

# Rescheduled Olympic Games to begin on July 23, 2021

No qualification events to be scheduled until further notice; World athletics championships moved to 2022

## TOKYO 2020

**UTHRA GANESAN**  
NEW DELHI  
The Tokyo Olympics will be held from July 23 to August 8, 2021, almost exactly a year after the Games were to commence this year.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Monday confirmed the new dates for the 32nd edition of the Games with details on handling the logistics necessitated by the decision. The Paralympics was also confirmed from August 24-September 5 next year.

The decision came after extensive discussions with all NOCs, International Federations (IFs) and the Tokyo Organising Committee. "This decision is in line with the many comments and requests we received. I hope you will appreciate that, given the many constraints, we had to take this decision without consulting you directly again," IOC president Thomas Bach said in a communique.

Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori confirmed the decision in Tokyo. "A certain amount of time is required for the selection and qualification of athletes and for their training and preparation, and the consensus was that staging the rescheduled Games during the summer vacation in Japan would be preferable," Mori said.

### Good news

The IOC also reiterated the revised qualification systems and timelines, confirming that athletes/NOCs already



**Taking note:** A passer-by takes photos of a countdown clock showing the adjusted days and time for the postponed Olympic Games next year. \*REUTERS

qualified would retain their places while the remaining qualifiers and qualification spots would be finalised soon.

"We will continue to work closely with each IF on the necessary revisions of Tokyo 2020 qualification systems. To facilitate these adaptations, and reflecting the postponement of the Games, we are making necessary modifications to the qualification system principles to include, for example, the relaxation of

the maximum two-year period and amendments to the qualification deadlines," IOC said.

The IOC also confirmed that no further qualification events would be scheduled until further notice and announced the formation of a Task Force to look into the operational and logistical changes required, including securing sports venues, Olympic Village and hotels. Deadlines for ticketing and accreditations have also been

pushed back with already purchased tickets likely to remain valid.

The decision, however, has forced several IFs to reschedule their calendar with World Athletics confirming the 2021 World Championships would now be held in 2022.

"Everyone needs to be flexible and compromise, and to that end we are now working with organisers in Oregon on new dates in 2022 for our World athletics champion-

ships. We are also in discussions with the Commonwealth Games Federation and the European Championships," World Athletics said in a statement.

### World swimming

The 2021 World swimming championships, scheduled for July 16-August 1 in Fukuoka, would also be pushed back, although the International Swimming Federation has ruled out postponing the competition to 2022.

## Tokyo 2020's bumpy road

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
TOKYO

Olympic officials regularly lauded Tokyo as the best prepared host city they had seen. But no one could have planned for the pandemic that has forced an unprecedented postponement of the 2020 Games. AFP chronicles the path to postponement.

**2013: Tears of joy:** TV news presenters burst into tears and thousands of people erupt in screams of delight as the IOC awarded the Games to Tokyo in September 2013.

**2015: Stadium scrapped:** Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was forced to tear up blueprints for the proposed national stadium when costs ballooned out of control.

**2015: Logo dropped:** The logo for the Games was ditched in September 2015 after accusations of plagiarism.

**2018: Boxing blues:** The IOC stripped AIBA of the right to run the boxing competition at the Games over various allegations.

**2019: French charges:** French investigating magistrates in January 2019 charged the former head of Japan's Olympic Committee, Tsunekazu Takeda, as they probed two payments totalling \$2.3 million made before and after the Japanese capital was chosen.

**2019: Budget blowout:** Organisers unveiled the final version of their budget in December, with the Games expected to cost \$12.6 billion.

**2019: Russian ban:** Russia's participation in

the Games was thrown into question in December, when anti-doping agency WADA banned the country's athletes for four years from global events.

**2020: Cancellation 'unthinkable':** By late March, the coronavirus outbreak had been declared a pandemic causing more than 325,000 infections and over 14,400 deaths. Tokyo governor Koike called cancellation of the Games due to COVID-19 "unthinkable".

**2020: Historic postponement:** The IOC and Japan eventually bow to the inevitable and postpone the Olympics in a historic decision.

Less than a week later, the new date for the opening ceremony is announced: July 23, 2021.

