

## IN BRIEF



## Gopi Chand contributes to COVID-19 relief

HYDERABAD  
P. Gopi Chand donated ₹11 lakh to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund here on Monday. Gopi also contributed ₹10 lakh to the Telangana Chief Minister's Relief Fund and another ₹5 lakh to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

International badminton player K. Sri Krishna Priya, meanwhile, donated ₹5 lakh to the Telangana Chief Minister's Relief Fund.



## Golf Majors reset after The Open is postponed

NEW YORK  
Three US-based Major golf championships announced rescheduled 2020 dates on Monday in the wake of the British Open being called off until 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

**Revised schedule: PGA Championship:** August 6-9; **US Open:** September 17-20; **Augusta Masters:** November 12-15. Ryder Cup will be contested one week after the US Open. AFP

## BWF suspends more tournaments

NEW DELHI  
The Badminton World Federation (BWF) has suspended the cash-rich Indonesia Open and three others, besides a para event and a number of Grade 3 competitions to be held between May and July. The announcement made on Monday lists \$170,000 Australian Open (June 2-7), \$400,000 Thailand Open (June 9-14), \$1,350,000 Indonesia Open (June 16-21) and Russian Open (July 7-12) among suspended events in Grade 2.



## Top Italian clubs agree to pay cuts

MILAN  
Italy's top-flight football clubs have unanimously reached an agreement to cut the salaries of players, coaches and staff as a result of COVID-19, the Lega Serie A announced on Monday.

League leader Juventus had already cut salaries, a move accepted by the players and coach Maurizio Sarri, in pic. FIFA had also urged the clubs and players to reach an agreement on wage reduction to protect clubs suffering financial damage. AFP

## Shooting World Cup cancelled

NEW DELHI  
The NRAI has cancelled the shooting World Cup scheduled to be held here for rifle and pistol from May 5 to 13, and shotgun from May 20 to 29. "The health and safety of our athletes, officials, staff and of all members of our shooting fraternity are absolutely paramount," said the statement.



## Cavendish reveals battle against depression

LONDON  
British cycling superstar Mark Cavendish says he has successfully come through a two-year battle against clinical depression revealing on Monday he was "dark" but is now on the "other side". "It's not just my physical health which has been dealt a blow over the last couple of years," Cavendish told *The Times*. "I've battled quite hard with depression. I was diagnosed with clinical depression in August 2018." AFP

## 'Looking at survival and safety'

Advani says the police, nurses, doctors and paramedics are our saviours

ASHWIN ACHAL  
BENGALURU

Pankaj Advani is not worried about missing competitive cue sports action, as there are bigger issues to tackle.

"I find it weird when sportspeople speak about their sport at this time, as we're looking at bigger things like survival, health and safety. These things are much more important than one's sporting career. The police, nurses, doctors and paramedics – they are our saviours. They put their lives at risk for us. I express my gratitude to all of them," Advani told *The Hindu* here on Monday.

With a contribution of ₹5 lakh to the PM-CARES Fund, Advani has done his bit in the fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

## Massive fight

"I'm not a doctor, policeman or someone who is in the front line of this battle. So this donation is the least I can do. We face a massive fight. The coronavirus has affected the entire world – people are suffering and dying," the multiple-time World champion said.

Advani emphasised on citizens doing their bit by tak-



On cue: Pankaj Advani calls for adherence to lockdown restrictions in order to beat the coronavirus pandemic. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUDHAKARA JAIN

ing the necessary safety precautions. The 34-year-old appealed to the public not to turn occasions like 'diya' lighting into celebratory affairs.

"I request everyone to keep distance, stay indoors, wash your hands and wear a mask whenever you go out. We tend to make a 'mela' out of the directions given by the government.

"Lighting a 'diya' and clapping for our health workers is good, but we should do it sensibly.

"We should not make an

event out of it by bursting crackers and so on. Indians are social people in general, but all socialising must wait. Religious gatherings and other functions must wait," Advani said.

## Extended lockdown

Advani believes that an extended lockdown would be the right way to go.

"In my opinion, the lockdown should be extended beyond April 14, but of course the government is best placed to take this decision.

