

# Tokyo 2020 will now be held next year

Japan and IOC take decision with aim to safeguard health of athletes and all involved in the Games

## SUMMER OLYMPICS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LAUSANNE  
The 2020 Tokyo Olympics has been postponed to no later than the summer of 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic sweeping the globe, the International Olympic Committee announced on Tuesday.

The Games were scheduled for July 24-August 9, but after telephone discussions between IOC president Thomas Bach and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a historic joint decision was taken for the first postponement of an Olympics in peacetime.

Abe said Bach was in "100% agreement" when Japan asked the IOC to push back the Games and said the delayed Olympics "held in a complete form will be a testament to mankind's defeat of the new virus".

In a joint statement, the pair said that based on current World Health Organization information, the Tokyo Games "must be rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021, to safeguard the health of the athletes, everybody involved in the Olympic Games and the international community".

"The leaders agreed that the Olympic Games in Tokyo could stand as a beacon of hope to the world during these troubled times and that the Olympic flame could become the light at the end



**Momentous:** A man walks past a billboard promoting the Tokyo Games. The unprecedented, but anticipated, decision to postpone the mega event was taken on Tuesday. ■ FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

of the tunnel in which the world finds itself at present.

### Flame to stay in Japan

"Therefore, it was agreed that the Olympic flame will stay in Japan. It was also agreed that the Games will keep the name Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020," the statement concluded.

Bach later said he did not discuss new dates with Abe and the exact dates is a question for the Tokyo organising committee and an International Olympic Committee panel overseeing the preparations.

The torch relay, due to start on Thursday from the Fukushima, will be postponed and the flame will remain there for now.

The move would be a devastating blow for Tokyo, which had won widespread praise for its organisation, with venues finished well ahead of time and tickets massively oversubscribed.

The Olympics, which has experienced boycotts, terrorist attacks and protests, but has been held every four years since 1948, would be the highest-profile event affected by the virus that has killed thousands and closed sports competitions worldwide.

The IOC has come under increasing pressure in recent days to postpone the Games, scheduled to start on July 24,

with 1.7 billion people across the planet in lockdown to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

### Preparations affected

Training has become impossible for many athletes and exposes them to the risk of contracting or spreading the disease. Competitions and qualifiers have been scrapped, while international travel is severely limited.

On Sunday, the IOC had initially given itself a deadline of four weeks to come up with a proposal to postpone the Games, a Herculean task that touches on every aspect of Tokyo 2020 planning from venues to security to ticketing.

Tokyo was spending some \$12.6 billion to host the Games, according to its latest budget, and experts believe a postponement could cost it some \$6 billion in the short-term before recouping it when it eventually goes ahead.

It will also be a bitter blow to sponsors and major broadcasters who rely on the four-yearly extravaganza for critical advertising revenue.

It is not the first time Tokyo has seen unscheduled changes to the Games – it was due to be the first Asian country to host the Olympics in 1940 before pulling out due to international pressure over its war with China.

But Tokyo 2020 organisers point to the unparalleled complexity – not to mention cost – of shifting the Games. It is not even clear venues will be available and tens of thousands of hotel rooms will need to be cancelled and rebooked.

### Logistical issues

Squeezing in the 16-day Games into what will already be a hugely crowded 2021 calendar is another major headache, with arguably the two biggest sports, swimming and athletics, due to hold their World Championships that summer.

However, World Athletics has already said it was prepared to shift its World championships, scheduled for August 6-15 next year in Oregon, to accommodate the move.

## Athletes relieved, says IOA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Tuesday welcomed the decision to postpone the Tokyo Olympic Games, saying the country's athletes have been relieved of having to train during a global health crisis.

"IOA welcomes the decision of IOC. Discussions were held by IOC with organisers and all stakeholders prior to this," IOA secretary-general Rajiv Mehta told PTI.

**Meeting**  
"Soon after the lockdown is over, IOA would be

holding meetings with athletes, federations, sponsors, etc. to revise plans. "This decision today, relieves our athletes of worries of having to train now during epidemic and perform their best in four months from now," he added.

