

# Archer airlifted to AIIMS after arrow pierces neck at Khelo India

**ASTHA SAXENA**  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 9

SHIVANGINI GOHAIN, a 12-year-old archer, was airlifted to the AIIMS Trauma Centre here from Guwahati after an arrow pierced her neck during training on the eve of the Khelo India Games. Dr Amil Lathwal, medical superintendent of the centre, confirmed the admission of the Assam girl. "She was admitted to the hospital around 8 pm. Doctors at our centre are examining her and a decision on the treatment will be taken soon," he told The Indian Express.

Sports secretary Radhey Shyam Julaniya, confirming the mishap, said that the Sports Authority of India (SAI) was overseeing the archer's treatment. "The archer who met

with an accident in Dibrugarh has been airlifted to Delhi. The SAI is bearing all the expenses of her treatment, including air travel and a senior SAI official has been detailed to ensure that she gets the best treatment at the hospital without any problem," he said.

The sporting event will witness competitions in 20 national-level multidisciplinary games in the under-17 and under-21 categories. Almost 6,500 athletes are expected to participate in the Games, which will run from January 10-22.

**Maharashtra, Haryana bid for supremacy**

With Asian Games 400m silver medallist Hima Das set to be the final torch-bearer at the opening ceremony but not competing on

her home track, Jharkhand recurve archer Komolika Bari is among the biggest names competing. The World recurve cadet girls' champion will seek to add the U-21 crown to the U-17 gold she won in Pune last year.

Defending champions Maharashtra and runners-up Haryana will be locked in a keen tussle in the third edition of the Games, which begin at the Sarjusrarai Sports Complex in Guwahati on Friday.

Maharashtra, who cornered a total of 228 medals in the last edition, have fielded a 579-strong contingent and are expected to be rolling in medals this year too.

They will, however, be wary of Haryana, who have with come with a bigger, stronger team and are eager to topple them.

Haryana, champions of the inaugural edition, boast of 682 athletes and are confident

of giving Maharashtra and the other 34 States and Union Territories a run for their money.

Delhi, Number 3 in both the earlier Games, will also be keen to move up the ladder once the action gets underway. The home state is also bidding to breach the top 10.

Maharashtra (579), Delhi (450), Uttar Pradesh (430), Punjab (390) and Tamil Nadu (356) are the other States with more than 300 athletes each.

Dadra and Nagar Haveli have the smallest team of three athletes, a 100m sprinter and two table tennis players representing the Union Territory. Making their Khelo India debut, the Union Territory of Ladakh is the only other team with single-digit representation with two archers and five boxers. The kabaddi event has already began in Guwahati on Thursday.



Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launches the torch relay of 3rd Khelo India Youth Games in Guwahati. *PTI*

## Saina, Sindhu enter Malaysia Masters quarters

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
KUALA LUMPUR, JANUARY 9

SAINA NEHWAL and reigning world champion P V Sindhu produced dominating performances to progress to the women's singles quarterfinals of the Malaysia Masters Super 500 badminton tournament here on Thursday. Sixth seed Sindhu notched up a commanding 21-10 21-15 victory over Japan's Aya Ohori in a pre-quarterfinal match lasting just 34 minutes. It was Sindhu's ninth successive win over Ohori.

The 24-year-old Indian, who won the World Championships in Basel last year, will take on world number 1 Tai Tzu Ying in the quarterfinals after the Chinese Taipei shuttler got the better of South Korea's Sung Ji Hyun 21-18 16-21 21-10. Saina, who had won the Indonesia Masters last year before going through a rough patch, dispatched eighth seed An Se Young of South Korea 25-23 21-12 after a thrilling 39-minute contest to make the last eight. This is Saina's first win over the South Korean, who got the better of the Indian in the quarterfinals of the French Open last year. The two-time Commonwealth Games champion will next take on Olympic champion Carolina Marin.

Saina had defeated Lianne Tan of Belgium 21-15 21-17 in the opening round on Wednesday. In the men's singles, India's challenge ended after both Sameer Verma and H S Prannoy crashed out in the second round.

While Verma lost to Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia 19-21 20-22, Prannoy was shown the door by top seed Kento Momota of Japan 14-21 16-21.

