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NEERAJ CHOPRA CHASES A BRUSSELS HIGH

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PAIN RESERVOIR - NEERAJ CHOPRA

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ONE STEP AT A TIME - My next goal is to break 27-minutes in 10,000m, says Gulveer Singh

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A YEAR TO REMEMBER...



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AHMEDABAD IS NEW DESTINATION FOR NIDJAM

Inside Story

PG. 04 | FOCUS IS TO BUILD STRENGTH IN PLEASANT CLIMES OF POTCHEFSTROOM IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE SUMMER.

—says World Champion Neeraj Chopra



JANUARY 2024

Gujarat University Campus

There was buzz in the air as the sprawling Gujarat University Campus spread over 300 acres agreed to play host to Athletics Federation of India's (AFI) flagship event—NIDJAM (National Inter District Junior Athletics Meet) in February. The prestigious tournament was conducted in coordination with the government of Gujarat and Sports Authority of Gujarat.

Neeraj Chopra in South Africa

The opening month of the year also saw India's star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, the reigning Olympic and world champion, gearing up to build his strength in the pleasant climes of Potchefstroom in South Africa to prepare for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. The Olympic champion began his campaign to defend his Olympic title a bit late due to nagging groin injury. His first competition of the year was Doha Diamond League.



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Inside Story

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PG. 05 | Marathon runner from highlands of Kumaon aims for Paris Olympic Games berth.

FEBRUARY 2024

Athletes amazed by Gujarat's hospitality

The 19th edition of NIDJAM (National Inter District Junior Athletics Meet) was held in Gujarat's world heritage city—Ahmedabad—from February 16 to 18.

The NIDJAM is the largest grassroots programme at the global level and attracted as many as 6,000 budding athletes from across 619 districts.

Elite race walkers break barrier

Conducive weather for endurance events in the last week of January in Chandigarh saw four race walkers breaking barriers in the men's 20km race walking event. The top four athletes in men's 20km race walk bettered the Paris Olympic Games qualification time of 1:20:10.

India's marathon runner Man Singh Bisht won the Asian Marathon title in Hong Kong. In 2017, Rio Olympian T Gopi was the first Indian to win gold.

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GUJARAT RAISES NIDJAM BAR




Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel was chief guest at the opening ceremony of 19th edition of NIDJAM held in Ahmedabad from February 16 to 18.



Competitors lineup at Bib collection centre on opening day of NIDJAM



Competitors attend seminar on "youngsters should avoid early specialization".

Inside Story | **pg. 04** | Neeraj Chopra, Parul Chaudhary honoured at TOISA function in Lucknow

pg. 06 | Odisha's sprinters hog limelight during three-day National Junior U20 meet in Lucknow

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pg. 07 | IOCL project to empower young female distance runners.

MARCH 2024

APRIL 2024

Sebastian Coe was impressed

The 19th edition of the National Inter District Junior Athletics Meet (NIDJAM) held at Gujarat University Campus eight-lane synthetic track between February 16 to 18 in Ahmedabad has further raised the bar of the largest grassroots programme in the world.

All stakeholders, including Government of Gujarat and Sports Authority of Gujarat worked tirelessly to ensure the flagship event of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) turned out to be memorable for one and all.

Sebastian Coe, president of World Athletics, was impressed by the overwhelming response to the 2024 edition of NIDJAM. He was unable to visit Gujarat, but via a video message was all praise for the organisers. India's double Olympic Games medallist Neeraj Chopra was also part of NIDJAM in their formative years.

Indian elite distance runners on track

The month of March turned out to be quite fruitful for elite Indian distance runners training at the high altitude of Colorado Springs in the USA. While Army's Gulveer Singh broke the 28-minute barrier in 10,000m in California, Kartik Kumar clocked an impressive 28:01.90. Both the runners improved the long standing national 10,000m record of 28:02.89 set in 2008 by Surendra Kumar Singh in Spain. Gulveer Singh crossed the finish line at 27:41.81 to earn second spot at the Ten track meet in California, while Kartik Kumar finished ninth. The Indian female distance runners too gave a good account of themselves in the 10,000m race. Seema clocked 32: 07.67, a personal best, to finish third. In another race Parul Chaudhary clocked 32:02.08, a personal best, but finished outside medal contention.


MAY 2024

Focus on relay team

In May jubilant members of the national 4x400m relay teams were all focused to showcase their potential at the Paris Olympic Games scheduled to be held in France from July 26. The Indian men and women's 4x400m relay teams earned tickets to the Paris Olympic Games on May 5 at Nassau's Thomas A Robinson Stadium in Bahamas. It was the season's first major global relay competition that offered berths for the Paris Olympic Games.

The Indian quarter milers grabbed opportunity with both hands during the second leg of the Paris Olympic Games qualification round of the World Relays in Bahamas. The Indian teams missed qualification on Saturday (May 4), but came back strongly on final day (May 5) to finish second in their respective heats and qualified for the Olympic Games.


