



## CM Omar unveils official merchandise for Kashmir Marathon 2026

Says event to establish Kashmir on India's marathon calendar, boost sports tourism

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Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today launched the official merchandise for the Kashmir Marathon 2026, organised by the Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Department, at the Royal Springs Golf Course (RSGC), Srinagar.

The official merchandise, comprising the marathon cap, finisher's medal and racing kit specially designed for participants, was unveiled at a brief function attended by representatives of the media and senior officers of the Tourism Department. The Chief Minister also launched the promotional video for the event. The initiative is aimed at promoting sports tourism, encouraging fitness and healthy lifestyles, and showcasing Jammu and Kashmir as a premier destination for national and international sporting events.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the marathon is much more than a sporting competition and forms an important part of the government's broader strategy to diversify tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Marathon is an event in itself. We are trying to increase tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. Tourism is not limited to destination weddings or conferences. We want to give recogni-



tion to the many unique experiences that Jammu and Kashmir offers, including skiing, the gondola, white-water rafting, fishing and other adventure activities," he said.

The Chief Minister said the government is striving to establish the Kashmir Marathon as one of the country's flagship sporting events on the lines of renowned marathons held in Delhi, Mumbai, Ladakh and other parts of the country.

"I have seen marathons in Delhi, Mumbai and several other states and Union Territories. Today, runners from across the country and the world participate in the Ladakh Marathon. We want the Kashmir Marathon and the Jammu Half Marathon to attain the same stature and recognition," he said.

Highlighting the wider significance of the event, Omar Abdullah said the marathon sends a powerful message about the Valley's peaceful environment and hospitality.

"The positive message of the marathon is that Kashmir is comfortable, safe and welcoming for everyone. We want people from across the country and around the world to come here, participate and experience Kashmir," he added.

The Chief Minister was informed that the third edition of the Kashmir Marathon will be held in Srinagar on October 25, 2026. Participants in the half marathon will run through some of Srinagar's most iconic landmarks, including the Jhelum riverfront, Lal Chowk, Dalgate and the scenic Boulevard along Dal Lake. Full

marathon runners will continue towards Hazratbal and Kashmir University. The course has been designed with a combination of flat and hilly stretches, featuring an overall elevation gain of approximately 960 metres, offering both a scenic and challenging experience for participants.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Ashish Chandra Verma, Secretary, Royal Springs Golf Course, Haris Ahmed Handoo, Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajad, Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

## SMVDSB felicitates Para Archer Payal Nag on Securing Bronze at World Archery Para Series

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JAMMU, JULY 10

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) today felicitated its accomplished para archer Payal Nag for bringing laurels to the nation by securing a Bronze Medal at the World Archery Para Series-2026 held at Nove Mesto, Czech Republic from June 29 to July 5, 2026.

Payal won the bronze medal in the Compound Women Team Event alongside fellow Indian para archer Sheetal Devi, who was also nurtured at the SMVD Sports Complex, delivering an outstanding performance against some of the world's finest para archers.

While felicitating Payal with Mata Ki Chunri, Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB, congratulated her on this remarkable achievement and commended her dedication, perseverance and unwavering pursuit of excellence. He described her success as a matter of immense pride for



both the nation and the Shrine Board and exuded confidence that she would continue to achieve greater milestones and bring further laurels to the country in the years to come.

The Shrine Board, under the Chairmanship of Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, JK-UT, remains committed to promoting sports and nurturing young talent by providing world-class training

facilities and opportunities. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sports Complex is being developed as a Centre of Excellence with modern infrastructure and resources to support aspiring sports persons in achieving success at national and international levels.

Notably, Payal is scheduled to represent India in the World Archery Para Series - Leg III to be held at Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in

September 2026. She will thereafter represent the country at the Para Asian Games scheduled to be held in Japan in October 2026.