### No venue to host PBL finals and semifinals

Bengaluru Raptors on Thursday expressed their inability to host the final and semifinals of the upcoming Premier Badminton League (PBL) due to "unavailability" of venue. In a series of tweets, Bengaluru Raptors made it clear that due to the unavailability of the Sree Kanteerava Indoor Stadium, they might not be able to host the scheduled matches. "Dear badminton players and Bengaluru Raptors fans, unfortunately it looks like this year we may not be able to have the Premier Badminton League finals in Namma Bengaluru. We have been requesting availability of Kanteerava stadium for several months now," the franchise wrote on their twitter handle. They blamed it on some officials at the Kanteerava, who, the franchise alleged, were "doing their very best to sabotage this event from happening".

The upcoming edition of the PBL is scheduled to start on January 20 when reigning world champion PV Sindhu's team Hyderabad Hunters faces Chennai Superstarz in Chennai. A total of 24 ties will be played in 21 days in four different cities. After the first leg in Chennai, the league will move to Lucknow on January 25, followed by Hyderabad, with Bangalore then being the host for the semi-finals and the finals on February 9.

**MIHIR VASAVDA**  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 9

A CAP on ammunition, a cumbersome procedure for getting firearms permission, barcodes for each firearm and every package of bullets that will enter the country, and a possible penalty if the lockers are left open. For the shooters competing at this year's Olympics, dealing with Japan's gun laws, considered to be among the strictest in the world, is likely to be as tricky as competing at the Games itself.

According to a guide published by the organising committee, every shooter competing at the Olympics will be allowed to carry only 800 rounds of ammunition each, significantly less than the previous Games and other international events. Additionally, the ammunition will have to be stored in a locker that will be provided to each at the venue, failing which he/she can be charged with breaking Japanese laws. "The maximum number of ammunition that can be stored in the locker is 800 per person under Japanese law. Any further ammunition cannot be stored for any reason. Those who have forgotten to lock the locker or store more than 800 rounds of ammunition might be charged with breaking the law," the guide stated. The restrictions on carrying ammunition mean that if Indian shooters reach Tokyo a week before the Games begin — as they did at the Rio Olympics four years ago — chances are they will run out of ammunition before their event starts.

Consequently, their road to Tokyo will be via the South Korean port city of Changwon. "We have been informed that an individual can carry a maximum of 800 rounds to Japan so we are planning accordingly. Before the Olympics, we will train in a nearby country, mostly South Korea, and then proceed to Tokyo," National Rifle Association of India secretary Rajiv Bhatia said.

The prescribed number, according to pistol coach Samresh Jung, is enough for match day and training on eve of the competition. For instance, in 50m rifle 3-position — which needs a 22 bullet — a shooter uses 120 rounds during the qualification round and approximately 40 to set their sights. If the shooter advances to the final, he will need 45 rounds for the match and another 15 at least for sighting. Most shooters also prefer keeping spares, in case of ammo failure. "So on a match day, you need around 250 rounds in total," Jung added. "But if you are reaching there four days or a week in advance, you need to have enough ammo; 800 is less since you end up shooting 100 rounds per day at least."

For 25m rapid fire pistol, the ammo requirement can reach up to 400 per day, especially during a long and intense session, given that five shots are fired in the space of four seconds. In normal circumstances, shooters are allowed to carry 5kg ammunition in flight, which roughly comes to around 1,200 rounds.

During long training stints abroad, like the 15-day camp in Doha before last year's Asian Championship, shooters buy ammunition that is available on site. "This being Olympics, though, everybody would want to carry their



Among other curbs, the organisers have put a cap of 800 rounds per shooter for the Tokyo Olympics. *File*

tested ammo," Jung said. Changwon has been identified as a possible base from where Indian shooters will launch their Tokyo campaign. However, before finalising it, the plan will first be trialled ahead of the Tokyo Olympics test event in April. "We want to see how it works out logistically," Jung said. "I would like to have fewer challenges like these."

Ammunition, however, is just one of the challenges. Japan's strict gun laws are seen as the reason why they have barely hosted international shooting tournaments in the past. The country has hosted the World Cup just twice — in 1995 (big bore) and 1999 (trap) — apart from four Asian Championships.

