

KENYAN DOUBLE

Bangalore Mirror Bureau | Updated: May 21, 2017, 11.08 PM IST



Alex Korio and Irene Cheptai claim the World 10K race; Naveen Kumar and Saigeetha Naik best Indian finishers

Alex Korio and Irene Cheptai made it a Kenyan double at the TCS World 10K race, winning the 10th edition in 28:12 and 31:51 respectively, in the city on Sunday.

While Mosinet Geremew looked for a hat-trick of wins here, Korio, who won the title in 2013, came up with a strong performance in the second half of the race to bag the winner's cheque of \$26,000. New Zealand's Zane Robertson pushed the pace for the pack along with designated pacemaker Stephen Kissa of Uganda during

the early part of the race. The nine elite male athletes went through 3 km in 8:30 and then 5 km in 14:09. Korio then changed gears and warded off a late challenge by Edwin Kiptoo, who settled for second in 28:26. Kissa, who later said he'd decided to finish the race around the halfway point, took the bronze in 28:28.

"My experience after winning the race in 2013 certainly helped me today," Korio said. "I knew the course and knew the best place to push. I realised I could win the race after the sixth kilometre. I was watching Zane till the 6 km mark and when he dropped, I knew I could push even more." Robertson struggled during the second half of the race and finished seventh in 28:49.

Kenya's world record holder Leonard Komon and Ethiopia's defending champion Mosinet Geremew also had forgettable days. Their pace dropped by the end of the fifth kilometre and the duo eventually finished eighth and tenth in 28:55 and 29:31 respectively.

Among the Indian men, Naveen Kumar stole the show with a 30:56 finish, followed by Sandeep Tayade at 31:02. Shankar Man Thapa claimed the bronze at 31:07.

Kumar, a steeplechaser who trains in the city, entered the elite line-up early this morning with the sole ambition of winning. "If I get a chance to participate, I would only run to win. It started out as a follow race for me and when I got to the eighth kilometre, I knew I would run my own race. And this race has given me the confidence of going out there, training harder and returning for a better time," Kumar said.

Tayade stayed on Kumar's heels for most part of the race. He said he was surprised by a second place finish. "Today my body just felt good and I decided to go with the flow," Tayade said. "When we hit the 8KM mark, I believed that I could be amongst the top four, but it was only when I entered the stadium and heard the crowd cheering me on, I felt I had a chance at a podium finish. The silver medal is a pleasant surprise."

Amongst the elite women athletes, Cheptai caught the eye in particular with an impressive performance that will confirm her rising status in the world of distance running. A conservative first half saw nine women pass 3km in 9:51. Five of the nine, including Cheptai and her Kenyan compatriots Gladys Chesir, Helah Kiprop and Magdalyne Masai as well as Ethiopia's Worknesh Degefa, were still together as they reached the halfway point in 16:19. Cheptai then took matters into her own hands. She gradually upped her pace in the seventh and eighth kilometres as her rivals slipped away.

Cheptai was on her own at the front towards the end but she didn't let her tempo drop. Her timing was just three seconds outside the course record of 31:48, set by another Kenyan runner Lucy Kabuu in 2014. "I wasn't confident at the start," Cheptai said. "But from the eighth kilometre, I grew in confidence and knew that I was going to win. I was also trying for the course record from the seventh kilometre (but couldn't manage it)."

Degefa, the last of Cheptai's opponents to succumb, hung on to take second place in 32:00 while Kiprop was third in 32:02.

Among the Indian women, Saigeeta controlled most of the race. She finished the 10K in 36:01 followed by Kiran Sahdev. Preenu Yadav joined them on the podium at 36:46.



The three fastest Indians, Naveen (centre), Sandeep and Shankar, on the podium

Results

Elite men:

Alex Korio (KEN) 00:28:12, Edwin Kiptoo (KEN) 00:28:26, Stephen Kissa (UGA) 00:28:28

Elite women:

Irene Cheptai (KEN) 00:31:51,

Worknesh Degefa (ETH) 00:32:00, Helah Kiprop (KEN) 00:32:02

Indian men:

Naveen Kumar (overall 14th) 00:30:56, Sandeep Tayade (overall 15th) 00:31:02, Shankar Man Thapa (overall 16th) 00:31:07

Indian women:

Saigeetha Naik (overall 11th) 00:36:01, Kiran Sahdev (overall 12th) 00:36:30, Preenu Yadav (overall 13th) 00:36:46

Police Cup:

Men: Team of Narendra D, KN Naveen, Raja 01:47:20; team of Ganesh, Kumar Swamy BK, Raju Dasar 01:56:17

Women: Team of Hemanthvathi GG, Pavithra, Devamma 02:39:55; Team of Sushmitha Pawar, CV Swetha, N Usha Rani 03:05:44

Costume winners: Anand Raj, Manas Kumar, Prathna Kaul

Group Winners: Shrimad Rajchandra Mission (yug purush, Mahatma's Mahatma), Payir (eco-friendly and non-eco friendly), Sahas (waste segregation)