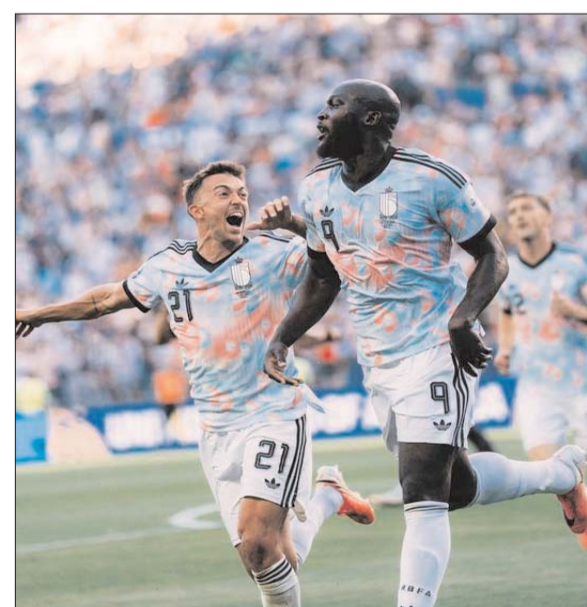
Among those present on the occasion were Shri Alok Kumar Maurya, Addl. Chief Executive Officer; Shri Satish Kumar Sharma, Jt. Chief Executive Officer; Shri Dhruv Gupta, Asstt. Chief Executive Officer; coaches and other Shrine Board officials.

## FIFA World Cup 2026: Rudi Garcia backs Belgium to give Spain 'run for their money' in quarter-final

LOS ANGELES, JULY 10: Belgium coach Rudi Garcia acknowledged that they may be heading into the FIFA World Cup 2026 quarter-final clash against Spain on Friday (local time) as the underdogs but said the Belgian Red Devils will do everything to give La Rojas "a run for their money," Reuters reported.

Garcia acknowledged Spain's quality and possession-based style but expressed confidence in his team's attacking strength and ability to challenge the European champions. He said that despite being underdogs, Belgium believe they can compete and give Spain a tough fight.

"We know we are playing one of the favourites. Spain are probably the best at ball possession and they have been playing in a recognisable way for 15 or 20 years. But we have a great team. We are the second-highest



scorers in the World Cup and we are facing the team with the highest expected goals. We think we can do it," he said as per Reuters.

Belgium reached the quarter-finals after a mixed group-stage campaign, drawing 1-1 with Egypt and playing out a goalless draw against Iran before securing a 5-1 win over New Zealand. They then edged past Senegal 3-2 in the Round of 32

and defeated co-hosts USA 4-1 in the Round of 16 to book their place in the last eight.

Spain, meanwhile, head into the quarter-final in formidable form. The reigning European champions are yet to concede a goal at the tournament, having kept a record six consecutive FIFA World Cup clean sheets.

After topping Group H, they eliminated Austria in the Round of 32 before edging past Portugal in the Round of 16 to reach the last eight.

While Spain will be aiming to punch their ticket to the final four of the FIFA World Cup for the first time since their championship-winning run in 2010, the 2018 bronze medal holders Belgium will be aiming to reach the semifinals, with Romelu Lukaku, Kevin de Bruyne and other veterans playing a crucial leadership role.

## Mandhana marks her 300th international as India bat first in historic Lord's Women's Test

LONDON [UK], JULY 10: England won the toss and asked India to bat first in the one-off Women's Test at Lord's on Friday, with opener Smriti Mandhana reaching a major career milestone by making her 300th international appearance.

Mandhana, who turns 30 on July 18, became the youngest woman cricketer to reach the 300-international milestone. She is only the 12th player in women's international cricket to achieve the feat and the third Indian after Mithali Raj (333 matches) and Harmanpreet Kaur (374).

The match is also historic as it marks the first-ever Women's Test to be played at Lord's, the iconic Home of Cricket. It is the 56th Women's Test to be staged in England, with the previous 55 having been played across 19 different venues. County Ground, Worcester, hosted the most Women's Tests in England with nine between 1951 and 2009, followed by The Oval with six between 1937 and 1976.