JUNE 2024

Boost to javelin throw

"Healthy competition during domestic meets will be a big advantage to Indian javelin throwers in future," India's Olympic and world champion Neeraj Chopra said after winning gold at the 27th national federation senior athletics competition held from May 12 to 15. The 26-year-old star javelin thrower was competing in domestic competition for the first time after winning gold at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, held in 2021. His gold-winning throw was 87.58m, giving India's first athletics Olympic medal in some style.

Chopra started his quest for the Paris Games with the Doha Diamond League where he won second spot with a throw of 88.36m, finishing behind Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic (88.38m). "I didn't push hard in Bhubaneswar as I was leading the field," he said in the post-match interaction.

FLASH BACK 2024


JULY 2024

Grand send-off ceremony for Paris bound athletes

It was a grand send-off ceremony for Paris Olympic Games bound track and field athletes by HSBC India and AFI (Athletics Federation of India) in Chandigarh. The event was graced by India's 2008 Beijing Olympic Games men's 10m air rifle champion, Abhinav Bindra. The former ace shooter shared his vast international experience with the athletes present on the occasion, encouraging them to stay focused in the last leg of the Games preparation. "All the hard work must have been done," Bindra said.

Domestic meet

At the National Inter State meet held between June 27 to 30 in Panchkula, spotlight was on quarter-milers and javelin throwers. Ahead of the Paris Olympic Games, distance runners too made a big impression in the last leg of the national meet in Panchkula.


AUGUST 2024

Neeraj Chopra all set for LA 2028

Neeraj Chopra's back-to-back medals in men's javelin throw at the Olympic Games highlights his journey of extreme sacrifice. The 26-year-old double Olympic Games medallist's performance at the global level has also been inspiring for youngsters back home.

More than half a dozen male javelin throwers have crossed the 80m mark in the 2023-2024 domestic competitions. "Tough domestic competition will certainly give a fillip to javelin in the country," Chopra had said prior to the Paris Games. Chopra's historic win at the pandemic delayed 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games held in 2021 in Japan gave a new dimension to Indian athletes.

He continued his good run and claimed silver with a throw of 89.45m, a season best at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Pakistan's Arshad Needam won gold with an Olympic record throw (92.97m).

FLASH BACK 2024


SEPTEMBER 2024

Enriching experience for Aarti in Lima

India's World U20 bronze medallist in race-walking, Aarti will be chalked out her future plans and will be based out of Coonoor in the Nilgiris hills to pursue bigger goals in 2025. She clocked 44:39.39, a national record, in the women's 10,000m race walk at the August 27 to 30 World Athletics U20 Championships in Lima (Peru). After an exhilarating experience in Peru, the teenager from Haryana shifted to Tamil Nadu to train under the tutelage of former international race walker and army coach Basant Bahadur Rana.

Aarti's performance in Lima was nearly three minutes better than her national U20 record clocked earlier this year in Chandigarh. She (Aarti) has the potential to do better at the senior level too, her coach said. Aarti's imminent goal was to improve her race walk technique.


OCTOBER 2024

Brussels Diamond League

India's celebrated 26-year-old javelin thrower, Neeraj Chopra, has on several occasions illustrated that he has the ability to push beyond boundaries when it matters the most. At the year-end Brussels Diamond League Finals on September 14, despite a fractured left hand, he narrowly missed the title. Chopra's best attempt was 87.86m while the eventual winner, Anderson Peters of Grenada, took home the trophy with a throw of 87.87m.

The 2024 Olympic year turned out to be a long competitive season for Chopra. He began his quest to defend his Olympic Games title with the Doha Diamond League in May. At the Paris Olympic Games, he won a silver medal to go with his Tokyo Games gold and became the first Indian track and field athlete to win back-to-back Olympic medals.

FLASH BACK 2024



NOVEMBER 2024

Focus on regional competitions

Regional competitions incorporated in the 2025 calendar year are part of the AFI ecosystem to build a solid foundation. The AFI has shortlisted at least 15 regional venues across the country to conduct the competitions, which is expected to encourage more participation at domestic level from next season. Last year AFI introduced a one-day relay carnival. The entry standards for the newly introduced regional domestic meets will be relaxed to allow more athletes to gain valuable experience and gradually climb the ladder. Ranking points will be awarded to the athletes during the regional events.

Asian Cross Country

Indian distance runners stamped their authority at the Asian Cross Country held in Hong Kong. The Indian team overall won 11 medals. National team competed in both junior and senior groups.



DECEMBER 2024

World Athletics Bronze Level Continental Tour

The Athletics Federation of India will host the inaugural edition of the Indian Open World Athletics Bronze Level Continental Tour in August at Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Stadium. The Continental Tour will be a good opportunity for the Indian team to showcase their potential on home ground before the World Championships in September. The AFI 2025 calendar will kick start with the national cross country championships on January 12 in Uttar Pradesh.

Breaking barriers

Army's 26-year-old Hangzhou Asian Games bronze medallist, Gulveer Singh improved his own national records in both the men's 5,000m and 10,000m at the fag end of 2024 season. His current 10,000m national record of 27:14.88 was set in Japan. His next goal is to qualify for the 2025 World Athletics.

FLASHBACK 2024

NEERAJ CHOPRA

Won back-to-back medals at the Olympic Games.



Indian Oil Corporation Limited

