

# ‘Postponed Olympic qualifiers will take place’

Batra asks NSFs to share athletes' training programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president Narinder Batra on Saturday said the Tokyo Olympics qualification events, postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will be held once the health crisis is resolved and asked the National Sports Federations (NSFs) to prepare a list of such tournaments in their respective sports.

Batra also asked the top brass of all the NSFs to share a calendar of their athletes' preparations for the Tokyo Games, pushed back by one year to 2021 in view of the worsening coronavirus crisis.

"The qualification events which were postponed will happen again at revised dates once this virus issue is resolved. Draft tentative planning for that. Please share details of all the qualification events yet to happen in your sport," Batra wrote in a letter to the presidents and secretaries of the NSFs.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach on Thursday had a conference call with the members in the after-



Looking at the future: Batra wants IOA and NSFs to plan on the extension of contracts of the coaches. \*FILE PHOTO: PTI

math of the postponement of the Olympics. Batra is an IOC member as well as the president of the International Hockey Federation.

Batra also said the IOA and NSFs need to plan on the extension of contracts of the coaches whose tenures were to end this year.

"As you are already aware that the 2020 Olympics is postponed to 2021, we now need to plan for extension of contracts for HPD (High Per-

formance Director), coaches, support staff, etc. till the end of 2021 as many such contracts are ending in 2020. This process needs to start as soon as possible," the IOA chief said.

## Understanding

He added that under the present circumstances, it will be very difficult to give any confirmations "but this is just to get everyone on the same page".

# New date 'won't satisfy everybody', says Coe

'There are demands for the decision to be taken as quickly as possible'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS

World Athletics president Sebastian Coe admitted on Friday that settling on a new date for the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 will not satisfy everybody.

"All sports have made it pretty clear they have particular challenges at particular times of the year," said Coe. "We are probably not going to reach a solution that meets with the approval of every sport. But there does have to be an element of flexibility and there is going to be flexibility for the next two years."

The 2021 World Athletics Championships, for example, are scheduled to be staged in August next year in Eugene, USA.

There is no definite date yet for the rescheduled Olympic Games with IOC chief Thomas Bach saying on Tuesday that the Olympics "must be rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021".

There have been suggestions even that the



Sebastian Coe. \*FILE PHOTO

All sports have made it pretty clear they have particular challenges at particular times of the year

rebooted Olympics could be held in the spring and so allow athletes to avoid competing in the brutal heat and humidity of Japan's summer.

"There are clearly demands for this decision to be taken as quickly as possible – the athletes and the federations need clarity," added Coe. "Once the decision is made, we can build (the calendars) around it."

# This battle can be won only by staying indoors: Pujara

'We have a responsibility to look after our country and family'

EXCLUSIVE

AYAN ACHARYA  
CHENNAI

Even as the novel coronavirus continues to cripple major sporting events across the world, India's Test batsman Cheteshwar Pujara has called on fans to rally around each other.

"These are tough times, not just for our nation but the entire world. The only way we can fight this pandemic is by staying indoors," Pujara told *Sportstar*.

"It can be frustrating at times. There will be days when you'll have to resist the urge to go out for a casual stroll, but we have a responsibility to look after our country and family and the best way to do it is by remaining in self-isolation at home," he added.

## Relaxed routine

Pujara is using the downtime to enjoy a relaxed routine at home with his young daughter. "It's a welcome change for me," he said.

"I like spending time with myself, reading a book or watching TV. That said, I've a young daughter who is so energetic and wants to play



Welcome break: Cheteshwar Pujara, returning from a practice session during the New Zealand tour last month, says people will have to resist the urge to go for a casual stroll. \*FILE PHOTO

all the time, so half my day goes into taking care of her. I'm also helping my wife Puja with the daily chores."

Pujara reminded that sport needs to take a backseat for now.

"I feel sport really has the power to bring people together but now is not the time for fans to throng stadiums in support of their teams and players," he said.

"Yes, you still need to stick together but with your family, in your own homes."

"In the aftermath of a crisis such as this, I feel the biggest fight is going to be to be indoors."

"For a sportsman, the fight is out on the field; for a soldier, it's the war front, but this particular battle can only be won by staying indoors."

