



ATHLETICS FEDERATION OF INDIA

JULY 2021

NEWSLETTER

TOKYO 2020



(Photo: Rahul Pawar)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

These are challenging but also exciting times. The Olympic Games is being held in Tokyo under very difficult conditions, and you know that I'm not speaking about the extreme heat in the Japanese capital. The world has been rocked by a pandemic and everyone has found it hard to sustain once preparation for the Olympic Games that is being held after a year's delay.

The Athletics Federation of India has been very clear that it expects the athletes to give their 100 per cent when they get to the start line in Tokyo 2020. That is the reason we insisted on fitness trials for a couple of athletes who did not compete in the national interest rate Athletics Championships in Patiala in June.

For years now, AFI has been working towards securing that breakthrough athletics medal in the Olympics. After all, India has done well at the Asian level and it is time to translate that to the global stage. With key inputs from the planning committee, AFI has been able to sustain a programme of training and competition for the athletes.

I believe AFI has left no stone unturned to ensure that National camps would continue despite the pandemic and that we could give some competition to our athletes. Working with the Government of India, AFI did everything possible to keep the athletes in competitive trim. That a number of them have made use of the opportunity to qualify for the Games is heart-warming.



Adille J Sumariwalla

President

Athletics Federation of India

Of course, it has been the most unprecedented year and a half now with the virus causing havoc in the world. But after the initial lockdown in March 2020, we got down to business and made sure that the athletes would resume training in a safe environment and with the best of help available to them in terms of infrastructure and manpower in support.

You will be aware the Indian team in the Olympic Games is 26-strong with 21 coaching and support staff. I'm confident that the squad will return home with its head held high. I believe the athletes and the coaching staff have done the best possible preparation for the world's greatest sporting event despite the upheavals caused by Covid-19.

While I wish the athletes the very best, I hope you will immensely enjoy the Olympic Games Tokyo2020 and continue to back our athletes in their quest for glory.



INDIAN ATHLETICS: OLYMPICS HOPES TO CAPTURE FANS' ATTENTION



You can be sure that on August 7 most of India's sports fans will pause whatever they are doing to watch the Olympic Games Javelin Throw competition in Tokyo. Of course, they get a confirmation of that appointment viewing on August 4 after the completion of the Men's Javelin Throw qualification.

Rarely would so much be riding on an athlete as it does now on Neeraj Chopra. The 23-year-old will be expected to showcase his potential as one of the world's leading Javelin Throw exponents and drive India towards securing that elusive athletic medal. By all accounts, he has the ability to soak in the pressure and come up with his best showing.

He showed form earlier this year, breaking his own National Record with 88.07m in the Indian Grand Prix III in Patiala. In his final competition before heading to Tokyo, Neeraj Chopra underlined his medal potential when he finished third in Kuortane behind Johannes Vetter (Germany) and Keshorn Walcott (Trinidad and Tobago) with a best throw of 86.79m.

The 2018 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games champion Neeraj Chopra missed the 2019 IAAF World Championships in 2019 due to an injury. Upon return to competition, he lost no time in sealing his berth in the Olympic Games with a 87.86, throw in the ACNW League Meeting in Potchefstroom.

Sometime in May, when India was in the throes of the second wave of the pandemic, he spoke of the importance of training overseas, citing distractions when based in India. Thanks to AFI's agility and with support from Government, Neeraj Chopra was able to base himself in Europe for nearly two months with biomechanics expert and coach Dr. Klaus Bartonietz.

Besides Neeraj Chopra, there will be expectations from the likes of Annu Rani in women's Javelin Throw, Tajinderpal Singh Toor in men's Shot Put and Avinash Sable in men's 3000m Steeplechase. They have caught the eye with their consistency and an ability to deliver good performances under pressure situations. There are others who can bid fair to progress to finals.

The men's 4x400m relay team believes that it can enter the final. It clocked 3:01.89 in the National Inter-State Athletics Championships in Patiala on June 25, 2021, to be the top team to secure an Olympic Games berth on ranking. Arokia Rajiv, Muhammad Anas Yahiya, Amoj Jacob and Noah Nirmal Tom can forge a speedy combination.