## Appropriate decision: Sindhu

Gopi Chand welcomes move, awaits new guidelines

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM  
HYDERABAD

World badminton champion P.V. Sindhu has welcomed the decision to postpone the Tokyo Olympics.

"I think it was the most appropriate decision given the prevailing critical situation.

"The organisers have shown concern for the health of every one involved by not going ahead with the original schedule," Sindhu told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

"Athletes should be prepared for unforeseen developments. Now, with the Games officially postponed, naturally we will have to re-plan our preparations. But, first, let us all hope that the situation improves globally," added Sindhu.

Chief badminton coach P. Gopi Chand also welcomed the decision.

"I welcome this very good decision for it would have been difficult to con-



**Wait to continue:** Gopi and Sindhu arrive in Hyderabad after the latter's silver-winning show at 2016 Olympics. ■ FILE PHOTO

duct the Games given the uncertainty shrouding the situation. Athletes would have found it extremely challenging to make it to the Games if they were to be held as per the original schedule in July.

"I don't know what kind of impact it (the postponement) will have on badminton players, for first we have to know the BWF guidelines

and the new qualification norms. Whether they will go ahead with the existing norms or not," Gopi said.

### More time, new challenges

"Yes, the move also gives the coaches and athletes time and at the same time new challenges too," said Gopi, who is in self-isolation on return from the All England championship.

## Life always comes first: Mary Kom

Indian stars concur that well-being of athletes is paramount

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Life comes first, sport can wait. This was the collective view of India's top Olympic-bound athletes, including M.C. Mary Kom and Saina Nehwal, as they lauded the Games' postponement on Tuesday.

"The situation right now is not good. Life always comes first, everything else can wait. Players' safety is paramount. Everyone who took this decision factored this in. I think it's good," said boxer Mary Kom.

Saina, who was racing against time to qualify for Tokyo, said, "happy that it's postponed even though some of us haven't qualified.



Ravi Dahiya. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI



Mary. ■ FILE PHOTO: VIVEK BENDRE

We are eager to know what the qualification (process) would be like going ahead."

India's only individual Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra welcomed the decision and stressed on the need to immediately suspend training camps and guard the athletes in the wake of the pandemic.

Wrestler Bajrang Punia said training had been thrown haywire and the postponement is welcome.

"It's a good decision because everyone is disturbed. Athletes' health is paramount. No one is training properly. We first have to save people from this epidemic," said Punia.



Bindra. ■ FILE PHOTO

"We were prepared for Olympics. We were ready but what do you do when something like this happens. It's beyond control," grappler Ravi Dahiya said.

### Hockey coaches' view

Indian men's hockey coach Graham Reid said the team is gutted by the postponement but understands the gravity of the health crisis.

"It is very disappointing that the Olympics will not go ahead, but given the unprecedented circumstances facing the world at present it is totally understandable and expected," Reid said. The view was shared by women's team coach, Sjoerd Marijne.

## Tough, but smart move: Paes

SHAYAN ACHARYA  
MUMBAI

India's tennis ace Leander Paes has termed the decision to postpone the Tokyo Olympics a 'smart move'.

Paes, who won a bronze at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996, told *The Hindu* that it was the right call.

"The Olympic movement stands for good health and is about the global community coming together. At a time like this, when the corona pandemic has touched almost every corner of the world, including Tokyo, full credit to the Olympic committee for postponing the Games," Paes said.

Paes said every aspect had to be considered before taking such a tough call.

"It's a very tough decision to take, because millions and millions of sporting commerce goes into the Olympics. Given the effort the Olympic movement takes to run the Games, it was a hard decision," Paes said.

In December last year, Paes had announced that 2020 would be his farewell year from tennis and he wanted to sign off after featuring in the Tokyo Games. On his plans following the postponement, he said: "My team and I are evaluating."



Leander Paes. ■ FILE PHOTO

## Shooting fraternity hails decision



APURVI. ■ FILE PHOTO

The Indian shooting team has welcomed the postponement of the Tokyo Games.

Apurvi Chandela, who has been training at her own shooting range at home, said she was taken aback by the decision. She, however, said this doesn't affect her preparations. "We have to look at our preparations and stay focused."