An Indian shooter who had travelled to Saitama for 2017 edition of the continental event, says the customs officials at the airport counted every bullet they carried.

"It took more than an hour for us just to leave the airport," the shooter said. While a physical inspection of firearms and ammo is unlikely during the Olympics, the shooters will be given QR codes, without which they will not

be able to access their own weapons.

The tedious process isn't uncommon in Japan. During the World Cup in Delhi last year, the country's rifle coach Goran Maksimovic had spoken about the 'strange' situations that emerge because of the gun laws. For instance, he was not allowed to even a rifle — even inside the shooting range — until he got a firearms license.

And to procure a license, he had to undergo a lengthy process, which included appearing for a police interview, sitting for a written exam, passing a firing test and submitting a doctor's certificate stating his mental fitness.

Though not as lengthy, all Tokyo-bound shooters, too, will have to go through a similar procedure to obtain permission that will be required to compete at the Games. "...in case the information submitted to Tokyo 2020 is not correct, or there is any necessary information missing by the deadline, the athlete will not receive a permission and therefore cannot participate in the Games," the organisers' handbook warned.

## How Japan's gun laws are one of the strictest in the world

INDIA'S LIBERAL gun laws are seen as a reason behind the country's shooters are winning international gold medals while they are still in their teens. Pistol shooter Saurabh Chaudhary, for instance, was just 16 when he set a world record. In Japan, that is the minimum age to start learning the sport. Until then, they use laser rifle and pistols.

According to the BBC, Japan is the first nation to impose gun laws in the whole world. The 1958 draft of the laws states that 'no person shall possess a

firearm.' And those who wish to, for sporting or safety purpose, need to pass a laborious process: attend an all-day class, pass a written test, achieve at least 95 percent accuracy in firing test apart from appearing for police interviews, and proving mental fitness.

The strict laws are credited for the country having one of the lowest crime rates in the world. At the same time, they are also the reason why Japan has barely hosted international shooting tournaments in the past.

EXPLAINED

## [SPORTS BAR]



## Rockets prevail in Harden-Young duel

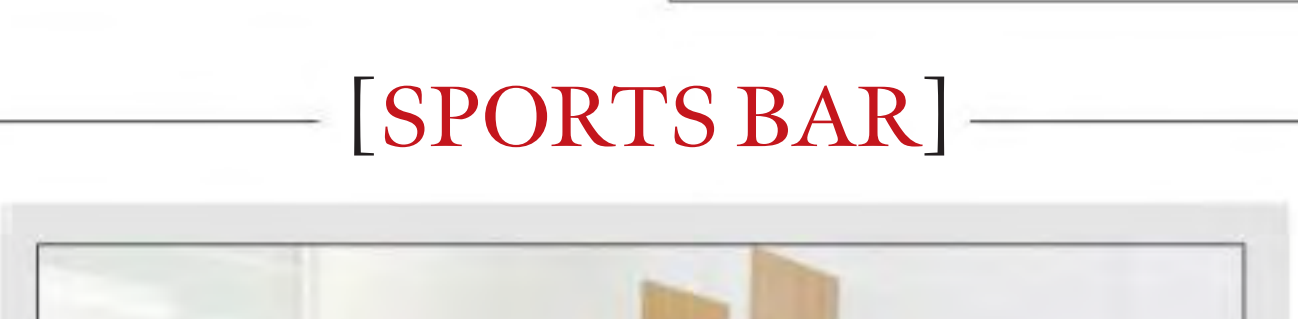
James Harden (**in pic**) scored 41 points en route to his second triple-double of the season and the visiting Houston Rockets beat the Atlanta Hawks 122-115 on a historic night Wednesday. The Hawks' Trae Young finished with 42 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists — the first 40-point triple-double in Hawks history. It was Young's sixth 40-point game and his second triple-double of the season. The game also marked the first time in NBA history that there were two 40-point triple-doubles in the same game. Harden had a subpar shooting night — making only 9 of 34 — but was 19 of 23 from the line with 10 rebounds and 10 assists. It was Harden's 44th career triple-double and his 15th 40-point triple-double, second-most in NBA history. The Hawks trailed by as many as 23 in the second quarter, but cut the lead to 118-115 with 18 seconds left.