"It would also be nice if the government regularly provides numbers and statistics related to the coronavirus. That will help us understand where we're headed," he said.

Advani, who lives with his mother, is finding ways to keep himself occupied. "I'm exercising, though I'm not very regular.

"I'm also helping with household chores like cleaning, dusting and so on. It makes me appreciate the efforts of everyone who works for us at home," he said.

## WFI may hold fresh trials

M.R. PRAVEEN CHANDRAN  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) may hold fresh trials to complete the selection process before the start of Asian and World qualifying tournaments, said its secretary V.N. Prasood here on Monday.

The WFI was mulling this move in the wake of postponement of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the subsequent cancellation of qualifying tournaments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prasood said the federation will either conduct fresh trials or may advance the 2020 National championships to complete the selection process before the start of the qualifying Asian and World tournaments.

He added that the final decision will be taken after the United World Wrestling (UWW) releases a fresh schedule for these events.

## Plans upset

"Right now everything is in a flux. The postponement of Tokyo Olympics to next year has upset our plans. Our policy is to select the best and deserving wrestlers. But we want to make sure everyone is given a chance. We may conduct fresh trials in all events and if that is not acceptable by the wrestlers, we may even hold the National championships a little earlier this year.

"But our schedule will depend on the international calendar. We have to see if UWW will hold the World championships before the



Narsingh. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

qualifying events. Normally UWW doesn't include Olympic events in world meets held in the Olympic year. But it is a different scenario now, so we have to wait and watch," said Prasood.

Four Indians – Ravi Kumar Dahiya (57kg), Bajrang Punia (65kg), Deepak Punia (86kg) and Vinesh Phogat (53kg) – had qualified for the freestyle events for the 2020 Olympics after winning medals in the 2019 World championships.

Prasood is hopeful that more Indians will make it to the Games from the qualifying events.

## End of the ban

The postponement of the Olympics has come as a blessing for Narsingh Yadav, who will complete his four-year ban this July.

Prasood added WFI has kept its doors open for Narsingh. "His ban will be over in July and there are no obstacles in front of him to return back to competition. If he is in good shape he can compete and win back his place in the team for Olympics."

## Sunil Kumar's confidence on a high

Asian Greco-Roman champion training on his own during the lockdown

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA

Mental training, which helped Sunil Kumar immensely in rewriting history, has again come to the aid of the 87kg Greco-Roman Asian champion in the time of the coronavirus outbreak.

Hailing from the non-descript Daburpur village of Sonapat district in Haryana, Sunil overcame his negative approach and focused on pre-match preparation to bring home an Asian championship medal after 27 years in Delhi last month.

## Not disheartened

The postponement of the Asian Olympic qualifier this month may not have been a welcome development for an in-form Sunil, but the 21-year-old is not disheartened. "My confidence is high af-

ter becoming the Asian champion. It is true that it would have been good (had the Olympic qualifier happened as per schedule). But every wrestler was trying to do his best and the situation is the same for everybody," Sunil told *The Hindu*. "The positive side is that the delay gives me extra time to work on my game and iron out weaknesses."

Despite being restricted to his home, Sunil, backed by Lakshya Sports, has become mentally stronger to make the most of the present situation.

"Without any sparring partner, I am training on my own – doing running, dumbbell, rope exercises and other equipment available at home. I am sticking to my schedule of training twice a day."

