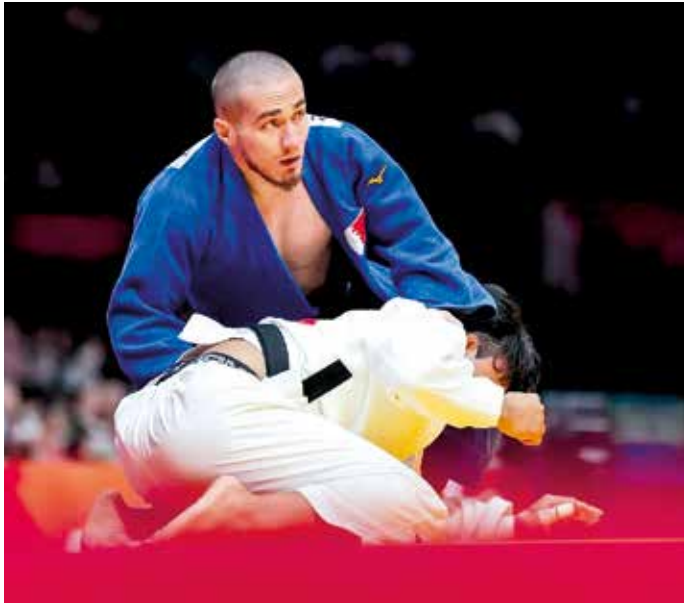


Podium eludes Bahrain Judo duo



Mukhamed Aloev in action during the men's -73kg judo competition

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Mukhamed Aloev and Askerbii Gerbekov both came within one victory of the podium at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, yesterday, finishing joint fifth in their respective judo competitions.

Aloev began his men's -73kg campaign at Aichi International Arena by needing just 31 seconds to defeat Laos' Xaisengxoun NouveneuEN by ippon with a ko-soto-gake.

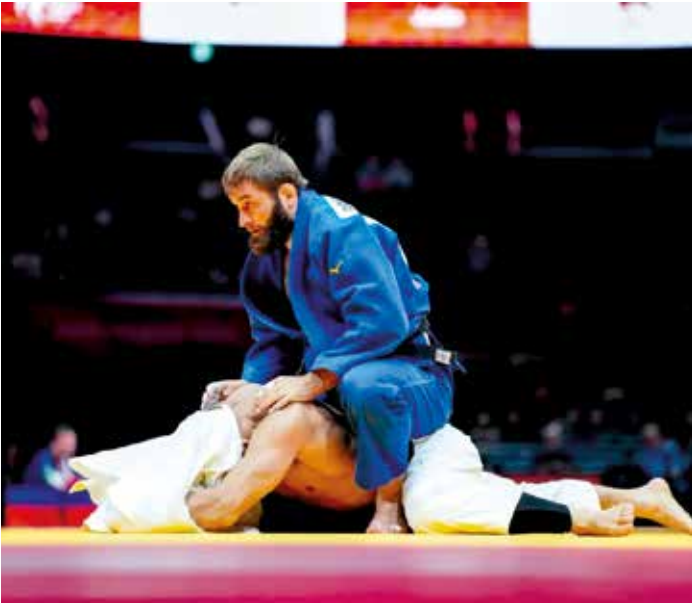
The Bahraini then faced

eventual champion Kazbek Naguchev of the UAE in the quarter-finals, where he was beaten by ippon in 3:26 and sent into repechage.

Aloev responded by overcoming the Philippines' Gabriel Benedict Quitain in a gruelling contest, scoring a yuko with an o-uchi-gari at 6:02 in golden score to earn a shot at bronze.

His medal bid, however, was ended by Japan's Tatsuki Ishihara, who secured an ippon with a seoi-nage after just 28 seconds.

Naguchev went on to claim gold, with Uzbekistan's Shakh-



Askerbii Gerbekov grapples with his opponent during the men's -81kg event

ram Ahadov taking silver and Ishihara and Tajikistan's Muthiddin Asadulloev earning the two bronze medals.

Gerbekov followed a similar path in the men's -81kg division, opening with an ippon victory over Bangladesh's Amirul Islam in 2:12 before meeting Japan's Sotaro Fujiwara in the quarter-finals.

The contest went into golden score, where Fujiwara eventually prevailed by yuko at 5:57 to send the Bahraini into repechage.

Gerbekov kept his medal hopes alive with an ippon vic-

tory over Hong Kong, China's Lee Kwok Wing in 3:26, setting up a bronze-medal contest against Tajikistan's Abubakr Sherov.

Sherov scored a waza-ari with a sumi-gaeshi at 3:00 before adding a yuko 40 seconds later, seeing out the four-minute contest to take bronze and leave Gerbekov joint fifth.

Fujiwara won the division ahead of Kazakhstan's Adilet Almat, while Sherov and South Korea's Lee Joonhwan completed the podium.

Judo competition continues through Saturday.

Ali bows out of Jiu-Jitsu



Abdulla Ali

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Abdulla Ali bowed out of the men's -62kg jiu-jitsu competition at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, yesterday after reaching the round of 16.

Ali began his campaign at Aichi Prefectural Martial Arts Hall with a 7-2 victory over Afghanistan's Noorullah Shafayee in the round of 32.

The Bahraini scored two two-point moves and one three-pointer during the 5:37 contest to secure his place in the next round.

Ali then faced Kyrgyzstan's Taalalbek Baiyshev in the last 16, where a much tighter contest ended in a 2-0 defeat after 6:54.

Baiyshev scored the only two points of the bout, bringing the Bahraini's campaign to an end.

Asian Games Medal Tally

#	Nation	G	S	B	Total
1	China	154	71	63	288
2	Japan	59	79	79	217
3	South Korea	30	30	53	113
4	Uzbekistan	16	21	19	56
5	Iran	12	17	13	42
6	Thailand	12	11	15	38
7	Bahrain	11	5	5	21
8	India	10	22	32	64

The medals were eventually dominated by Gulf competitors, with the UAE's Khaled Alshehhi taking gold ahead of compatriot Omar Alsuwaidi. Saudi Arabia's Abdulmalik Al Murdhi claimed bronze alongside Khaled Ali Habab.

Bahrain return to the mat today, with Khaled Faraj beginning his men's -94kg campaign against South Korea's Park Sunghu in the round of 16 at Aichi Prefectural Martial Arts Hall.

India to face Pakistan for Asian Games cricket gold



India's Vaibhav Sooryavanshi in action

AFP | Nagoya

World champions India will face arch-rivals Pakistan for Asian Games men's cricket gold after both won their semi-finals with ease yesterday in Japan.

India hammered Sri Lanka by 124 runs after Pakistan beat Bangladesh by six wickets to set up a mouth-watering final on Saturday at the Korogi Athletic Park Stadium in Nagoya.

India posted a testing 169-7 on a sharply turning pitch after being asked to bat.

Sri Lanka lost two wickets without a run on the board and crumbled to 45 all out in less than 10 overs of chaos that included three run-outs.

It was Sri Lanka's lowest total in a men's T20 international, worse than the 77 they scored against South Africa in

New York in 2024.

Sri Lanka opted to field and were given a taste of the power of 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi on his Asian Games debut.

The fearless teenager, who topped the IPL batting charts this year, smoked a whirlwind 38 off 21 balls with six fours and two enormous sixes before falling to a thick edge caught at backward point.

"He is an amazing talent," said Sri Lankan coach Ashan Priyanjan.

Ishan Kishan was India's mainstay with a crafted 80 not out, including five sixes.

When Sri Lanka batted, pace bowling great Jasprit Bumrah ripped out two wickets in his first over. They were 18-5 by the end of the fourth over, with spinner Axar Patel taking two of the wickets.

Ronaldo's Portugal future in doubt after walkout

AFP | Copenhagen

Uncertainty surrounds the future of Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo in the national team after the 41-year-old walked out on the squad following an announcement from coach Jorge Jesus that he would not start yesterday's game against Denmark.

Ronaldo announced late Wednesday that he had left the team, shortly after a press conference in which Jesus confirmed the five-time Ballon d'Or winner would be left out of his starting line-up for a second consecutive game.

The former Real Madrid forward had been due to train with his teammates at the Parken Stadium on the eve of the UEFA Nations League match against the Danes, but walked out following the announcement by Jesus.

"After the press conference of the national team coach, and following a conversation with the president of the Portuguese Football Federation, I have made the decision to leave the role of the national team," Ronaldo wrote on Instagram.

Ronaldo had already spent the entirety of Sunday's 2-1 Nations League win in Norway on the bench, having captained the side in the 1-0 home victory over Wales last Thursday.

It is commonplace for national team coaches to rotate their squads for these matches,



Cristiano Ronaldo waves as he arrives for a training session with the Portugal team at the Parken stadium in Copenhagen

which do not carry the same level of importance as a World Cup or European Championship.

However, Ronaldo appeared to indicate that the reasons behind Jesus's decision ran deeper.

"In due time, I will tell the Portuguese people the truth about the reasons that motivated my departure from the national team, to which I have always dedicated myself," he added in comments that hinted at a permanent withdrawal from the international stage.

"Now is time to wish Portugal and all my teammates the very best for the future, without exception."

Spanish sports daily Marca said Jesus and Portuguese fed-

eration president Pedro Proenca followed Ronaldo to Copenhagen airport in an attempt to persuade him to stay with the squad, before the player boarded his private jet.

Jesus insisted earlier Wednesday that there was no rift between him and Ronaldo, although the 72-year-old -- appointed coach in July -- acknowledged that his captain was disappointed to remain on the bench against Norway.

The news sparked a wave of memes on social media and furious backlash from Ronaldo's sister, Elma Aveiro.

"They don't deserve to have the best of anything," she said about the Portuguese people on Instagram.

"We are envious, scornful, and ignorant, and we deserve

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appearances make Ronaldo Portugal's most-capped player, with 146 international goals

to return to the mediocrity that defined us in the pre-CR7 era of football."

'Nothing to make a fuss about'

The game in Oslo was the first time since November 2024 that Ronaldo had not featured for Portugal while not being either injured or suspended.

"There was no incident whatsoever," Jesus, who coached Ronaldo at Saudi club Al-Nassr for a year before taking the Portugal job, told reporters after that match.

"Any player -- and I was a player myself... when you spend 20 or 30 minutes warming up and then don't get on... no one is happy about that," Jesus added on Wednesday.

The Portuguese coach also said he had told Ronaldo before the match that he would not be in the starting line-up, but that he might bring him on.

"Afterwards, as coach, I decided not to bring him on. It's nothing to make a fuss about," Jesus insisted.