

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE – 27**

**BA VI SEMESTER EXAMINATION: MAY 2023**

**SPORTS JOURNALISM: JN 6319**

**Time- 2½ hrs Max Marks- 70**

**Instructions:**

1. **This paper is for students of III JIP who have chosen the Sports Journalism elective.**
2. **This paper has THREE SECTIONS and THREE printed pages.**
3. **Please provide word counts following every response that you make.**
4. **You are allowed to use a dictionary.**
5. **Read the following excerpt from a feature published in Sportstar magazine::**

Nikhat Zareen is in a happy place right now — at her home in Hyderabad with family. She is on a break, after winning her second gold medal at the World Boxing Championships in New Delhi.

Once the camp at the National Institute of Sports in Patiala resumes in a couple of weeks, the 26-year-old will return to the spartan routine of an elite boxer. The day will start early, with promises of sore muscles from heavy gym sessions, bruised egos and blackened eyes from hard sparring, and a constant state of hunger because of the calorie-deficit diet she will follow to make the 50kg weight category she competes in.

But at least for a few days, Nikhat can let her shoulder length hair flow, instead of the tight braid that she adorns while boxing. Her upper lip that was split open by a punch in the final of the World Championships has also healed in the comforts of home.

“ Abhi samjho vacation pe hai (She is enjoying her vacation),” says her father Jameel. “She wakes up at 8 or 9 am. Then she spends the whole day chatting on the phone with her friends and playing with her nephew and niece. It’s Ramzan, so she’s eating her mother’s haleem and biryani. She tries everything. She misses that a lot when she is training,” he says.

It was the Indira Gandhi Stadium, the scene of her latest triumph, that was also witness to the lowest point in her career. Back in 2019, she was still trying to find a place in the Indian team. Even though she was a Youth World champion, standing in her way was India’s first Olympic bronze medallist in women’s boxing — Mary Kom.

The Manipuri literally owned the women’s flyweight spot in the national team. Her resume: six gold medals at the World Championships and the first bronze medal for India in women’s boxing at the Olympics. Replacing Mary Kom in the national team meant replacing a piece of Indian sporting history.

At the end of 2019, Nikhat requested the Indian Boxing Federation to conduct trials to pick the team for the Olympics selection competition. It was not a request that went down well with the senior pro looking at a swansong on the biggest stage “Who is Nikhat Zareen?” Mary Kom had quipped.

Nikhat, like every Indian woman boxer of the last decade, had grown up admiring Mary Kom and while she was hurt by the criticism for seeking a fair trial, she would insist on it. It was eventually granted. Nikhat, then 22, lost a close but fair decision. That was followed by a sharp verbal exchange in the ring.

As a dejected Nikhat trudged back to her hostel, she was subjected to further taunts. “Why couldn’t you just wait for your time. You got carried away by people,” a Federation official told her. “I wasn’t asking for a favour. I was asking for my right,” Nikhat replied.

Sarita Devi, the 2006 World Champion in lightweight, too, had competed at those trials and remembers the day well. “After the fight, I saw that she was almost in tears. But she never cried. Not in public. She went to the toilet next to the boxing hall. Nikhat won’t ever show any weakness,” she remembers. “I knew she was hurting and told her not to worry and that her time will come.”

Sarita, 15 years older to Nikhat, always had a soft spot for her since she first saw the youngster at the national camp. “At that time, I was an established boxer. She was coming from youth to senior. I liked her game. She had a very neat and clean style,” she says. But Sarita also empathised with the rookie. “In Indian boxing, girls generally come from two parts of the country. They are either from Haryana or from the NorthEast. She was from Telangana, which did not have a boxing culture. She was all by herself,” Sarita says. Nikhat was an outsider. She was a Muslim. “I’d seen Muslim girl boxers in Turkey and other Muslim countries. But I had not seen many in India. I think in all my time at the national camp, there have been two including Nikhat. I had a Muslim friend from Manipur who wanted to be a boxer and I knew how hard it was for her. She’d train with us and then change to a hijab when she went home. I was curious whether Nikhat had to deal with this as well,” recalls Sarita.

Nizamabad, where Nikhat originally hails from, is a small town — about 160 km away from Hyderabad — and did not have the most progressive attitude to a young girl trying to make her way in sport. “We talked about her struggles, how she had to fight to wear shorts and compete. But she always told me that it was her father who backed her. She told me ‘I can do what I can because my father always fights for me. He wants me to do well,’” recalls Sarita.

If you ask him, Jameel doesn’t think he did anything extraordinary. “It’s true that not everyone in the neighbourhood or even the family were supportive. It’s the usual thing. They would say it is wrong and it would spoil her marriage prospects. Some never approved of her wearing boxing shorts. But I never let Nikhat worry about these things. I wanted her to do her best. People always talk. If you stop and listen to what everyone has to say, you won’t go very far,” he says.

Jameel, a former athlete, at first encouraged Nikhat to start as a sprinter, and she won medals at the State level. Nikhat took to boxing after Jameel was left impressed with a training session at Nizamabad’s secretariat ground. In the absence of other young girls, she sparred with older boys. Backed by her father and fighting against tougher opponents, Nikhat progressed rapidly, and won her first sub-junior national title in a year at the age of 14. A year later she would win gold at her first international tournament at the Youth World Championships.

If you ask Nikhat today, she says she derives more joy from the respect her father enjoys rather than her own wealth and fame. “Wherever my father goes, people respect him. In the initial days of my boxing career, my father had to struggle a lot to get financial aid for my boxing. He had to give up his job to support me. Now he is highly respected, which makes me proud,” she says..”

1. **Answer ANY FOUR of the following questions in FIVE to SIX lines each: (4x5=20)**

1. Look carefully at the second paragraph. What is its relevance to the story?
2. What does the Mary Kom incident do for the larger story? Explain.
3. A magazine feature is in direct competition with online reporting which is immediate, and daily newspapers. Is that evident anywhere in the way the piece is written?
4. If you were editing this piece, what would you change about its structure? Why?
5. Comment on the author’s choice of people to interview as seen in the above piece.
6. **Answer the following questions in 150-200 words. (2x15=30)**
7. Write about a woman sportsperson you look up to. What part of their appeal comes from what you have read in newspapers?
8. From the events you organised this semester, what did you learn about the key factors that draw an audience? Describe how these seemed to work
9. **Answer ANY ONE of the following questions in 200-250 words. (20 marks)**
10. Is the reading self different from the viewing self–especially the television-viewing self? Does this influence the way you respond to sports coverage? Explain.
11. What do sports photographs do for their audiences? Pick one photograph from the last 12 months that seems to bring together everything that sporting achievement symbolises for you.

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