The contest is the 16th Women's Test between England and India. India holds the upper hand in the rivalry with three victories,



while England's lone win came by just two runs at Jamsheedpur in 1995 -- still the narrowest victory by runs in Women's Test history. The remaining 11 encounters have ended in draws. History

This is India's 10th Women's Test in England. The visitors have won two of their previous nine Tests on English soil, while the other seven finished as draws.

The teams last met in England in a one-off Test in June 2021, which ended in

a draw. Their most recent Test clash came in Navi Mumbai in December 2023, where India registered a commanding 347-run victory. The match is also England batter Tammy Beaumont's final international appearance. Beaumont, the only England woman to score a double century in Test cricket, will retire at the conclusion of the match. She is also only the second woman in history to score international centuries in Tests, ODIs and T20Is.

England Women: Tammy Beaumont, Maia Bouchier, Heather Knight, Nat Sciver-Brunt (captain), Alice Capsey, Amy Jones (wicket-keeper), Mady Villiers, Sophie Ecclestone, Issy Wong, Lauren Bell, Lauren Filer.

India Women: Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Yastika Bhatia, Harmanpreet Kaur (captain), Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (wicketkeeper), Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Sayali Satghare, Shree Charani, Kranti Gaud. (ANI)

## Punjab's teen shuttler Inayat books India berth

JALANDHAR, JULY 10: Inayat Gulati (14) has been selected for the sub-junior Indian badminton team, making her one of the youngest girls from Punjab to join the national squad. A Class IX student at Delhi Public School, she will represent India at the Asia Sub-Junior Badminton Championship in Chengdu, China, from September 8 to 13.

Inayat is only the second girl from Jalandhar to enter the national team, after Shanya Ralhan in the junior category. She earned her spot by winning a silver medal in the under-15 mixed doubles event at the All India Sub-Junior Ranking Badminton Tournament in Bengaluru.



On her return, she was welcomed at the Ratti Badminton Academy, Doaba College, where she trains under former international players Sachin Ratti and Gagan Ratti.

Punjab Badminton Association hon-

orary secretary Ritin Khanna presented her with a cheque of Rs 21,000 and pledged full support. "Gulati is a promising girl who has been following in the footsteps of star player Tanvi Sharma from Hoshiarpur. Her disciplined practice routine has helped her reach this level at an early age," he said.

Inayat lives in Phagwara, where her parents run a business. Her mother, Shivani Gulati, said, "Be it summer, winter or rain, she wakes up at 4 am daily to reach Jalandhar for practice by 5 am. She returns home, eats, rests and heads for her second session. Online tuitions help her keep pace with schoolwork despite camps and tournaments."

NEW DELHI, JULY 10: Hockey India on Friday announced the 20-member Indian Women's Hockey Team for the upcoming 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026, scheduled to be held from September 19 to October 4 in Japan.

Salima Tete will continue to captain the side, having led the team to FIH Nations Cup triumph in New Zealand last month, according to a press release by Hockey India.

"We have a group in which we have a nice balance between juniors, experienced players and seniors who are constantly working to get the best out of each other," said the team's Chief Coach, Sjoerd Marijne, sharing his thoughts on the selected 20-member squad.

Savita, who recently received the Padma Shri award, and Bichu Devi Khariabam have been named



as the two goalkeepers in the squad.

The defence comprises Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam, Ishika Chaudhary and Jyoti, besides Lalhantlu and Shilpi Dabas who made their senior debut during the FIH Nations Cup and were rewarded for their good performance in the

tournament that India won with an unbeaten run.

In the midfield, captain Salima will be joined by Nikki Pradhan, Sakshi Rana, Sunelita Toppo, Neha and Deepika Soreng.

The forward line features Lalremsiami, Rutuja Dadaso Pisal, Navneet Kaur, Deepika, Ishika, Bal-

jeet Kaur and Beauty Dungle.

"This group of players has shown that they have the right form and fitness in recent months. We are confident that this team is ready for the challenge at the Asian Games," Chief Coach Marijne added.

Forwards: Lalremsiami,