

James won't play in empty arenas

NBA mulls games behind closed doors amid coronavirus concerns, superstar LeBron says 'it's impossible'

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
LOS ANGELES, MARCH 7

BASKETBALL SUPERSTAR LeBron James said he won't play if his Los Angeles Lakers have to hold games behind closed doors due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The NBA has reportedly told teams to look into strategies on how to play without fans in the arena amid concerns over the spreading virus.

"Nah. It's impossible," James said after the Lakers' 113-102 win over the Milwaukee Bucks. "If I show up to the arena and there ain't no fans in the crowd, then I ain't playing." The league sent a memo to each team on Friday asking them to develop contingency plans to combat the spread of the virus. One of the alternatives is playing games behind closed doors.

"I ain't never played the game without no fans," James said. "Ever since I started. This



Nah. It's impossible! I show up to the arena and there ain't no fans in the crowd, then I ain't playing.

LEBRON JAMES
LA LAKERS FORWARD

ain't Europe.

"I play for my teammates and I play for the fans. That's what it is all about."

James and Anthony Davis scored all but one of the Lakers' points in the final quarter Friday as they rallied to beat the NBA-leading Bucks and clinch their first playoff spot since 2013.

No high-fives

As fears grow over the spread of the virus, and sports leagues formulate contingency plans, the NBA's Friday memo told teams to start "developing" plans on how to play games with only "essential staff" in attendance, American sports broadcaster ESPN reported. The NBA had sent out a previous memo to teams earlier this week, recommending players to use fist-bumps instead of high-fives with fans. It also said to avoid taking items such as pens, balls and jerseys from fans to sign.

"The health and safety of our employees, teams, players and fans is paramount," the NBA said in a statement on Monday. The NBA said it has been taking advice from the

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"We are coordinating with our teams and consulting with the CDC and infectious disease specialists on the coronavirus and continue to monitor the situation closely." The global spread of COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the international sporting calendar with Formula One motor racing, golf and athletics among the sports canceling or postponing events. In Italy, the hardest-hit

European country with 148 deaths from the novel coronavirus, all major sports events, including football matches, will be played behind closed doors until April 3. Six Nations rugby games in Italy have been postponed. Davis Cup tennis ties in Italy and Japan are being played behind closed doors this weekend. WHO has called the spread of the virus "deeply concerning" as a wave of countries reported their first cases of the disease.



The National Institute of Health and Family Welfare
Baba Gang Nath Marg, Munirka,
New Delhi-110067

Observance of Institute's 43rd Annual Day

The 43rd Annual Day of the Institute will be observed on **Monday, 9th March, 2020 at 10.30 a.m.** in the Institute's premises. Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Hon'ble Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare will be the Chief Guest on this occasion. All ex-faculty, ex-employees, alumni and friends of the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi, are requested to kindly attend the function. Programme Details are available on the Institute's website.

DAVP-17153/11/0004/1920

DIRECTOR



TRACKING THE VIRUS

India World Cup qualifiers hit

India's 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers match against Qatar scheduled for March 26 has been postponed due to the spread of the deadly virus. AIFF gen sec. Kushal Das said that the match against Qatar in Bhubaneswar has been postponed and a new date will be known next week.

Russian team under scanner

The Russian national women's football team is facing quarantine after playing a game in Germany. Team doctor Eduard Bezuglov told Russian news agency RIA Novosti on Friday that the players' clubs had been given recommendations based on a decree from Moscow.

NHL issues safety guidelines

The NHL has sent a memo to teams urging players to limit contact with fans because of the coronavirus outbreak. NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly confirmed the league issued the memo in an email to The Canadian Press on Friday.

AGENCIES

Paes belies age before young gun Nagal fails

SHAHID JUDGE
MUMBAI, MARCH 7

ON A hot September day in 1995, Leander Paes stepped out on a grass court in New Delhi to play a big-serving, hard hitting Croat. This was a World Group Round 1 Davis Cup tie, and he knew that for him to have any chance of beating world no. 7 Goran Ivanisevic, he'd have to go beyond the ordinary. So he decided to face those booming serves by standing at least three feet inside the baseline.

"(It was) unheard of. I just had to get my racquet on the ball, because the ball was coming so fast that if I touched it, his power would ricochet back. And it would go faster to him," Paes had told *The Indian Express* in 2017. "My eye-hand coordination had to really work if I had to catch that serve - see where it's coming, read the toss, read the body language, read the legs where the angles are going and come back and use the speed of the serve."

