

## Sports

## Photo of the Day



Thomas van Tonder is seen setting a Guinness World Record for fastest 50m rope climb at Red Bull Rising in South Africa. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

# Elite runners brave pollution, COVID in Delhi half marathon

## Shanghai marathon defies coronavirus with 9,000 runners

**NEW DELHI:** Elite runners brushed off poor air quality and a surge in coronavirus cases yesterday in India's capital for the Delhi Half Marathon, one of the country's first major sporting events since the pandemic started. Forty-seven professional runners hit the 21-kilometre (13.1-mile) course in the men's and women's event, while amateur participants raced between Wednesday and Sunday to prevent overcrowding.

The route was sprayed with chemicals to minimize the effect of Delhi's annual toxic smog, which blankets the megacity in winter due to traffic and industrial pollution, crop stubble burning and cold temperatures. The air quality index—which monitors tiny PM2.5 and PM10 particles that get into the bloodstream and vital organs—was at 244 and in the “poor” category, the Central Pollution Control Board said yesterday. Doctors last week said it would be “suicidal” for runners to take part in the competition given the twin risks.

Ethiopia's Amdework Walegn won the men's race with a course record of 58.53 minutes with last year's champion Andamlak Belihu just a sec-

ond behind. The previous best was 59.06 set by Ethiopia's Guye Adola in 2014. “The course was very good,” Walegn said. “In earlier years there were a lot of U-turns, but this time it was flat and good to race on.” In the women's race, Yalemzerf Yehualaw of Ethiopia won in 1.04.46 — also a record—with Kenya's Ruth Chepngetich second. Avinash Sable, who has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics in 3000m steeplechase, was the top Indian finisher with a record national time of 1:00.30.

### Shanghai marathon

In another development, around 9,000 runners—some wearing face masks—took part in the Shanghai International Marathon yesterday, Chinese media said, a rare mass event in a year when coronavirus laid waste to most such sport. Prior to the race officials touted it as an opportunity to show how China—where the virus emerged late last year before unleashing a pandemic—is moving ahead despite the continuing global health crisis.

The prestigious New York, Berlin, Boston and

Chicago marathons all fell victim to coronavirus this year, while London and Tokyo were open only to elite runners. Bucking that trend, the Shanghai marathon went ahead under sunny skies following several days of rain, and with virus prevention measures in place to thwart infections. Shanghai is on edge following a scattering of recent local cases, but China has largely got to grips with the epidemic thanks to strict lockdowns and aggressive mass testing.

Runners had to pass a coronavirus test in order to take part and were ordered to wear a mask immediately before and after the race. Some kept them on the whole time. About 9,000 runners had been expected to take part, down from 38,000 in previous Shanghai marathons. No overseas athletes flew in for the race and spectators were told to stay away. Distance running is booming in China, with state media saying there is “marathon fever”. In February, when the country was shut down by the pandemic, one fanatical runner jogged the equivalent of an ultra-marathon inside his small apartment. — Agencies

## Tyson comeback fight at 54 ends with draw against Jones

**LOS ANGELES:** Mike Tyson's return to boxing at age 54 ended in a draw with 51-year-old Roy Jones Jr. on Saturday in an eight-round exhibition battle of former heavyweight champions. Fifteen years after retiring with a 2005 loss to journeyman Kevin McBride, Tyson made his comeback at Staples Center in Los Angeles without spectators in a pay-per-view matchup that mixed curiosity and nostalgia.

California State Athletic Commission officials required two-minute rounds instead of the usual three-minute rounds, mandated larger than normal 12-ounce gloves, said neither fighter could seek a knockout and declared there could be no official winner in safety moves for the over-50 fighters. “Sometimes that two minutes felt like three minutes,” Tyson said. “I'm glad I got this under my belt and I'm looking forward to doing it again.”

An “unofficial” panel of former World Boxing Council champions at ringside scored the bout a draw, an outcome that Tyson applauded despite appearing to dominate. “I'm good with that,” Tyson said, admitting he thought he had won the fight. “Yeah, but I'm good with a draw. The crowd was happy with that.” Jones, who looked tired and grabbed Tyson much of the fight, was unhappy at a draw. “I ain't never happy with a draw. I don't do draw,” Jones said, admitting that Tyson hurt him throughout the bout, particularly with body blows.

“If he hits you with his head, punches, body shots, it don't matter, everything hurts. Body shots definitely took a toll. Body shots are what makes you exhausted,” Tyson, who entered 50-6 with 44 knockouts, lost 100 pounds and began training again, his desire to get back in shape becoming a hunger to strap on the gloves once more. Jones, who entered 66-9 with 47 knockouts, had not fought since a February 2018 cruiserweight victory. He hoped a solid effort against Tyson might set up a fight with 45-year-old Brazilian mixed martial arts star Anderson Silva.