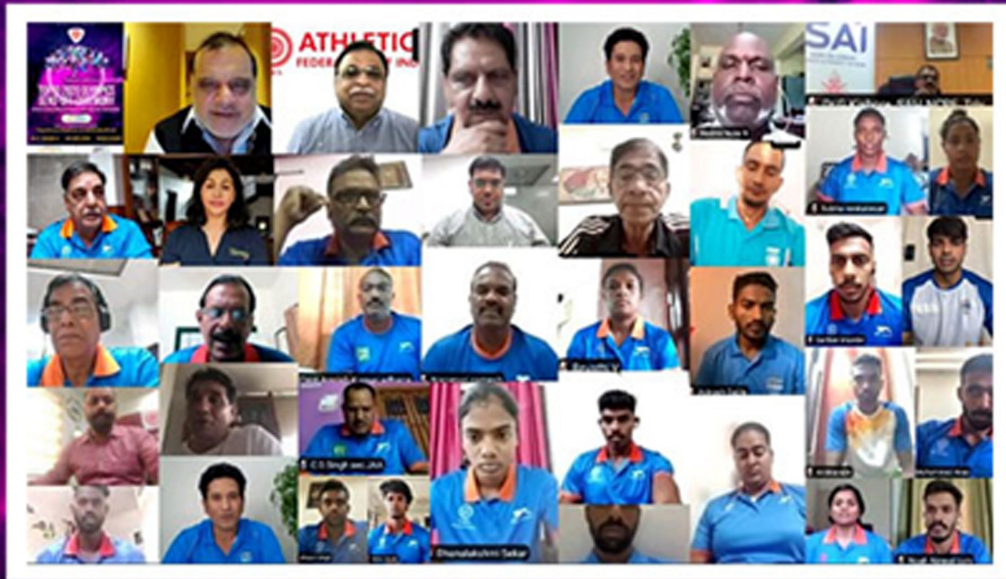
Yet, if a collective attention of a nation's people is funnelled on one its track and field athletes in the Olympic Games, it will be Neeraj Chopra. The 2016 World Junior U20 Champion has quickly risen to be one the most recognised Olympic sport athletes and is eager to rise to the nation's expectations of a memorable performance.

For all that, fans are well aware that athletics is a most competitive discipline and athletes will have to come up with nothing less than world class performances to get into the finals of the Olympic Games competitions.

SCHEDULE OF #TEAMINDIA ATHLETICS AT TOKYO

ATHLETE	EVENT	ROUND	DATE & TIME
Avinash Sable	Men's 3000m Steeplechase	Qualifiers	30/07/2021 05:45 am
Jabir M P	Men's 400m Hurdles	Qualifiers	30/07/2021 07:25 am
Dutee Chand	Women's 100m	Qualifiers	30/07/2021 08:45 am
Revathi Veeramani Subha Venkatesan Dhanalakshmi Sekar Alex Antony Sarathak Bambri	Mixed 4x400m Relay	Qualifiers	30/07/2021 04:40 pm
Seema Punia Kamal Preet Kaur	Women's Discus Throw	Qualifiers Finals	31/07/2021 06:00 am 02/08/2021 05:30 pm
Sreeshankar Murali	Men's Long Jump	Qualifiers Finals	31/07/2021 03:40 pm 02/08/2021 06:50 pm
Dutee Chand	Women's 200m	Qualifiers Finals	02/08/2021 07:00 am 03/08/2021 06:20 am
Annu Rani	Women's Javeline Throw	Qualifiers Finals	03/08/2021 05:50 am 06/08/2021 05:20 am
Tajinder Pal Toor	Men's Shotput	Qualifiers Finals	03/08/2021 05:10 pm 05/08/2021 07:35 am
Neeraj Chopra Shivpal Singh	Men's Javelin Throw	Qualifiers Finals	04/08/2021 05:35 am 07/08/2021 04:30 pm
KT Irfan Sandeep Kumar Rahul	Men's 20Km Racewalk	Finals	05/08/2021 01:00 pm
Gurpreet Singh	Men's 50Km Racewalk	Finals	06/08/2021 02:00 am
Bhawana Jat Priyanka	Women's 20Km Racewalk	Finals	06/08/2021 01:00 pm
Amoj Jacob Naganathan Pandi Arokia Rajiv Muhammed Anas Yahia Noha Nirmal Tom	Men's 4x400m Relay	Qualifiers Finals	06/08/2021 04:55 pm 07/08/2021 04:30 pm

*All the Timing Mentioned are Subject to Changes as per Tokyo Olympics Website



SACHIN TENDULKAR EXHORTS INDIAN ATHLETES TO PURSUE THEIR DREAMS AND VICTORY

Legendary Sachin Tendulkar exhorted the Indian athletics contingent heading to the Olympic Games in Tokyo to chase their dreams of winning medals for the country. "Pressure will be your constant companion, but you have raised the expectations with your performance," he told the 26 athletes in a virtual send-off ceremony.