## IOA asks NSFs to start planning

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Monday asked all the national sports federations (NSFs) to chalk out training programmes to prepare their athletes for the postponed Tokyo Games.

"All Olympic sports NSFs (National Sports Federations) are requested to please start their draft plan-

ning structure for preparation for Tokyo 2021 and for Paris 2024," IOA president Narinder Batra said in a release.

Soon after the new dates were announced, IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta said, "Indian Olympic Association along with the National Sports Federations welcome and support the new dates for the Tokyo

2020 Olympic Games, which will be held from 23 July to 8 August, 2021."

Two days ago, the IOA chief had asked the NSFs to share the calendar of their athletes' preparations.

Nearly 80 Indian athletes have so far qualified for the Tokyo Olympics in seven sports - athletics, archery, boxing, equestrian, hockey, shooting and wrestling.

## Wimbledon will be cancelled, says German official

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
PARIS

The vice-president of the German tennis federation has predicted that Wimbledon will be cancelled on Wednesday, and slammed the French Tennis Federation for moving the French Open to the autumn.

Dirk Hordorff told French sports daily *L'Equipe* that he expects Wimbledon, scheduled for June 29-July 12, to be scrapped due to the coronavirus pandemic. "This is not a rumour, they will announce that they are cancelling Wimbledon," he said.

In a move that surprised the tennis world, French Open organisers have already postponed their tournament and moved it to start on September 20, instead of May 24.

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**DIRK HORDORFF**

dorff said.

Hordorff hit out at FFT president Bernard Giudicelli for his handling of the rescheduling of Roland Garros, the claycourt Grand Slam.

"What president Bernard Giudicelli did is a disgrace, for tennis and for France," Hordorff said.

The controversial switch leaves the French Open starting a week after the US Open finishes, if that event retains its original slot in New York, which has been badly hit by the COVID-19 outbreak.

"The way they did it, tennis would be dead if we all behaved like that."

## Anil Chaudhary feeling at home in the field

Forced to stay back in his village, umpire rediscovers farming skills

### GENERAL

**VIJAY LOKAPALLY**  
NEW DELHI

Cricket took him away from Dangarol, a village in District Shamli. The lockdown has now transported him back to his childhood days when he would spend time in the sugarcane fields owned by his family.

"The India-South Africa series ended abruptly (on March 13) and I came to the village on the 16th to fetch grains and jaggery. I brought my sons (Aryan and Akshat) along, leaving my wife (Meeta) and mother (Kamla) back in Delhi. Then the lockdown happened. We decided to stay put in the village," ICC panel umpire Anil Chaudhary told *The Hindu*.

In the village, Chaudhary has used the "opportunity" to rediscover his farming skills.

"We are farmers. I used to stay in this village till my 10th standard and help in the fields. I found the labourers here had left. So I plunged into ploughing the fields (su-

**I have been enjoying working in the fields. Feels like my childhood days have returned. I have discovered new muscles in the body**

garcane and wheat). People are allowed to work in the fields or go to the nearby town to get essentials for three hours beginning 6 a.m.," he said.

### Teaching others

Chaudhary has taken the opportunity to educate people around him.

"I told them the importance of social distancing and regular washing of hands. Soap is now kept at every tubewell. Earlier they would wash their hands and feet with mud.

"Now they have started using soap. I have distributed masks too and told them not to gather to gossip or play cards. I am happy that they listen to me.

"There is no gathering of people anymore in Dangarol. We also never had this cul-

ture of shaking hands and we greet each other with a "Ram, Ram," he said.

On the experience of staying in the village, Chaudhary said, "I have been enjoying working in the fields. Feels like my childhood days have returned. Every morning I drive the tractor for three hours, but it can be tiring. I have discovered new muscles in the body (laughs)."

Chaudhary recalled his younger days. "My family has always been in the village. Some of my uncles and cousins graduated in agriculture and stayed on. (Brother) Harendra and I would spend months in the village. Cricket took us away from the village where the bonding among people is amazing. I have never spent so much time at a stretch with my sons," he said.