## COVID-19 AID



Raina contributes 52 lakh

LUCKNOW India player Suresh Raina has pledged ₹52 lakh in the fight against coronavirus. "It's time we all do our bit to help defeat COVID-19. I'm pledging ₹52 lakh for the fight (₹31 lakh to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund and ₹21 lakh to the UP CM's Disaster Relief Fund). Please do your bit too," Raina wrote on Twitter.

## MPL team owners' kind gesture to groundsmen

MUMBAI The eight team owners of the Mumbai Premier League (MPL) will be donating ₹1 lakh each in order to help the groundsmen working on the Mumbai maidans and facing hardship due to COVID-19 lockdown. PTI

## Bagan gives ₹20 lakh

KOLKATA Designated I-League champion Mohun Bagan has announced a donation of ₹20 lakh in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. "Mohun Bagan will donate ₹20 lakh towards the West Bengal State Emergency Relief Fund to be used to combat the deadly coronavirus pandemic," Mohun Bagan announced on its official Facebook page. PTI

## COVID-19 IMPACT

### Bhunia in AFC's video awareness campaign

NEW DELHI Former India captain Bhaichung Bhunia will feature in Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) public awareness campaign on the COVID-19 pandemic, the continental body said. "The #BreakTheChain campaign features some of Asia's finest from all across the continent, such as 2018 AFC Women's Player of the Year, Wang Shuang from China PR, Indian legend Bhaichung Bhunia and Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors' and 2016 AFC Champions League winner Lee Dong-gook with several more big names poised to join the series in the upcoming instalments," the

### UEFA chief says season can still be saved

ROME The head of UEFA said European football leagues were still looking at all options and not ruling out finishing this season – if the coronavirus pandemic subsides. "We could start again in mid-May, in June or even late June," Aleksander Ceferin told Italy's La

### F-1 teams to help in manufacture of medical devices

LONDON Seven UK-based Formula One teams have responded to the British government's call for assistance with the manufacture of medical devices to help in the treatment of COVID-19 patients. The teams, which have diverted technological resources into the 'Project



### Gobert and Utah Jazz players recover

NEW YORK Rudy Gobert, the first NBA player to test positive for coronavirus, and all Utah Jazz players and staff have been cleared of coronavirus by the Utah Department of Health, the club announced on Friday. The players and staff members completed a 14-day isolation and quarantine period, and no longer pose a risk of infection to others, according to the health department. AFP

AFC said in a statement. Others in the video include Saudi Arabia's Yasser Al Qahtani, Hong Kong's history-making coach Chan Yuen Ting, as well as Australia's Adam Taggart. PTI

*Repubblica*. Any time after that and "the season will probably be lost," he said. Ceferin did not say when UEFA will issue a final ruling and stressed that consultations with the main leagues and clubs were still underway. "There is also a proposal to end this season at the beginning of the next one and then start the next one a little later," said Ceferin. AFP

Pitlane' collective, will try to improve respirator and ventilator facilities. Red Bull, Racing Point, Haas, McLaren, Mercedes, Renault and Williams have agreed to assist. Meanwhile, the fans could find out as soon as next week whether this year's British GP will go ahead. Officials are trying to draw up a revised season after the first eight races of 2020 were called off due to COVID-19. AFP

### Dybala reveals how he struggled to breathe

MILAN Juventus star Paulo Dybala revealed on Friday how he "struggled to breathe" after contracting coronavirus. He was one of three Juventus players to catch the virus along with Daniele Rugani and Blaise Matuidi, who both had no symptoms. "I feel better now after some strong symptoms," the 26-year-old Dybala said. "A couple of days ago I was not well. I was struggling to breathe. I gasped for air and as a result I couldn't do anything, after five minutes I was already very tired. Now I'm fine," he said. AFP



## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

### Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

# Former LaLiga winger dons the white coat

Dovale trades his football boots to serve his country

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
CORUNNA (SPAIN)

Journeyman footballer Toni Dovale put his football boots to one side and slipped into a pharmacist's white coat in the front line struggle against coronavirus in Spain.

The 29-year-old pharmacy graduate and former top-level sportsman had been playing football for a Thai club, but was visiting his family in Spain when the COVID-19 pandemic took hold.

