



Sakeena Itoo witnesses Shaheed Wali Mohammad Cricket Tournament finale

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JUNE 15

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today witnessed the final match of the prestigious Shaheed Wali Mohammad Itoo Cricket Tournament held at DH Pora in Kulgam district amid enthusiastic participation of local youth and sports lovers.

The tournament, organized in memory of late Shaheed Wali Mohammad Itoo, saw participation from several talented teams from across the region. It served as a vibrant platform for promoting sportsmanship, discipline and healthy competition among youth.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Minister lauded the organizers for successfully conducting the tournament and providing a constructive avenue for the young talent to showcase their sporting abilities. She said that sports play a pivotal role in shaping character, fostering teamwork and steering youth towards positive and productive pursuits.

Sakeena Itoo reiterated



the Jammu and Kashmir government's commitment towards strengthening the sports infrastructure and creating more opportunities for youth engagement in J&K. She emphasized that focused efforts are being made to encourage sports activities at the grassroots

values of perseverance, leadership and mutual respect", asserted the Minister.

Highlighting the immense sporting potential of Jammu and Kashmir's youth, she called upon the young players to actively participate in sports and make full use of the facilities and opportunities being extended by the government. She assured continued support for the initiatives aimed at nurturing sporting talent and promoting youth-centric activities throughout the region.

The Minister also appreciated the enthusiasm displayed by the participating teams and spectators, stating that such events strengthen community bonds and inspire the younger generation to pursue excellence in sports.

Later, Sakeena Itoo distributed trophies, medals and certificates among the winning and runner-up teams and congratulated all the participants for their spirited performance. She encouraged the players to continue striving for excellence and represent Jammu and Kashmir at higher levels of competition.

Thathri, Bhalessa crowned Volleyball Champions as day 12 showcases Girls' sporting excellence

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The Inter-Zonal District Level Tournament 2026, organized by the Youth Services and Sports Doda under the overall supervision of DYSSO Ashok Kumar enters its 12th day.

The event witnessed impressive performances in Girls' Martial Arts and Volleyball competitions.

Participants from various zones competed enthusiastically in Boxing, Karate, Thang-Ta and Wushu events, displaying remarkable skill, discipline, determination and sportsmanship throughout the day.

The Volleyball finals proved to be a major attraction, with Zone Thathri defeating Zone Assar to lift the U/17 Volleyball Championship Trophy. While Zone Bhalessa emerged victorious over Zone Assar in the U/14 final to claim the title. Both matches showcased excellent teamwork, coordination and competitive spirit among the young athletes.

The tournament, which commenced on 4th June 2026, continues to serve as a significant platform for nurturing sporting talent and promoting healthy compe-



tion among the youth of district Doda. The active participation and outstanding performances of the athletes reflect the growing

sporting culture in the district and the department's commitment to developing future champions.

The Inter-Zonal District

Level Tournament 2026 continues to foster unity, sportsmanship and excellence among the young sportspersons of Doda.

U-14 Girls Kho-Kho Championship Begins in Baramulla

BARAMULLA, JUNE 15:

Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS) Baramulla today commenced the Inter-Zonal District Level Under-14 Girls Kho-Kho Championship at HS Ground Khawaja Bagh, marking another significant step towards promoting sports among young girls in the district.

The championship was inaugurated by District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO) Baramulla, Mushtaq Ahmad Pampori, in the presence of departmental officials, technical staff and participating teams.

Speaking on the occasion, DYSSO Baramulla emphasized the vital role of sports in fostering confidence, discipline and leadership qualities among young girls. He appreciated the increasing participation of girls in sporting activities and highlighted the department's commitment to providing



platforms that nurture talent and encourage healthy competition.

A total of 216 athletes representing 18 zones are participating in the two-day championship. The tournament is being conducted in a league-cum-knockout format, ensuring ample competitive exposure for all teams.

The opening day witnessed spirited performances across both courts. Zone Rohama, Nehalpora, Kunzer and Sopore registered victories on Court No. 1, while Zone Dangiawacha, Dangerpora, Pattan and Wagoora emerged victorious in their respective matches on Court No. 2.

The championship show-

cased remarkable enthusiasm, teamwork and sporting spirit among the participants, reflecting the growing sports culture in the district. The tournament is being conducted under the supervision of DYSS Baramulla and will conclude tomorrow with the final matches and felicitation of the winning teams.