"You have worked hard in these difficult times. And if nobody has any expectations of you as an athlete, you are in the wrong place. You will have heard that winning and losing are part of sport. Let us win and let the others lose," he said. "When you wear the medal, see the Tricolour go up and hear the National Anthem, it will be the biggest moment of your life."

In an inspirational address, Sachin Tendulkar recalled that when he was recovering from a tennis elbow and a shoulder surgery in 2004-05, he realised during practice in England that international athletes sometimes forget the primary reason they set out to play sport. "It is a love for the game. I had to wake up the kid in me and bring him alive," he said.

Indian Olympic Association President Dr. Narinder Dhruv Batra, who joined the ceremony from Tokyo, said he believed Indian athletics is on the cusp of winning that elusive Olympic medal. "I have seen the hard work by the Athletics Federation of India, and I know that athletics medal is not very far," he said, encouraging the 47-member track and field squad.

After a welcome by Athletics Federation of India Senior Vice-President Anju Bobby George, AFI President Adille J. Sumariwalla said the 26 athletes have earned the honour of representing the country on the biggest stage, but also had the responsibility to deliver their best performances and make India proud.

AFI Planning Commission Chairman Dr. Lalit K. Bhanot, who thanked the Government and the Sports Authority of India for the unstinted support before and through the pandemic, said he was hopeful that the best prepared Indian squad would be able to bring home medals from the Olympic Games this time.

The send-off ceremony was presented by Ageas Federal and supported by NEB Sports.

ATHLETICS BY THE NUMBERS AT THE TOKYO OLYMPIC GAMES



Here are 10 key figures to keep an eye on throughout the 10 days of Athletics competition at the Olympics

1000

The men's discus final on Saturday 31 July will be the 1000th Olympic final in athletics. Of the 998 athletics finals held to date, the USA has won 344 (more than 34%) of them, making them the most successful nation in this sport.

196

The number of teams set to take part in athletics at the Tokyo Olympic Games. This figure includes the seven-strong Athlete Refugee Team, who'll be competing at their second Games.

116

The number of athletes entered in the men's marathon, the largest field of any athletics event at the Games.

99

The number of countries to have earned Olympic medals in athletics. It's highly likely that Tokyo will witness the 100th addition to the Olympic athletics all-time medals table. Countries such as Burkina Faso (Hugues Fabrice Zango, triple jump), Israel (Lonah Chemtai Salpeter, marathon) and Samoa (Alex Rose, discus) all have good medal chances.

75

The percentage of athletes who qualified for the Olympics by attaining qualifying standards. The other 25% qualified through world rankings.

55

The hours of athletics competition set to take place in Tokyo and Sapporo, spread across 19 sessions and spanning 10 days.



(Photo : World Athletics)

51

The age of the oldest athletics competitor,

Spanish race walker Jesus Angel Garcia. The 1993 world champion will be competing at his eighth Games, a record number of appearances in athletics.

25

The number of Olympic medals won in athletics by Japan to date. Although China is above Japan on the all-time medals table, Japan is higher on the all-time placings table, making them the most successful Asian nation in Olympic history.

17

The age of the youngest athletics competitor, Lacarthea Cooper. The Bahamian sprinter is entered for the women's 4x100m.

3

The number of disciplines entered by Sifan Hassan. The Dutch distance runner begins her Olympic campaign on Friday (30) with the heats of the 5000m. She is also entered for the 1500m and 10,000m – the events she won at the 2019 World Championships – though only time will tell if she'll line up for all three.

(From www.worldathletics.org)

SANGRUR TO HOST 466 JUNIOR ATHLETES COMPETING IN FEDERATION CUP

A total of 466 athletes, including 166 girls, will vie for honours in the three-day 19th National Federation Cup Junior U20 Athletics Championships at the Hero Stadium in Sangrur from July 31. While the Olympic Games competitions are on in Tokyo, the youngsters will try and deliver performances here to catch the selectors' eye.