Abhishek Verma, who has self-quarantined at his Chandigarh home, said: "This is an important decision keeping the public interest in mind. It was necessary to ensure public safety. All the countries will be able to participate in full swing next year."

Manu Bhaker, though disappointed by the decision, echoed the shooters' "health above all" opinion.

## COVID-19 IMPACT

### Bajrang donates salary in fight against pandemic

NEW DELHI  
Star wrestler Bajrang Punia has donated his six months salary towards fight against the coronavirus pandemic. "I have donated my six months' salary towards relief fund for COVID-19 patients set up by Haryana Chief Minister M.L. Khattar," Punia, who works with the Railways as an officer on special duty (OSD) said in a



tweet. He also called upon people to make contributions towards the "Haryana corona relief fund." ■ IANS

### Senior National badminton put on hold

NEW DELHI  
The 84th senior National badminton championship, scheduled to be held in Lucknow from April 27 to May 3, has been put on hold, Badminton Association of India

(BAI) said on Tuesday. "We have put on hold the 84th senior Nationals and 75th inter-State inter-zonal in light of the coronavirus outbreak. We have advised the state secretaries not to book any ticket for the Lucknow event," BAI secretary Ajay Singhania said. ■ PTI

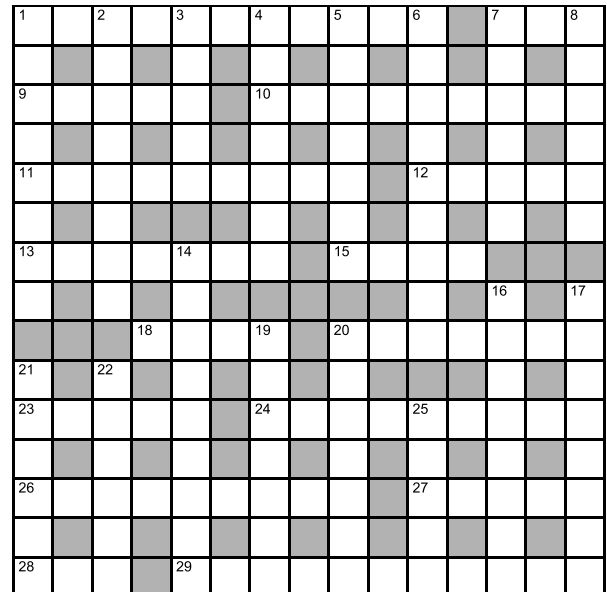
### Bayern Munich and other Bundesliga clubs take pay cuts

BERLIN  
Footballers at Germany's top teams, including Bayern Munich, have agreed to take pay cuts to help clubs survive

the economic impact of the coronavirus, media reports said Tuesday. *Bild* reports that players and club officials at champions Bayern, currently on top of Bundesliga, have accepted a 20% in their salaries. Bayern has a massive wage bill which reached €336 million last year, almost half of club turnover. Players at Borussia Moenchengladbach were the first in the Bundesliga to propose a pay cut. Borussia Dortmund and Bayer Leverkusen players are in talks over pay cut proposals with management. ■ AFP

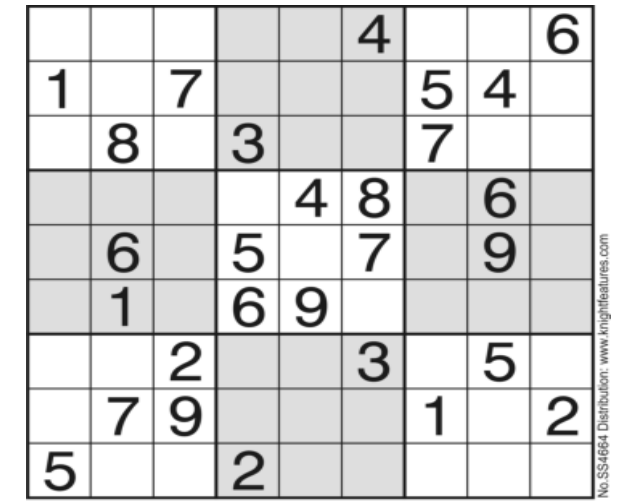
## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12892

