



## **Survey on Media coverage of National Games 2022**

In August 2021, Indian athletes were being feted and celebrated for their achievements at the Tokyo Olympics. Personalities no less than the Prime Minister of the country invited them to his official residence and for the Independence Day functions irrespective of whether they won a medal or not. Even recently, Indian athletes were celebrated for their achievements at the Commonwealth Games. With growing awareness and celebration of the achievements of Indian athletes for their feats, it would be expected that the same would reflect in the media coverage of sports beyond cricket. The National Games in that context was perfectly timed, not only the first edition in seven years but featuring the biggest names in Indian sports. A number of publications, in print and digital have sent their reporters to cover the National Games which would also reflect in a growing diversity of stories.

Unfortunately in the past week October 2-10 the coverage of the National Games has been very low and one could say even negligible. For the purpose of this report, we are taking the coverage in two English dailies Times of India and Hindustan Times, both of which are among the highest circulating in the language in India and four Hindi dailies Dainik Bhaskar (the number one circulating daily in the country), Dainik Jagran (the number two circulating daily in the country), Hindustan and Amar Ujala both of whom figure in the top five circulating Hindi dailies in India.

After the pandemic, sports coverage in newspapers has taken a major hit and newspapers have reduced the number of pages devoted to sports. Of the six newspapers that have been assessed for their coverage of the National Games, the two English newspapers have 1 and a half pages devoted to sports while the four Hindi newspapers have 1 page each devoted to sport.

### **Coverage in Hindustan Times (October 2-8)**

Date	Coverage of National Games (% of total sports coverage)	Coverage of Cricket (% of total sports coverage)
October 2	2 stories (25%)	Full page (66.6%)
October 3	1 story (15%)	Full page (50%) (there were two pages that day)
October 4	2 stories (33.3%)	Full page (66.6%)
October 5	2 stories (33.3%)	Half page (33.3%)
October 6	1 story (22.5%)	Half page (33.3%)
October 7	1 story (under 10%)	60% of page (40%)

October 8	1 story (under 10%)	80% of page (more than 50%)
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#### Coverage in Times of India (October 3-8)

Date	Coverage of National Games (% of total sports coverage)	Coverage of Cricket (% of total sports coverage)
October 3	3 stories (22.5%)	50%
October 4	2 stories (10%)	Half page (33.3%)
October 5	3 stories (15%)	70% of page (over 50%)
October 6	3 stories (nearly 20%)	50% of page (33.3%)
October 7	3 stories (30%)	30% (there was just one page that day)
October 8	3 stories (more than 25%)	Half page +2 separate stories on second page (over 40%)

#### Coverage in Dainik Jagran (October 4-10)

Date	Coverage of National Games (% of total sports coverage)	Coverage of Cricket (% of total sports coverage)
October 4	1 story (about 5% of coverage)	70% of coverage
October 5	1 story (about 10% of coverage)	75% of coverage
October 6	1 story (about 10% of coverage)	75% of coverage
October 7	1 story (under 5% of coverage)	65-70% of coverage
October 8	Zero coverage	75% of coverage
October 9	1 story (under 5% of coverage)	80% of coverage
October 10	1 story (under 5% of coverage)	70% of coverage

#### Coverage in Dainik Bhaskar (October 4-8)

Date	Coverage of National Games (% of total sports coverage)	Coverage of Cricket (% of total sports coverage)
October 4	1 story (10%)	40% of page
October 5	1 story (5%)	60% of page
October 6	Zero coverage	

October 7	1 story (5%)	70% of page
October 8	1 story (10%)	60% of page

### Coverage in Amar Ujala (October 2-8)

Date	Coverage of National Games (% of total sports coverage)	Coverage of Cricket (% of total sports coverage)
October 2	2 stories (25% of page)	70%
October 3	1 story (15% of page)	50%
October 4	Updates from various sports (25%)	50%
October 5	3 stories (30% of page)	60%
October 6	1 story (20% of page)	40-50%
October 7	1 story (10% of page)	3 stories on cricket
October 8	1 story (20% of page)	3 stories on cricket

### Coverage in Hindustan (October 2-8)

Date	Coverage of National Games (% of total sports coverage)	Coverage of Cricket (% of total sports coverage)
October 2	Updates from various events (30%)	55-60%
October 3	2 stories (20%)	50%
October 4	2 stories (10%)	Nearly 80%
October 5	2 stories (20% of page)	Nearly 60%
October 6	1 story (15% of page)	More than 50% of page
October 7	2 stories (20% of page)	More than 50% of page
October 8	1 story (5% of page)	

The above reports quite clearly suggest that bar the odd exception when 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the overall sports coverage has been around the National Games, the coverage has on the whole been limited to 10-20%. Coverage of cricket in the meanwhile has with a few exceptions, always been over 50% of the total sports coverage.

It is indeed a big surprise that the two highest circulating national dailies of India, i.e. Dainik Bhaskar and Dainik Jagran have barely mentioned anything about the National Games on their pages. This is disappointing given the wide reach that they have in India. While on some cases it is has been barely 5% of the total sports pages, there have been occasions in the case of each paper where there has been nil coverage of the National Games.

Also if one is to go into greater depth of the National Games coverage, around 60% or even more is coming from a single sport i.e. Athletics. Sports such as Badminton, Archery and Shooting have also been covered to some extent but not as much as Athletics. This is indeed a surprise because the National Games features 36 sports, so for 6-7 sports to get the lion's

share of coverage and a single sport getting featured so much is disproportionate. Athletics is a popular sport worldwide but India has won one medal in Olympic history and two in the World Championships. India has done much better in some other sports which have not been covered to the same extent.

The reduction of sports pages presumably due to the pandemic has unfortunately also made a major dent on the space that can be devoted to sports but despite that, the outcomes could have been a lot better. Almost all newspapers when a major event like the Commonwealth Games or the Asian Games let alone the Olympics takes place, devote one full page to just reports from that competition. This de facto would mean more than 50% of sports coverage in the newspapers would come from the CWG or the Asian Games, then why is the same not adopted for the National Games. After all , the National Games is a senior level competition featuring the biggest names in Indian sport.

This report also sadly indicates why India is struggling to move on from being a one-sport nation. The coverage of Cricket even when an event like the National Games is going on is disproportionately high. When this happens, one cannot complain as to why India is yet to become a full-fledged sporting nation.

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