So he decided to pitch in



Toni Dovale. \*AFP

using the studies which he had yet to put into practice due to his passion for football. "I really was packing my bags to go back when things got complicated," Dovale said.

## Travel restrictions

Travel restrictions trapped Dovale in his native La Coruna in the Atlantic coast region of Galicia, where he started his football career with nearby Celva Vigo.

Although Dovale also completed his university studies in pharmacy four years ago, he had never actually worked in the field. Now with the world of sport in limbo the footballer realised the time was ripe to use his studies to help his homeland. "I was playing in Asia then; pharmacy is different there and I was never in Spain long enough to work," he said.

# International Olympic Committee's package for athletes — 'How to stay positive'

Six-point advice seeks to support them physically, mentally

GENERAL

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

Having postponed the Tokyo Olympics to next year, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has taken the next step to keep the athletes tuned to a positive mindset, amidst the depressing scenario painted across the globe by the coronavirus pandemic.

Bringing the world of athletes under one umbrella Athlete365, for which the Olympic and non-Olympic athletes can sign up, the IOC, through its website olympic.org, has proposed a six-point advice — 'How to stay positive' from the Dutch team's psychologist Paul Wylleman.

# Vikas vows to win Olympic gold

I am the toughest one and it is time to perform, he says

BOXING

K. KEERTHIVASAN  
CHENNAI

These are exciting times for Indian boxing as a record nine pugilists (five men and four women) have made the cut for the Tokyo Olympics (postponed to 2021). London 2012 had witnessed seven Indians in the fray.

Vikas Krishan, the most experienced boxer in the group, is considered a bright prospect to win a medal, even gold. He won the yellow metal in the Asian Games 2010 (Guangzhou), and a bronze at Incheon (2014) and Jakarta (2018). He also clinched the third spot in the 2011 World championship and a gold in the 2018 Commonwealth Games at Gold Coast.

Santiago Nieva, India's High Performance Director, said: "Vikas has been at an exceptionally high level for

"You can do this by taking care of both your mental and physical health," says the introduction.

## First advice

The first advice is to choose trusted communication channels and understand the relevance of the overwhelming flood of information.

The second points seeks the athletes to manage their thoughts. "We have to accept that we cannot always be in control of the situation, but we have the ability to take some specific measures that can deal with our problems to keep daily life as structured as possible."

The guidance is for athletes to stay relaxed, by taking deep breath to relieve

tension. The importance of listening to music, taking a walk, reading a book or watching a favourite TV show has been highlighted.

The next advice seeks the athletes to not feel guilty of rude behaviour, in view of the need to maintain social distancing.

## Eye on future

"Keep your eye on the future" is the fourth advice. The athletes need to be in constant touch with their coaches and teams, to manage daily training in the re-trained circumstances.

"Eventually events and competitions will return. So, make sure you stay prepared and ready for that moment," reads the redeeming line for the athletes.

The expert advice for the athletes is to capitalise on the communication channels, even while maintaining physical distance, to stay in touch with friends and teammates by sharing thoughts, to be mentally fit.

The sixth tip emphasises that sharing problems as well as daily activities would help in maintaining a stable lifestyle and deal with the psychological impact.

Finally, the IOC has also suggested the athletes to tap the resources from the World Health Organisation (WHO) on dealing with COVID-19.

The IOC has designed a mobile App, 'Get Set-Train Smarter', which identifies effective exercises for athletes in different sports.

# BCCI donates 51 crore for PM-CARES

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced that it will contribute ₹51 crore to the Prime Minister Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM-CARES) Fund.

According to a statement issued by the BCCI, president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah discussed the issue with other office-bearers and State associations before announcing this decision.

"The outbreak of COVID-19 is a public health emergency and the BCCI has a firm resolve that the nation gets all possible help to cope with the testing times," the statement read. "The BCCI will contribute to the Prime Minister's initiative, a dedicated National fund (PM-CARES Fund), with the primary objective of dealing with emergency or distress situations."

It has been agreed that the BCCI will contribute ₹35 crore while the 32 State associations will donate ₹50 lakh each, *The Hindu* understands.



Packing a punch: Vikas feels he's ready to take on any opponent in his medal quest. \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT