Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics: Dhinidhi Desinghu wins 100m freestyle bronze – India's first-ever swimming medal at the YOG

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News

At the 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Senegal, 16-year-old Dhinidhi Desinghu of Bengaluru won bronze in the girls' 100m freestyle final at the Dakar Aquatic Centre on 2 Nov 2026, clocking 56.27 seconds. Croatia's Ana Bobanović (55.89 s) won gold and New Zealand's Alyssa Lawson (56.13 s) silver. It is India's first-ever swimming medal at the Youth Olympics (men or women). She reached the final with the third-fastest qualifying time (56.80 s); her final time bettered her own national record of 56.57 s (June 2026).

Key facts

Date / venue	2 Nov 2026 – Dakar Aquatic Centre, Senegal
Event / time	Girls' 100m freestyle – bronze, 56.27 s
Gold / silver	Ana Bobanović (Croatia) / Alyssa Lawson (New Zealand)
Athlete	Born 17 May 2010, Bengaluru (Karnataka); coach B.M. Madhu Kumar (Dolphin Aquatics)
Earlier	Paris 2024 Olympics – India's youngest athlete at 14 (200m freestyle, universality quota)

Record	India's first swimming medal at the Youth Olympics

Background

- Swimming basics: Olympic swimming has four strokes – freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. Any stroke is allowed in freestyle, but swimmers almost always use the fastest one, the front crawl. Individual medley order: butterfly → backstroke → breaststroke → freestyle.
- Governing body: World Aquatics (formerly FINA; renamed Dec 2022) – HQ Lausanne, Switzerland. In India, the Swimming Federation of India (SFI) is the national body.
- Indian swimming history: Mihir Sen (1958) – first Indian to swim the English Channel; Arati Saha (29 Sep 1959) – first Asian woman to cross it, and in 1960 the first Indian sportswoman to get the Padma Shri. Sajan Prakash (Kerala) – first Indian to achieve an Olympic 'A' qualifying time, at the Sette Colli Trophy, Rome, June 2021.
- Dhinidhi's journey: India's youngest athlete at the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games; national record of 56.57 s in the 100m freestyle at the June 2026 national championships, Ahmedabad; 200m freestyle national record (2:01.81) at the July 2026 Asian Age Group Championships (Thailand).

Tamil Nadu link: Dhinidhi was born and raised in Bengaluru; no reliable source confirms Tamil Nadu roots. Tamil Nadu's swimming pride: Erode-born V. Kutraleeswaran swam six channels in a single year, 1994 – including the Palk Strait and the English Channel (15 Aug 1994, aged 12) – and entered the Guinness Book of Records; he received the Arjuna Award in 1996 at 14.

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