### Set routine

The daily routine is well set. "We go around the fields in the morning. Not in groups. We distribute the work. Eat early and sleep early. By 9 p.m. you are asleep. A melo-

dious *aarti* from a nearby temple wakes us at 5 in the morning. Villagers are basically nice, gentle, selfless people. I have learned so much during this lockdown."

A couple of 80-year-olds in the village, revealed Chaudhary, talk of this "unprecedented development".

### Bit of advice

"But they insist 'we shall overcome. It is a test of our will power'. Follow guidelines, accept the gravity of the situation," is the advice from the 55-year-old, who sometimes has to climb trees to catch the internet signal in his village.

"I miss my cricket, the packed stadiums, the travelling, the challenges of umpiring, but there is life outside cricket, too. It's great fun here in the village. The sky is clear - blue during the day and star-lit at night.

"No man to be seen for miles. Nature has shown mankind its place. Even if forced to stay indoors, I have learnt new ways to live life," he signed off.



**Silver lining:** Anil Chaudhary says he has learnt new ways to live life. \*FILE PHOTO: AP

## COVID-19 IMPACT



### Messi confirms pay cut for Barca players

**MADRID**

Lionel Messi confirmed on Monday that Barcelona's players will take a 70% pay cut and make financial contributions to ensure the club's other employees are paid in full. "We want to clarify that our desire has always been to apply a drop in salary because we fully understand that this is an exceptional situation and we are the first ones who have ALWAYS helped the club when asked...therefore, it never ceases to amaze us that from within the club there were those who tried to put us under the magnifying glass and tried to add pressure to do something that we always knew we would do." AFP

### Bhutia offers shelter to migrant workers

**KOLKATA**

Indian football icon Bhaichung Bhutia on Monday offered shelter to migrant workers of Sikkim. "The people who are affected the most during the lockdown are migrant workers. I've a new unfinished building in Gangtok (Lumsey, Tadong). It should accommodate about 100 people. We will also provide some basic

### Rashford helps feed children during shutdown

**LONDON**

Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford is working to get food to children who rely on free school meals after the coronavirus shutdown. The 22-year-old England international, who has teamed up with charity FareShare to help children in the Manchester area after schools were closed, said a fundraising had gone well. "We have got to the



### Scrap season if it can't finished by June: Kane

**LONDON**

Tottenham striker and England captain Harry Kane said the Premier League season should be cancelled if it cannot be completed by the end of June. "I think, for me, we do need to try to finish the season. But there needs to be a point where enough is enough. Probably the limit for me is the end of June. If the season's not completed

### Mary Kom donates a month's salary

**NEW DELHI**

Six-time world champion boxer M.C. Mary Kom on Monday said she will donate her one month's salary as Rajya Sabha MP, amounting to ₹1 lakh, to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund to combat the pandemic in the country. The Commonwealth and Asian Games champion became a MP in 2016. PTI



### Kohli and Anushka pledge their support

**NEW DELHI**

Virat Kohli and his actor wife Anushka Sharma on Monday pledged their support to the Prime Minister and the Maharashtra Chief Minister's relief funds but did not specify how much they would be contributing. "Anushka and I are pledging our support towards PM-CARES Fund & the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (Maharashtra)." PTI

## COVID-AID

### Shooter Manu Bhaker contributes ₹1 lakh

**NEW DELHI**

Shooter Manu Bhaker on Monday donated ₹1 lakh to the Haryana government. "This is the time when only lives of people matter to the country and to save them we need to do whatever we can. I am donating ₹1 lakh to the Haryana Corona Cases fund from my savings," Bhaker tweeted. PTI



### Mercedes F1 team helps to develop breathing aid

**LONDON**

F1 team Mercedes has helped to develop a breathing aid that could keep coronavirus patients out of intensive care. Mercedes worked with University College London engineers and University College London Hospital clinicians to adapt and improve a device that bridges the gap between an oxygen mask and the need for full ventilation. PTI

### TT star Sathiyam pledges to donate ₹.25 lakh

**CHENNAI**

Table tennis player G. Sathiyam on Monday pledged to donate ₹.25 lakh to fight against the pandemic. Sathiyam will contribute ₹1 lakh to the Chief Minister's public relief fund and ₹25,000 to the PM's relief fund. PTI

