

500+ athletes supported, four Commonwealth Games qualifiers: Axis Bank and IIS strengthen India's judo talent pipeline

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[Axis Bank](#), one of the largest private sector banks in India, in partnership with Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), India's premier high-performance Olympic programme, is helping translate India's sporting potential into international success through the **Axis Bank Judo Development Programme**. Having supported more than 500 athletes across grassroots and high-performance pathways, the programme has reached another significant milestone, with **four women judokas qualifying for the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow**.

Yamini Mourya (57kg) from Madhya Pradesh, **Unnati Sharma (63kg)** from Uttarakhand, **Ishroop Narang (78kg)** from Punjab, and **Takhellambam Inunganbi (70kg)** from Manipur have earned their place in India's Commonwealth Games squad, reflecting the impact of sustained investment in athlete development, world-class coaching, sports science, and international exposure. Their qualification marks the latest milestone for a programme that is steadily building India's next generation of judokas. The programme has also contributed to landmark achievements, including **Linthoi Chanambam** becoming India's first-ever World Junior Championship medallist in judo after securing bronze at the 2025 World Junior Championships in Peru.

Beyond individual milestones, the programme is helping build a stronger and more competitive ecosystem for Indian judo. Through its grassroots initiative in Manipur and the IIS High Performance Centre, it has nurtured talent at multiple levels, **supporting 471 young judokas and 53 elite female athletes**. Athletes supported under the programme have collectively secured **more than 140 medals across state**, national and international competitions, while also benefiting from **11 international training camps** in leading judo nations such as Japan, Georgia and Uzbekistan.

Designed as a holistic athlete development initiative, the programme combines world-class coaching with sports science, nutrition, strength and conditioning, mental wellbeing support, education assistance and competition exposure. In Manipur and the North-East, partnerships with local stakeholders, including the Manipur Judo Association, along with mentorship from Olympian Sushila Devi, are helping nurture promising talent. The initiative also provides athletes from underserved and conflict-affected regions access to a safe, structured environment for training and development.

Speaking about the programme, **Vijay Mulbagal, Group Head - Wholesale Bank Coverage, Corporate Salary, Sustainability & CSR, Axis Bank**, said, "At Axis Bank, we

believe meaningful and lasting impact is created through long-term partnerships that empower individuals and unlock opportunities. Our association with the Inspire Institute of Sport reflects this commitment by helping talented athletes access world-class coaching, scientific training and the support they need to perform at the highest level. The achievements of these athletes, including four Commonwealth Games qualifiers, highlight the value of sustained investment in talent development and demonstrate that sporting excellence is achieved when potential is backed by the right ecosystem of expertise, infrastructure and support."

Manisha Malhotra, President - Inspire Institute of Sport, said, "The Axis Bank Judo Development Programme was envisioned as a pathway that could support athletes at every stage of their development journey. Over time, the programme has evolved into a comprehensive ecosystem that combines grassroots engagement, high-performance training, world-class coaching and sports science support. Our aim continues to be creating equitable access to sporting excellence by empowering youth, advancing women's participation, and building sustainable sporting ecosystems. The outcomes we are seeing today are a testament to the dedication of the athletes, coaches and support teams, and reinforce our belief that sustained investment and the right environment can help Indian judokas compete successfully on the global stage."

The initiative is helping shape not only successful athletes but also confident young role models within their communities. Building on this momentum, the programme aims to expand its grassroots footprint in the North-East, support athletes on the international stage and further strengthen India's judo ecosystem. Through this partnership, Axis Bank and IIS remain committed to nurturing talent and contributing to the continued growth of Indian sport.