The tactic worked, as he'd go on to pull off a famous five-set win over one of the biggest names in the sport.

Just under 25 years later, on Saturday, Paes was on court in a doubles match with partner Rohan Bopanna, this time a World Group Qualifier on an indoor hard court at the Dom Sportova in Zagreb. The match was close to its conclusion, but still could have gone either way. Franko Skugor was serving at deuce, 5-6 in the final set of the contest. That's when Paes decided he needed to come up with something extraordinary. He watched, eagle-eyed, as Skugor started his service routine, and found a tell. Once the ball toss

The Paes/Bopanna win over Skugor and Mate Pavic kept the visitors alive in the tie by giving them their first point.

came, the 46-year-old moved to his left, anticipating a body serve that he would convert onto a forehand - the side where he could produce a bigger return.

That's exactly how it panned out. The big Skugor serve came where Paes had been standing a moment earlier, and the veteran used the pace of the serve to slot back an angled return winner to give the Indians a match point chance. Skugor was rattled - he double faulted the next point to hand the Indians a 6-3, 6-7(9), 7-5 win. The Paes/Bopanna win over Skugor and Mate Pavic kept the visitors alive in the tie by giving them their first point, after Prajnesh Gunneswaran and Ramkumar Ramanathan had lost their singles matches on Friday against Borna Gojo and Marin Cilic respectively.

With India trailing 1-2 in the tie, non-playing captain Rohit Rajpal decided to field India's highest-ranked singles player Sumit Nagal (127), for his first match in the tie, against Cilic. The former world no. 3, however, cruised past the 22-year-old Indian 6-0, 6-1 to secure the tie 3-1 for Croatia. Eventually, the doubles match proved to be the only positive result for the Indians in this tie. But that too was a hard-fought win. And in the crucial moments, Paes, the world record holder for most doubles matches won in the Davis Cup (now 45), stepped up.

Khelo India winter games underway in Gulmarg

ADILAKHZER
GULMARG, MARCH 7

THE FIRST-EVER Khelo India winter games was held in Gulmarg on Saturday. It was the first major sporting event to be held in Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5 last year.

Declaring the games open, Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju said, "It is not historic for just J&K, but for the whole country."

He added that the government will establish a world class national center of excellence for winter sports in Gulmarg.

An official statement said, "Over 800 players from different parts of the country are participating in around 30 events like snow skiing, night skiing, snowboarding, cross country, snow show, snow cycling and other events." The statement added that athletes from 20 states are participating in the games.

Prem Singh, an athlete from Odisha, said it was his first visit to Kashmir. "We are a team of

nine. Everyone is excited about the games," he said.

For participants from J&K, the event means much more. "It is a big platform, especially for J&K participants. I was waiting for the event ever since we were told that we will be participating," said Saniya Mir, who will participate in ice-stock, a sport similar to curling.

Rouf Tramboob, president of Adventure Tour Operators Association of Kashmir (ATOAK), said the event will send a "good message". "When people will see that kids are participating in the games and they are in Gulmarg, tourists will definitely come to Kashmir. It would help tourism as well."

However, some expressed their reservations over the games due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus. Rijiju, however, said there is no need to worry as all measures are in place. "At five places, Jammu and Kashmir administration has done multiple screenings. There is no need to worry," he said.

The Khelo India Winter Games will run till March 11.



“India is moving from women development to women-led development”

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

We are moving towards a new India. Where our women are able, empowered and true partners in progress.

The indomitable Nari Shakti is excelling in every sphere of activity. With holistic efforts, the Government of India is constantly furthering the empowerment of India's daughters. From granting them freedom from toxic fumes in the kitchen to treating them with dignity and respect by making toilets, from helping them fight gender inequality by abolishing triple talaq to giving them wings by offering a world of opportunities, all such steps have enabled India's daughters to become equal partners in India's growth journey





This International Women's Day, India reaffirms its commitment towards ensuring the progress of women

HAR EK KAAM DESH KE NAAM

- 1 crore beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana
- 1.5 crore beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
- 8 crore LPG connections under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
- 10 crore families benefitted under Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY)
- 11 crore toilets built
- 15 crore women beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana
- Up to 50% increase in the honorarium of Asha and Anganwadi workers
- Maternity leave extended up to 26 weeks
- Free prenatal health check-ups on the 9th of every month from the 3rd to 6th month of pregnancy
- More than 1.67 crore accounts opened under Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana
- 1.92 crore scholarships awarded to girl students from minority communities
- Women can avail a loan up to ₹1 Crore under Startup India