## Can't wait for Wimbledon 2021: Vijay

RAYAN ROZARIO  
COIMBATORE

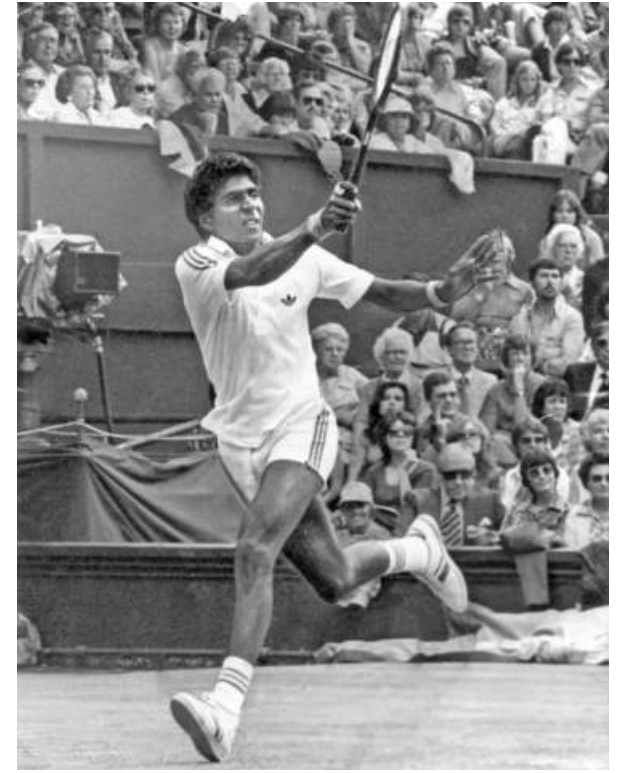
Wimbledon stands out from the other Grand Slams, thanks to its unique blend of tennis and tradition. The atmosphere is so electric and emotional that it brings the best out of every player.

India's Vijay Amritraj, who has experienced them all for five decades as a player and a commentator, was very disappointed with the cancellation of the 2020 event. "It was expected, of course," Vijay told *The Hindu* in an email interview.

"I have been associated with Wimbledon for 50 straight years and always look forward to it with the same enthusiasm as I had in 1969," said Vijay, a two-time quarterfinalist at The Championships.

Vijay, who is now in the United States, said all ranked players have lost a valuable year. "To the best, it means not having a chance to increase their wins. To the challengers, it means a lost opportunity. To the players who get in regularly, it means lost economic opportunity and points. To the Indian players, only if you have a chance to qualify, it would make a difference."

He said no sporting event in the world compares to Wimbledon. "For me, along with the Davis Cup, it's the



Down memory lane: Vijay Amritraj running down a return against Bjorn Borg at Wimbledon in 1979. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

reason I played for so long. The greatest blessing is to have played there for so many years and also coming close to winning it. It has always been my No. 1 event."

In 1973, Vijay lost to eventual champion Jan Kodes; in 1981, he suffered a heartbreaking loss, going down to Jimmy Connors after taking the first two sets.

When Vijay visited the All England Club earlier this year, he would not have expected things to pan out this way.

"The majesty of the club and its history gives me goosebumps whenever I visit. Can't wait for Wimbledon 2021," said Vijay, who has done TV shows for more than 25 years there.

## COVID DEATHS

## Ligue 1 club doctor commits suicide after diagnosis

REIMS (FRANCE)  
French Ligue 1 club Reims was on Sunday in mourning for long-serving club doctor Bernard Gonzalez committed suicide after being diagnosed with coronavirus, sources confirmed. "Devastated, Reims cries for Bernard Gonzalez," said a statement released by the Ligue 1 club. "Not just the club but also hundreds of men and women in Reims." AFP

## Guardiola's mother succumbs

LONDON  
Pep Guardiola's 82-year-old mother, Dolores Sala Carrio, died in Manresa (Barcelona) after contracting coronavirus, Manchester City announced on Monday. Guardiola, 49, had last month donated \$1 million to buy medical supplies for the fight against coronavirus in his native Spain. AFP

## British boxing great Benn bereaved

LONDON  
British boxing great Nigel Benn revealed on Instagram one of his brothers Mark had died of coronavirus infection. The 56-year-old – former World champion in two weights – said Mark had been the "joker" of the family. Benn was WBO middleweight champion in 1990 and went on to become WBC super-middleweight champion, holding the belt between 1992 and 1996. He retired from the ring in 1996 after twice failing to wrest the WBO super-middleweight title from Irishman Stephen Collins. AFP

## Bayern Munich players back on the field



Welcome sight: Bayern Munich players train in small groups at the Saebener Strasse complex on Monday. ■ REUTERS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BERLIN

Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich resumed training on Monday for the first time since the German league was suspended on March 13, but the players were put through their paces in small groups and maintained social distancing measures.