Tyson came out aggressive and fast, swinging and connecting often to the body of Jones, who was able to hit and evade at times, then hugging Tyson often when all else failed. “You came back. I hit you with good shots and you took it,” Tyson told Jones. “We have to do this again.” A hard left to the head stung Jones in round two and he spent much of the third and fourth rounds holding and moving into clinches with Tyson. “It's something in there taking punches from Mike,” Jones said. — AFP

## News in brief

### Bezuidenhout takes tour title

**MALELANE:** Christiaan Bezuidenhout held his nerve to win the Alfred Dunhill Championship by four shots at Leopard Creek Country Club yesterday as the rest of the contenders faltered in a dramatic finish. The 26-year-old South African took his second European Tour victory after birdies on the 14th and 15th holes helped him surge through a crowded leaderboard and end with a fourth-round 69 for a tournament total of 274. Bezuidenhout, ranked 61 in the world, proved steady on the back nine as super-fast greens and tight pin positions proved the undoing of the other frontrunners. Four golfers tied for second place, including American Sean Crocker, who was one shot behind the lead with a hole to play but hit his ball out of bounds twice on the 18th for a horror-show eight that put paid to his hopes. Poland's Adrian Meronk, who had led from the start of the tournament, South African teenager Jayden Schaper and Englishman Richard Bland also all finished on 10-under-par 278. — Reuters

### Delayed Olympics to cost more

**TOKYO:** The coronavirus-delayed Tokyo Olympics could cost \$1.9 billion more than its original budget of \$13 billion, a 15 percent increase, a report said yesterday. The Olympics organizers will formally decide the increased budget for the Games as early as mid-December after communicating with the Japanese government and the host city Tokyo, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported, citing unnamed Olympic sources. The 2020 Games were pushed back a year as Covid-19 spread around the globe, and are now scheduled to open on July 23, 2021. But the delay has thrown up a plethora of new costs, from rebooking venues and transport to retaining the huge organizing committee staff. With many countries experiencing second or even third waves of infection, there have been doubts about whether the event can be staged, but organizers and Olympic officials insist it can be done safely. — AFP

### Palmeiras win 3-0 to go fourth

**SAO PAULO:** A brace from Rony either side of halftime helped Palmeiras to get a 3-0 win over visitors Athletico Paranaense on Saturday and lifted the Sao Paulo club into fourth place in Brazil's Serie A. Patrick de Paula with a nice turn and finish put Palmeiras 1-0 up after eight minutes and Rony doubled their leader 11 minutes before the break. Rony got his second with a header four minutes into the second half to seal all three points for the home side. Palmeiras are now five points behind leaders Atletico Mineiro and have a game in hand. Athletico sit in 11th spot in the 20-team table. — Reuters

### Players losing ‘joy of playing’

**LONDON:** Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said his players could not revel in their 5-0 victory over Burnley on Saturday as hectic match scheduling had sucked some of the joy out of the sport. The novel coronavirus pandemic forced last season to finish late and this campaign to be condensed into a shorter period, with a chorus of club managers lamenting the relentless schedule that they believe has contributed to more player injuries. City, who bounced back from last week's defeat by Tottenham Hotspur and moved up to eighth with the win against Burnley, travel to Porto for a Champions League game on Tuesday before facing Fulham in the Premier League on Saturday. “The problem is the players lose the joy of playing football,” Guardiola told reporters. “Before it was nice playing once or twice a week with spectators. Now it's three days and then another one. We will travel to Porto to win, then prepare against Fulham.” — Reuters

### Bahrain crash cuts car in two

**MANAMA:** Romain Grosjean escaped from a horrific first-lap crash at the Bahrain Grand Prix yesterday when his car split in two and burst into flames. The French driver's Haas collided with Daniil Kyvat's Alpha Tauri on turn three, skewing into a barrier. Grosjean, 34, was lodged in the front half of his monocoque as it appeared to fly under the barrier, leaving the rear half behind on the edge of the circuit after spinning on impact. His car's fuel tank was clearly ruptured in the accident, releasing the fuel that ignited in a huge blaze. The crash came at a service road access point where the driver and medical crew from the circuit Safety Car were on the scene immediately. They helped Grosjean from his car as he leapt over the barrier. A medical official used a fire extinguisher on his race suit as they tackled the blaze and quickly put it out. A clearly shaken Grosjean was taken back to the pits by the medical car at the Sakhir Circuit suffering from minor burns. — AFP



SAKHIR: Fire marshals put out a fire on Haas F1's French driver Romain Grosjean's car during the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix at the Bahrain International Circuit in the city of Sakhir yesterday. — AFP



## Kuwait's Shooting Tournament ends in style

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Annual Shooting Tournament came to a conclusion Saturday at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex. Capital governor Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah represented HH the Crown Prince during the closing ceremony which was attended by Deputy Director General of Public Authority for Sport Dr Saqer Al-Mulla, President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Engineer Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi, Secretary General Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi, board members and other dignitaries.

Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi in his speech welcomed the guests on behalf of board members and the entire shooting community. He said “we are honored to organize HH the Crown Prince tournament,” adding that the committee provided all that is necessary — including the sterilization of the complex as they followed the instructions of the health authorities to protect against coronavirus.

Engineer Al-Otaibi said the tournament enjoyed the participation of a large number of shooters from the club, National Guard, military and Police Sports Associations as more than 300 shooters registered for the tournament. He said the competition was very strong as each shooter sought the honor of winning the season opener. The results of the tournament were as follows:

In the Men's Skeet — Saud Abdelrahman



Habeeb: In the Men's Trap - Abdelrahman Nasser Al-Faihan; In Women's Skeet - Iman Salem Al-Shamma; In Women's Trap - Sarah Al-Hawal; In the Men's 10 Meter Air Pistol - Saad Mane Nuhaqan; In the Men's 10m Air Rifle - Abdallah Awadh Al-Harby; In the 50 Meter 3 Positions Rifle Abdallah Awadh Al-Harby; In the 25 Meter Rapid Pistol - Hassan Abdelaziz Abdelmajid; In the Women's 10 Meter Air Rifle Hessa Nabil Al-Zayed; In the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol - Huthama Ali Al-Baghlhi; In the Olympic Archery - Abdallah Mohammad Taha and in the Compound Archery - Abdallah Yaqoub Malallah.