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



- (set by Arden)
- 12 Hope everyone can suppress discontent (5)
  - 13 Bag of tricks – grabbed it, getting ultimate thrill (4,3)
  - 15 Image exposed – nice and long (4)
  - 18 Hard to check vehicle daily (4)
  - 20 He gets a bird on flight (7)
  - 23 Only role of abstractionism in painting (2,3)
  - 24 Landlord will glance around before entering empty room initially (9)
  - 26 Used for divining friend's secret, reportedly (9)
  - 27 Well earned, no odds on this animal (5)
  - 28 One breaking a contract is a fool (3)
  - 29 Free, in case trade is established (11)
  - 1 It will slither and stop on tarmac (7)
  - 5 Subject of King's ascendancy – they say 'Ayes' have it (7)
  - 6 Communicate as per home design (9)
  - 7 Perhaps later allowed new growth overhead (6)
  - 8 Complaint with business software he has acquired (6)
  - 14 Unkempt, hairy – task for him is to fight (9)
  - 16 After drink understood he's a man of God (8)
  - 17 Butted in, but perhaps didn't stop offensive (8)
  - 19 Automatic turnaround for contributor (7)
  - 20 Endless plea by painter (7)
  - 21 Move on with a ticket (6)
  - 22 Everyone's sunk low, Tom goes for vote (6)
  - 25 Purge the opponent, finally there's change (5)

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

**Solution to puzzle 12891**

C	E	M	S	F				
I	R	O	C	A	S	I	O	N
N	L	E	N	O	A	R	W	
F	E	E	L	O	T	T	E	M
A	S	E	E	U	G	C		
M	O	L	O	T	O	V	W	A
Y	A	H	I	E	A	A	Y	
W	I	T	H	R	A	W	I	N
B	L	G	R	E	T	R	I	O
E	L	G	R	E	H	E	R	I
C	A	N	T	R	I	P	O	S
H	T	T	E	A	E	A	A	S
A	R	U	M	L	I	L	S	P
Y	N	N	E	T	D			

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

1	2	4	5	3	9	7	6	8
6	7	9	2	1	8	4	3	5
3	5	8	7	6	4	9	1	2
9	4	3	8	5	7	6	2	1
8	1	7	6	4	2	3	5	9
5	6	2	1	9	3	8	4	7
7	8	6	4	2	5	1	9	3
4	9	5	3	8	1	2	7	6
2	3	1	9	7	6	5	8	4

## FAITH

### Importance of Acharyas

Alavandar's Stotra Ratnam is about Lord Narayana. But it begins with worship of Acharya Nathamuni. In a work about the Supreme One, how can one begin with praise of an Acharya, we may ask. The answer lies in the fact, that without an Acharya, there is no way we can attain moksha.

It is his guiding hand that shows us the right path, said Valayapet Ramachariar, in a discourse. Milk has a natural sweetness. But add some jaggery, cardamom and saffron to it, and it tastes even better. Similarly, worshipping God becomes even more delightful, when it goes hand in hand with worship of an Acharya. If we are present in a temple, when an Acharya does a mangalasanana of the deity, then is not our joy doubled? Paying obeisance to one's Acharya pleases the Lord. But is there any precedent for such worship? Sage Maitreya fell at the feet of sage Parasara, and asked for advice. Parasara then told him the Vishnu Purana. So Alavandar is only following what had already been the practice, namely paying one's respects to an Acharya, when one seeks knowledge about Bhagavan.

An Acharya is put on a pedestal – Acharya devo bhava – an Acharya is equal to God. Chandogya Upanishad says Acharyavaan Purusho Vedah, that is, only a man who has an Acharya has proper spiritual understanding. So, we can see that the Sastras lay stress on Acharya bhakti. Only with Acharya's help, we can understand Vedantic texts. And the beauty is that a person who has studied under an Acharya, also comprehends that which has not been taught to him. It may not be possible for a shishya to study all literature. His Acharya may teach him only a few. But when he later on reads whatever has not been taught, he still is able to understand the meaning, because of Acharya's grace.