

Maharashtra girls in Badminton Association of India's Top-10

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NAGPUR: Contrary to the general feeling that most of the top badminton players are coming from the southern part of the country, Maharashtra emerged as the surprise packet with as many as eight shuttlers breaking into the top 10 in women's singles rankings released recently by the Badminton Association of India (BAI).

Arundhati Pantawane led the Maharashtra brigade by topping the chart as she regained the No. 1 ranking after nearly two years. The other girls in the top-10 are Tanvi Lad, Sayali Gokhale, Neha Pandit, Riya Pillai, Saili Rane, Trupti Murgunde and Sanyogita Ghorpade.

Barring PV Sindhu (Andhra Pradesh) and PC Thulasi (Kerala), who are ranked second and fourth respectively, all the other girls are from Maharashtra.

Although, these eight girls are originally hail from Maharashtra, they do not represent their state in the national-level tournaments. Only Riya Pillai, who is occupying the seventh spot, represents Maharashtra as she is yet to accept the job proposal from the government-undertaking company.

Most of these top Maharashtra shuttlers play for different petroleum teams, while some are employed with either Air India or Airports Authority of India.

The secretary of Maharashtra Badminton Association (MBA) Sunder Shetty is happy with the present standard but regretted about the fact that association do not have an academy of their own in the state.

"We need big academies like Hyderabad, Bangalore and Kochin. In those states, government support sports in big way. We have approached government authorities many times including the chief minister for land for academy but we get only promises and nothing else. If MBA get government land, we will build a state of the art badminton academy which will further boost the game in the region," said Shetty.

Maharashtra players in BAI's top-10 ranking

1. Arundhati Pantawane (PET); 3. Tanvi Lad (AI); 5. Sayali Gokhale (AI); 6. Neha Pandit (AAI); 7. Riya Pillai (MAH); 8. Saili Rane (AI); 9. Trupti Murgunde (PET); 10. Sanyogita Ghorpade