## Woods eyes record win at Torrey Pines

Tiger Woods will have his first crack at securing a record-setting 83rd PGA Tour victory in two weeks in the Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines in San Diego, the former world number one said on Thursday. Woods, who tied Sam Snead at the top of the all-time PGA Tour wins list when he triumphed at the Zozo Championship in Japan last October, has won eight times at Torrey Pines with his most recent triumph there coming at the 2008 U.S. Open. The tournament, which will be held from Jan. 23-26, has been Woods' usual first start to the year. He joins a loaded field that includes Rory McIlroy, Justin Rose, Phil Mickelson, Jon Rahm and Xander Schauffele.

**Revamped Lahiri opens 2020 season**

The US PGA Sony Open in Honolulu, Hawaii, marks the first 2020 start for India's Anirban Lahiri, who has made major equipment changes and rebuilt his workout routine entering the new year. "My main target is to get back into contention more frequently and just try and keep knocking on the door, which is the only way to break through," Lahiri said. "I want to get more consistent this year. The last season and a half, I've not really contended." Lahiri has not won since 2015 and his best finish in 112 US PGA starts was second at the 2017 Memorial tournament.



The beds to be used by the athletes at the Olympics are displayed during a press preview in Tokyo. *Kyodo/via Reuters*

## Out of the box: Cardboard beds at Tokyo 2020

ATHLETES COMPETING at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games will sleep on bed frames made from recyclable cardboard, with mattresses formed of polyethylene materials that will be reused for plastic products after the Games. The environmentally conscious sleeping arrangements were put on display for the media for the first time on Thursday at a mock apartment in the Tokyo 2020 headquarters, though construction of residential sections of the Olympic and Paralympic village were completed in December. In all, 18,000 beds will be required at the village, nestled in Tokyo Bay and in sight of the iconic Rainbow Bridge, during the Olympics that begin on July 24. Only 8,000 will be needed for the Paralympics. At 2.10 metres long, the beds should be suitable for all but the very tallest athletes, and the manufacturer, Airweave, is confident they can bear a weight of around 200 kilograms, which is more than any athlete weighed at the 2016 Games in Rio.

## Real Kashmir look to get back to winnings ways

REAL KASHMIR will look to get back to winning ways when they host Punjab FC in the I-League in Srinagar on Friday amid cold conditions. Former champions Punjab FC have been practising in the sub-zero temperature for the much-awaited encounter, which will take place at the TRC Turf Ground. Last season, the team from Punjab refused to travel to Srinagar for their match against Real Kashmir, following the Pulwama terror attack. Speaking before the match, Real Kashmir FC head coach David Robertson said, "Punjab is always a tough team to play against. If we play and work as hard as we have, we can win the game."

## Match postponed due to bushfires

Australia's rampaging bushfires continue to affect top-level sporting events with a women's football match scheduled for Newcastle on Friday postponed because of the poor air quality and expected soaring temperatures. Football Federation Australia said on Thursday with the poor air quality in the Hunter region, which encompasses Newcastle, and temperatures expected to exceed 30C (86°F) at the kick-off time of 5 p.m., the women's W-League match between Newcastle and Adelaide would be rescheduled for Feb. 1.



## Sandhu top Indian at Hong Kong; Kapur 12th

India's Ajeetesh Sandhu finished with back-to-back birdies to get into the top-10 with a score of three-under 67 in the opening round of the season-opening Hong Kong Open golf tournament here on Thursday. Sandhu, who had a decent season in 2019 with two runner-up finishes on Asian Tour and a win on domestic Indian Tour, is tied-sixth and two shots behind the co-leaders, Australia's Wade Ormsby and Japan's Tomoharu Otsuki, who carded five-under-par 65 each. Shiv Kapur (**in pic**) was the next best Indian at two-under 68 and tied-12th alongside Thai Jazz Janewattananond, who won the 2019 Order of Merit. Two other Indians, Rashid Khan and Jyoti Randhawa turned in sub-par rounds of 69 each to be tied-20th, alongside the reigning Open champion Shane Lowry of Ireland.