Keeping at least 1.5m from each other, the players trained together. "It was a very unusual feeling to hold

a training session in small groups, but it was also nice to see the boys in person again," said Manuel Neuer after Bayern had previously held training sessions online. After arriving at staggered times to limit contact the 21-man squad was split into five groups, each containing a maximum of five players. When they changed, the players were kept four metres apart in the changing rooms.

## 'Lack of civic sense led to pandemic'

Situation in Belgium much better than in Spain: Brasa

UTHRA GANESAN  
NEW DELHI

Jose Brasa may have been India hockey coach almost a decade ago, but he continues to be one of the most popular ones with the players. The Spaniard, currently coaching in Belgium, categorically blamed the lack of civic sense for the COVID-19 explosion in his homeland.

## In 'exile'

"I was in Spain visiting my family from March 8-12. Since then I have been confined to my apartment here in Liege as Spain ordered lockdown the day after I left. Things are better here, although one player from my club (the Old Club of Liege) was infected," he revealed without naming the player.

"But he is young and strong and he's been cured. He and his girlfriend are in home quarantine and will



Jose Brasa. ■ FILE PHOTO

remain so for the next two weeks. Almost all of us have probably been in contact with the virus because if this player was infected and the symptoms are seen two weeks later, during those two weeks we all were with him," he said.

Asked about the sporting scene there, he appreciated the Belgians for being decisive. "On April 2, the Nation-

al Hockey League here was over and promotions and relegations decided by classifications obtained in the first round. In football they decided to consider all matches played till now.

"The situation in Spain is the total opposite. Competitions are suspended. Football leagues have not ended and it seems they want to resume," he said.

Brasa insisted the only way to be safe was to stay home. "Staying indoors is the best way to prevent coronavirus from spreading rapidly and clogging up hospitals. In Spain the restriction is total, no one can leave home except workers in essential services like hospitals, pharmacies and food supermarkets. The situation is not so serious in Belgium. All activities that do not involve crowds are open, with precautionary measures," he said.

## Deepali Deshpande strikes a cautious note

Weighs in on a problem of plenty in the women's 3p rifle event

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

India's problem of plenty in the rifle and pistol events is likely to give selectors a headache when they sit down to select teams for the postponed Olympics.

One primary question is whether World Championship silver medallist Anjum Moudgil will be able to retain her berth in air rifle or will the selectors instead opt for former World Champion and Commonwealth Games gold medallist Tejaswini Sawant. "You try to give your best every time. You cannot think, 'this is not my strong event. Let me wait and get it in my event,'" was Anjum's counter to the question.

## Irony

Anjum has shot a world record 1180 out of 1200 in the 50m rifle 3-position event, but the irony is that she could not compete in the



Talent aplenty: Coaches Deepali Deshpande, centre, and Oleg Mikhailov will have to choose between Anjum Moudgil, left, and Tejaswini Sawant. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

regular team in any of the World Cups, as the team was searching for an Olympic quota which she was ineligible to win. After Sunidhi Chauhan, Gaayathri Nithyanandan and Kajal Saini failed, it was Tejaswini who nailed the Olympic quota in the 3P event.

Olympian Deepali Deshpande, the Indian team's high performance rifle coach, put things in perspective. "Anjum is experienced and in good form. Postponement is an advantage for her. In air rifle, 2019 was all about changing technique, equipment and getting over injury.

Still she could maintain her ranking," said Deepali.

With Apurvi Chandela winning two World Cup gold medals it has generally been perceived that Elavenil Valarivan and Mehuli Ghosh could fight for the second spot in women's air rifle.

## Two planes

"The national federation and the selection committee will be thinking a lot on these aspects. I feel that we have to be very careful as we will be working on two planes. One is 2020 Olympics being held in 2021, and the other is 2024. Some of the shooters will be front runners for 2024. If we drag them into this selection, we may lose them even for 2024," cautioned Deepali, even as she pointed the high scores of 1170 or more of Tejaswini. "With Olympic quota points she is second to Anjum only," she added.