

# 'DESH KE LIYE APNE ANDAR JUNOON RAKHO'

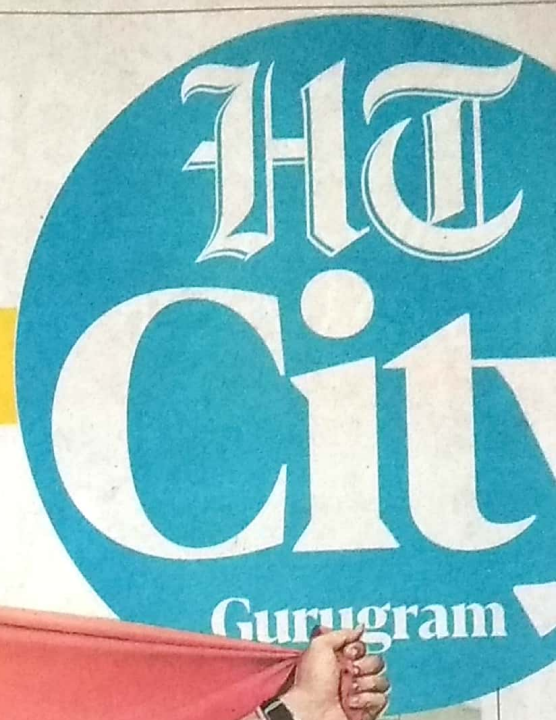


PHOTO: GOKUL VS/HT, LOCATION: TAJ PALACE, NEW DELHI

## 'Golden boy' Neeraj Chopra is happy to be living his dream this I-Day

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**Y**eh pehla aisa Independence Day hai jo medal ke saath manaya jaayega, toh mere liye yeh special hai!" says Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra. "Mera sapna tha main Tiranga Olympics mein pure world ke saamne lehraun, apne rashtra gan par. Aur yeh sapna is Independence Day ke pehle pura hua. Desh ke liye kuch kar paya, yaadgaar rahega."

adds the javelin thrower. Ahead of August 15, when the 23-year-old was in Delhi and held the Tricolour for a photo shoot with us, the atmosphere turned emotional for those present, as everyone could recall the moment when the athlete wrapped the flag around himself at the stadium in Tokyo! "Nation flag apne upar lapet te waqt bahut achha lag raha tha," recounts Chopra. And the Indian Army Subedar in him strongly feels, "Desh ke liye apne andar junoon rakho, usko sachhe

man se pyaar karo. Hum kuch bhi kha pi ke aise fek dete hain, agar sahi se koode ko dustbin mein dalein aur apne desh ko saaf rakhein toh woh bhi ek achhi shuruwaat hogi." Once back from the Games, the Haryana-born Chopra says "sabse pehle maine apna gold medal maa ko pehnaya. Aur meri maa kafi emotional ho gayi thi." Chopra was all of 14 when he left home to train in sports. Looking back, he says he didn't miss out on the fun that other youngsters his age had. "Jo mera routine tha —

stadium jaana, training karna, khaana kha ke achhe se so jaana — wohi bahut achha lagne laga mujhe," he shares. Chopra feels he now stands a good chance at winning the coveted Khel Ratna award, for which he was nominated thrice in the past. "Ab Olympic champion banne ke baad agar milta hai toh lagega well deserved hai," says the nation's 'golden boy' whose aim is only to excel further. "Ek bar jeetna muskhal hai. Lekin bar bar jeetne se pata lagta hai ki sach mein mahan

khiladi hai, jaise Usain Bolt, Michael Phelps, jinhone bar bar duniya ko apni performance dikhayi," says Chopra. Looking forward to resume his training and make new records, he adds, "Yeh mera medal aa gaya hai, isko main achhe se pack karake ghar pe rakhunga jaise Commonwealth aur Asian Games ke rakhe hain. Uske baad meri agli training shuru ho jayegi, 90 meters ka mera sapna hai abhi, woh throw karna hai!"

Hum kuch bhi kha ke aise fek dete hain...agar koode ko dustbin mein dalein aur apne desh ko saaf rakhein, woh ek achhi shuruwaat hogi. Desh bhakti sachhe mann se karni chahiye.

**NEERAJ CHOPRA**, Javelin thrower