Some of the familiar names in the entry list are Uttar Pradesh's Shaili Singh (women's Long Jump), Uttarakhand's Ankita who claimed a distance running double in the last edition of the competition in Bhopal, javelin throwers Jay Kumar (Uttar Pradesh) and Kunwar Singh Rana and women's 400m Priya Habbathanahally Mohan.

Haryana (85 athletes), Uttar Pradesh (61) and Tamil Nadu (54) are the three States with more than 50 entries in the competition. Maharashtra (48), Delhi (39), Punjab (29) and Rajasthan (28) are the other sizable contingents in the Championships where events will be conducted for athletes between 19 and 20 years of age.

Ajit Kumar, who is Nepal's sole representative, will join 465 Indian athletes from 24 States and Union Territories



in the competition which comes

against the backdrop of the World Athletics U20 Championships in Nairobi. It the second National Federation Cup Junior U20 Championships being held this calendar year after Bhopal hosted the first in the end of January.

The pole vault events will be held in the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports, Patiala.

RELIANCE FOUNDATION PHYSIOTHERAPY SUPPORT ENSURES ATHLETES PUT BEST FOOT FORWARD



Over the last two years, six physios from Reliance Foundation, ably supported by a specialist team of Sports Science and Medicine experts based at the Sir H.N. Reliance Foundation Hospital in Mumbai have been providing invaluable support to national athletes in partnership with AFI. Inputs are provided on aspects

such as nutrition, psychology, data science, screening, injury prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The physiotherapy team has completed over 8000 individual treatment sessions and have diagnosed, treated and rehabilitated nearly 1200 injuries with 7 treatment sessions on average being accorded to each injury. Time lost due to injury is one of our important measures of efficacy and we aim to get athletes back to full fitness as quickly as possible.

400m runner Amoj Jacob, who has battled a history of hamstring muscle injuries, was assisted in every stage of his rehab process by Reliance Foundation physioKetan Hulawale. Jacob won Gold at the Federation cup in Patiala earlier this year. Similarly, Heptathlete Mareena George who was laid low by a groin strain, was attended to by physio Nitya Marwaha, who used a combination of soft tissue

treatment techniques and exercise rehab to help the muscle heal quickly. Mareena produced her Personal Best performance of 5516 points at the Federation Cup to win Silver. Physio Drashan Shetty has aligned closely with the Javelin throw contingent by providing precise intervention to treat injuries and leading rehab.

The key to success is Teamwork. Our team is in constant touch the coaches keeping them updated on athlete progress and this makes sure that the coaches can make the most informed decisions about what is the best course of action for that athlete

Quite clearly, this partnership between the AFI and Reliance Foundation is a shining example of how combining expertise can result in providing athletes both at the youth and elite levels the edge they need.

1. Who were the two Indian athletes who made it to the finals of an athletics event in the 2012 Olympic Games in London?
2. Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) received 17 referrals from 16 countries for investigation of suspicious qualifying performances in the run up to Tokyo2020. These included 31 athletes and five relay teams. How many of these qualifying performances were not recognised by World Athletics?
3. What was Anju Bobby George's best effort in the 2004 Olympic Games Long Jump competition in Athens?
4. Sticking with Anju Bobby George and 2004 Games, why was she elevated from the original sixth place to fifth place in 2007?
5. What is the distinction held by Nilima Ghose and Mary D'Souza in history of independent India's participation in the Olympic Games athletics competition?
6. Which track and field athlete, representing independent India, had the best placing in Olympic Games athletics competition before Milkha Singh's fourth place in 1960?
7. Who was the first woman from independent India to qualify for a semifinal in the Olympic Games athletics competition?
8. Although two-time Asian Games Javelin Throw medallist Elizabeth Davenport was listed to compete in the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, India did not field a women's squad. Who was the first Javelin Thrower to represent India in the Olympic Games?
9. Which track and field athlete secured the best placing by an Indian in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro?
10. What will be the last final in the Olympic Games athletics competition in Tokyo?

WINNERS OF JUNE 2021 QUIZ CONTEST

ABHITEZ PAMU, PUGAZHANDHI SELVARAJ, AMALENDU BAG

***Send your replies to communications@indianathletics.in by 15th Aug 2021.
Winners with all correct answers will receive an Exclusive AFI T-shirt**