FIH Women's Nations Cup: India come from behind to defeat USA 3-2 in opening match

AUCKLAND, JUNE 15:

The Indian women's hockey team staged a remarkable comeback from two goals down to defeat the United States 3-2 in their opening Pool A match of the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup on Sunday at the North Harbour National Hockey Centre in Auckland.

For India, Deepika netted a brace, and Navneet Kaur scored a goal, while Ashley Sessa and Madeleine Zimmer were on the scoresheet for the USA.

Deepika, who marked a stunning return to the Indian team with a brace, was also awarded the Player of the Match.

The USA got off to a great start and opened the scoring through Ashley Sessa (4'), who found the back of the net with a field goal in the fourth minute. The Americans doubled their advantage just three minutes later when Madeleine Zimmer (7') converted a penalty corner to put India under early pressure.

Trailing by two goals, India gradually began to assert itself in attack. Their efforts paid off in the second quarter when drag-flick specialist Deepika (17') successfully converted a penalty corner to reduce the deficit and



bring India back into the game. The momentum continued to swing in India's favour as they earned another penalty corner midway through the quarter. Deepika (24') stepped up once again and successfully converted another penalty corner to level the score at 2-2.

India maintained the pressure and completed a stunning turnaround before halftime. Navneet Kaur

(28') converted a penalty corner to hand India the lead for the first time in the match, ensuring the team entered the break with a 3-2 advantage.

The second half saw both teams battle intensely in search of goals. Both sides earned six penalty corners each over the course of the match, but neither defence allowed any further breakthroughs in the remaining two quarters.

India successfully held on to their advantage in the closing stages to secure all three points and begin their Nations Cup campaign on a winning note. Following the victory, India moved to second place in Pool A with three points, level with Japan, who lead the standings on goal difference.

India will next face Japan in their second Pool A match of the tournament on June 16 at 6:30 am.

Suryansh, Vipraj fifties take India A to 265 vs Sri Lanka A

DAMBULLA, JUNE 15:

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi once again got out after a flying start but spin bowling all-rounders Suryansh Shedge and Vipraj Nigam hit timely fifties to fish India A out of troubled waters as the visitors scored 265 against Sri Lanka A in a tri-nation series game here on Monday.

Shedge smashed 72 off 66 balls while Nigam contributed 51 off 49 balls to rescue India after they were reeling at 143 for 7 at one stage.

Sooryavanshi (21 off 14 balls) started by smashing pacer Chamika Gunasekara for a six and couple of boundaries but off-spinner Sahan Arachchige got one to slightly drift wide of his hitting arc and the southpaw hit across the line to spoon it towards



point. Skipper Tilak Varma (23) and his in-form deputy Ruturaj Gaikwad (32) added 52 for the third wicket in 9 overs but the Sri Lankan spinners made a comeback on a slowish track. From 91 for 2, a middle-order slump had India

tottering at 143 for 7 once off-spinner Vijaykanth Vijaykanth beat Gaikwad with an off-break to trap him plumb in-front.

Tilak was dismissed when he tried to smash slinger Kugathas Mathulan through point only to be

caught by the fielder stationed there.

However, Mumbai's Shedge and UP's Nigam — two multi-skilled players, who are on national selectors' 'targeted list' added 104 runs for the eighth wicket, indicating the depth coming through pathways structure.

Both are capable batters and have done well for their respective state sides in the domestic white ball events. It only helps Indian cricket that they are frontline spinners too.

While Shedge hit three fours and two sixes while Nigam hit six fours. Gauging the slowness of the pitch, the duo farmed strike and showed the importance of running between the wickets even as they punished the loose deliveries.

Chandigarh judoka Narang qualifies for Glasgow Commonwealth Games

CHANDIGARH, JUNE 15:

Having 12 fingers and 12 toes has proved to be an advantage rather than a disadvantage for Chandigarh judoka Ishroop Narang, who is currently ranked World No. 3 in the junior women's 78 kg category and has secured a berth for the 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, scheduled to begin on July 15.

Ishroop recently won a bronze medal in the 78 kg category at the Junior Asian Cup 2026 held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Last year, she



was selected by the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS) for long-term high-perfor-

mance training under head coach Mamuka Kizilashvili in Akhmeta, Georgia.

Earlier, representing Punjab, Ishroop claimed her first international medal — a bronze in the +70 kg pre-cadet category — at the Commonwealth Judo Championships held in Walsall, Great Britain.

Blessed with a stronger grip because of her extra fingers, Ishroop has won several medals for Chandigarh. She trains at the Sector 34 Sports Complex under coach Vivek Thakur. At the 38th National Games in Uttarakhnad, she won the gold medal in her category.