producing the day’s biggest lbw appeal in the opening session without success, the right-armer returned with greater rhythm and pur-

pose, exploiting bounce and angles to repeatedly discomfort the batsmen. His sustained barrage of short-pitched bowling unsettled Dinusha, who was struck on the gloves, beaten for pace and repeatedly forced onto the back foot, struggling to handle the steep bounce.

Brar eventually earned his reward by forcing Pavan Rathnayake into a miscued hook before continuing to beat the outside edge with the older ball. Even during the final ses-

sion, he found late movement, extracted steep bounce and regularly drew uncertain responses from the batsmen. His figures of 1/49 in 12 overs understated the sustained pressure he created and arguably strengthened his case to partner Siraj in Galle.

Siraj extracted seam movement and awkward bounce with disciplined lengths during the morning, twice surprising Rasantha with steep lift, and later returned with a hostile spell featuring sharp bouncers that repeatedly hurried the lower order. Although boundaries occasionally came off shorter deliveries, he probed away across all three sessions, repeatedly asking questions that deserved greater reward than the scorebook ultimately showed.

Prasidh, by contrast, endured a mixed day that is unlikely to strengthen his claim. He struggled for consistency in his opening spell, offering scoring opportunities with overpitched deliveries and width before tightening his lengths after lunch.

‘Be more proactive’: Rahane’s advice to India batters ahead of SL Tests



MUMBAI, AUG 7:

Former India player Ajinkya Rahane, who announced his international retirement last month, had a word of advice for the India batters who are set to take on Sri Lanka in a 2-match Test series, beginning on August 15. “I think in Sri Lanka, the first day wicket generally is very good. But

being top of the bowler as a batsman is very important. That’s what I have learned in Sri Lanka. You cannot be too defensive,” Rahane told.

Rahane played a key role in 2017 when India toured Sri Lanka, scoring 200 runs with a hundred and a fifty, helping his team win 3-0.

“You have to probably be

more proactive because they will have spin friendly wickets, and Sri Lanka do have decent spinners in their side. And again, a home team is always a tough team to beat.

Whatever I’ve learned playing cricket for so many years, you can’t take anyone for lightly. So it’s all about, I think, having your own game plan as an individual and being proactive. Even in Test cricket, it’s going to be the key,” he said.

Rahane had on Friday joined Amsterdam Flames as a marquee player in the inaugural European T20 Premier League, hoping to make global impact through the opportunity that came to him the day he announced his international retirement. The tournament is scheduled to be played between August 26 to September 20 across Dublin, Ireland, and the Hague, Netherlands.

Gujarat government officer balances public service with para-athletics, targets 2028 Paralympic medal

MUMBAI, AUG 7:

Gujarat government officer Ram Singh Padhiyar is preparing for the 2026 Asian Para Games and the 2028 Paralympic Games while representing India in international para-athletics. Padhiyar, 33, serves at the Gujarat Secretariat in Gandhinagar and trains at the SAG Sports Complex in Nadiad. Competing in the long jump and high jump events, he has won more than 23 medals at international and national competitions, including a bronze medal at the 2023 Asian Para Games and a silver medal at the 2024 World Para Athletics event. The state, Padhiyar stated that the Gujarat government has strengthened sports development through initiatives such as the Shaktidoot Scheme, under which several athletes are receiving training and assistance. He also referred to Gujarat’s selection as the host of the 2030 Commonwealth Games and India’s bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games, saying such developments are expected to further strengthen the country’s sporting ecosystem and create greater opportunities for athletes. Officials said sustained investment in sports infrastructure, athlete development programmes and para-sports has enabled athletes from the state to compete at national and international platforms. District Sports Development Officer, Nadiad, Dr Mansukh Tavethiya said the Gujarat government has introduced multiple initiatives, including the Shaktidoot Academy, COI, DLSS, In-School Sports Programme and Khel Mahakumbh, to identify and nurture sporting talent. According to Tavethiya, these initiatives provide athletes with training, infrastructure and other essential facilities free of cost, helping them pursue professional careers in sports.

Ashwin on Hardik’s IPL future: ‘Don’t count on him going to a team other than’

NEW DELHI, AUG 7:

Former India all-rounder R Ashwin weighed in on the rumours surrounding Hardik Pandya’s IPL future with the Mumbai Indians, with reports indicating that the 32-year-old may be the centre of a blockbuster trade discussion.

After two successive seasons as MI captain when the five-time champions failed to qualify for the Playoffs, reports have linked Pandya to potential trade deals with the Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders.

Reflecting on a potential trade deal, Ashwin remarked that Pandya will not be pursued by any other team outside CSK or KKR, who are desperate for a reset. While the Super Kings recently announced the exit of Stephen Fleming after 17 years as head coach of the franchise, KKR will be heading in a new direction after the retirement of their last season’s skipper Ajinkya Rahane.



Ashwin said that MI may only accept a swap deal with KKR if they acquire the services of pacer Harshit Rana and Rinku Singh in return.

“Don’t count out Hardik going to a franchise other than CSK or KKR. The talks are that CSK will give Dube and a pacer, while KKR gives away Cameron Green. What happens if Green decides to focus on the Ashes next year? If I

were MI, I would accept a deal with KKR on only one condition, which is getting Harshit Rana and Rinku Singh in return. That is the only way MI gets stronger,” Ashwin said.

“MI will also think who between CSK and KKR gets stronger through the Hardik trade. If CSK give away Dube and one Indian pacer to get Hardik, they get strong but not invincible.