

Mysuru gears up for Invitation Cup Weekend

RACING

CYRUS J. MADAN
MYSURU
The imposing Chamundi Hill has stared down on the Mysore Race Club for decades.

If it could speak, I'm sure it would regale us with tales of awe because as one of the great Rock Bands in the world The Police wrote "Every breath you take and every move you make... I'll be watching you".

But, even with all the watching like an imperial sentinel, I doubt Chamundi Hill would have thought that one day it would witness the Mysore Race Club playing host to the biggest and most glamorous weekend of Indian racing – The Invitation Cup.

Indian racing's youngest Turf Authority came into being just six years ago. Of course, they have been



Bird's eye view: The Mysore Race Club awaits its biggest assignment yet. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Hearty welcome: MRC chairman Dr. N. Nithyanand Rao said that he and his managing committee will leave no stone unturned in showcasing the Invitation Weekend. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

there for years, but it was only in 2014 that they were inducted as an independent Turf Authority and just six years later they host the In-

invitation Weekend. Mysore Race Club has been racing for well over 100 years and in fact celebrated their centenary in 1991.

It's come a long way since the time they conducted just one Racing Season from August to October and today they race around the year.

The last Saturday of February and the first Sunday of March 2020 will usher in a new epoch in the archives of racing in Mysuru. A true

baptism by fire, you might say, as they assert that they have now arrived on the map of the Indian Turf.

Under the chairmanship of Dr. Nithyanand Rao and his committee, backed by a dedicated team of officials, Mysore Race Club has been working round the clock to

ensure that Indian Racing's most glamorous weekend will be showcased in all its splendour.

The marquee races
Saturday February 29, 2020 is an auspicious day in itself, coming once every four years.

They couldn't have chosen a better afternoon to run the first two of four Grade 1 races – The Bangalore Turf Club Sprinters Cup (Gr. 1), a blinding test of speed, and the M.A.M. Ramaswamy Stayers Cup (Gr. 1), a gruelling test of stamina.

And then, the next day the all-important Invitation Cup and the Maj. P.K. Mehra Memorial Super Mile.

These will be backed by the Suresh Mahendra Million, a Grade 2 Affair.

All in all an absolute carnival of racing that turfites in Mysuru have never ever witnessed.

Maiden GM-norm for Bharat

SPORTS BUREAU
MOSCOW

Thirteen-year-old Indian Bharat Subramaniyam made his maiden Grand Master-norm, reaching 4.5 points with a draw against GM Alexander Riazantsev (Russia) in the Aeroflot Open chess tournament here.

Two share lead
Mamedov and his 14-year-old compatriot Aydin Suleymanli are in the lead with six points.

Indian GM B. Adhiban held Azerbaijan's Rauf Mamedov to a draw in the eighth round to remain in contention for the top spot with 5.5 points, along with Aravindh Chithambaram and six others.

Anjum takes Tejaswini's spot

Indian shooting squad for Tokyo test event named

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has announced a 17-member shooting team for the Olympic test event to be staged at the Asanka Range in Tokyo, from April 16 to 25.

The Asanka Range was used for the 1964 Games in only rifle and pistol events.

This test event is basically meant for the Olympic qualified shooters with rare exceptions, in terms of numbers.

India will have 14 Olympic-qualified shooters, as Tejaswini Sawant who won the Olympic quota in the women's rifle 3-position event, has been kept out.

Her place has been taken by Anjum Moudgil.

The two spots in the wo-



Anjum. •FILE PHOTO: S. MAHINSHA

men's air rifle have been filled by Apurvi Chandela and Elavenil Valarivan.

Since the test event does not allow additional spots, Anjum will not shoot in air rifle, despite having won the first Olympic quota with the silver medal in air rifle in the World Championship in 2018.

This could also give a hint

about the thought process of the National federation for the Olympics. India has not won any Olympic quota in men's rapid fire pistol event, but will field Anish Bhanwala and Adarsh Singh in the test event.

Moreover, Rahi Sarnobat and Chinki Yadav will shoot in the women's 25-metre pistol event, even though Manu Bhaker has a better ranking.

Since only one Olympic quota may be swapped by a country, with the same gender, and depending on availability, it is a good possibility that Chinki gets to retain her place in the event, with good performances.

Entries revised
Incidentally, the NRAI has revised the entries for the World Cup at home in Delhi

in March, by bringing Chinki into the main event, and keeping Olympian Annu Raj Singh in the MQS section.

The team: Men: 50m rifle 3-position: Sanjeev Rajput, Ashwary Pratap Singh. **10m air pistol:** Abhishek Verma, Saurabh Chaudhary. **10m air rifle:** Divyansh Singh Panwar, Deepak Kumar. **25m rapid fire pistol:** Anish Bhanwala, Adarsh Singh. **Skeet:** Mairaj Ahmad Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa.

Women: 50m rifle 3-position: Anjum Moudgil. **10m air pistol:** Manu Bhaker, Yashaswini Singh Deswal. **10m air rifle:** Apurvi Chandela, Elavenil Valarivan. **25m sports pistol:** Rahi Sarnobat, Chinki Yadav.

Mixed air pistol: Abhishek Verma & Manu Bhaker; Saurabh Chaudhary & Yashaswini Singh Deswal. **Mixed air rifle:** Divyansh Singh Panwar & Apurvi Chandela; Deepak Kumar & Elavenil Valarivan.

Indian boxers make a great escape from coronavirus-hit Italy

STAN RAYAN
KOCHI

With the coronavirus spreading fast in many countries, there is a new development virtually every hour. Countries have shut borders, cities have been locked down, people quarantined and flights have been suspended.

And with the coronavirus cases jumping to 400 in Italy, it was virtually a great escape for the Indian boxers training there in Assisi on Thursday.

The contingent (13 boxers and 10 support staff), which is scheduled to fight in the Olympic qualifiers in the Jordanian capital of Amman from March 3, left Italy and reached Germany on Thursday.

"Our team has reached Frankfurt airport and it will be leaving for Jordan in an hour. We were running around from pillar to post," Jay Kowli, the secretary general of the Boxing Federation of India, told *The Hindu* on Thursday evening.

The team includes stars like M.C. Mary Kom and Amit Panghal.

Clearly, the new developments – Italy is now experiencing the largest outbreak of the coronavirus in Europe and on Wednesday Royal Jordanian Airlines announced that it was suspending all flights from Amman to Rome until further notice – had left Kowli very worried.

"We had to be alert all the time and get various arran-

gements done. We had to be very careful.

"Italy's name (on the coronavirus hit list) has come out and had we been late, it could have been a problem," he said.

"People are quarantined, flights are stopped, so it's lucky that we left. We are like parents, they are our kids. Now all over the world, there's a big worry."

Boxers from Ireland, France, New Zealand and Russia were also training in Assisi, in the central Italian region of Umbria, which is nearly 500km from Lombardy, the worst-affected area.

The Irish team had cut short its camp and left on Wednesday.

MARUTI SUZUKI

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