



Srinagar hosts Indian Soft Tennis Team's National Camp ahead of 2026 Asian Games

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 14

The Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council today inaugurated the second National Coaching Camp of the Indian Soft Tennis Team at Gindun Sports Stadium, Rajbagh.

The month-long camp, approved by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Sports Authority of India, is being organised by the Amateur Soft Tennis Federation of India in collaboration with the J&K Amateur Soft Tennis Association and the J&K Sports Council, and will continue until August 13, 2026.

The Opening Ceremony of the 2nd National Coaching Camp of the Indian Soft Tennis Team, was conducted in preparation for the 20th Asian Games, Japan 2026. Nuzhat Gull, Secretary, J&K Sports Council, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. During her interaction with the Indian National Team players and the coaching staff, she encouraged the sportsmen and assured them of every possi-



ble support from the J&K Sports Council throughout their stay in Srinagar. She extended her best wishes to the team for the forthcoming Asian Games and expressed confidence that their dedication, hard work, and determination would bring laurels to the nation. The J&K Amateur Soft Tennis Association expressed its gratitude for being entrusted with the responsibility of hosting this prestigious National Coaching Camp.

The Amateur Soft Tennis Federation of India and the J&K Amateur Soft Tennis Association look forward to hosting many more national and international events in the future with the same spirit of excellence, cooperation, and sporting dignity.

Among the distinguished officials of the J&K Sports Council present on the occasion were Gh Rasool, Administrative Officer; Yasir Sab, Chief Accounts Officer; and Jahangir Ahmad, Pub-

lic Relations Officer (PRO). The officials of the Amateur Soft Tennis Federation of India who attended the ceremony included Aniket Khodadhar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Hashmukh Vegda, National Coach; Dr Gh. Hassan, Executive Member, ASTFI and National Coaching Camp Coordinator; Sudesh Sangte, National Team Coach; and Shakir Ashraf, General Secretary, J&K Amateur Soft Tennis Association.

JAMMU, JULY 14: More than 570 sports and youth infrastructure projects with an estimated investment exceeding ₹650 crore are presently under various stages of planning and execution across Jammu & Kashmir during current financial year, under the Department of Youth Services & Sports, marking one of the most comprehensive infrastructure development programmes undertaken by the Department in recent years.

The progress of this ambitious programme was reviewed today by Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, chairing the first quarterly review of the implementation roadmap initiated earlier this year.

The meeting was attended by Director General, Youth Services & Sports, Special Secretary YSS, Secretary, J&K Sports Council, FA/CAOs, JDP, senior officers of the Administrative Department, engineering agencies, Heads of Wings, District Youth Services & Sports Officers from all twenty districts and officers of the J&K Sports Council.

The review covered Capital Expenditure, Special Assistance to Capital Investment (SASCI), Centrally Sponsored Schemes including the Khelo India Mission, Revenue Expenditure, Budget Announcements and district-wise implementation of sports infrastructure projects. The Commissioner/Secretary said that the Department's infrastructure strategy is fully aligned with the vision of the Khelo Bharat Niti, with emphasis on creating an equitable, accessible and future-ready sports ecosystem



capable of serving every region and every section of society.

Dr. Choudhary observed that while significant investments have already transformed sports infrastructure over the past few years, the current phase represents a strategic shift from isolated project execution to a planned, data-driven expansion of sports infrastructure across urban centres, rural areas, border districts, tribal habitations, remote mountainous regions and other underserved locations. He said the objective is to ensure that every young person in Jammu & Kashmir has access to quality sports facilities within reasonable proximity, while simultaneously creating centres of excellence capable of nurturing national and international sporting talent.

The meeting reviewed the progress of 315 CapEx projects being implemented by the Directorate of Youth Services & Sports during 2026-27, including 167 ongoing works, 140 new projects and eight non-construction initiatives, in addition to projects under SASCI, Budget Announcements and other flagship programmes. The J&K Sports Council is simultaneously implementing 263 infrastructure projects, comprising 195 ongoing works, 57 new works and 11 SASCI Disaster Component projects, reflecting an unprecedented scale of coordinated infrastructure development across the Union Territory.

A comprehensive district-wise review was undertaken of all major projects. The Commissioner/Secretary reviewed progress on development of Khel Gaon, Nagrota as a flagship multi-sport hub through establishment of a Lawn Tennis Academy, new Directorate headquarters, Strength & Conditioning Centre, Youth Hostel and remodelling of cricket infrastructure. Progress was also reviewed on major new projects including construction of Khel Bhawans and integrated residential sports facilities at Rajouri, Ramban, Samba, Srinagar, Anantnag, Kulgam, Poonch, Jammu, and Nagrota; two Border Sports Academies; the proposed Centre for Mountaineering & Skiing at Sanasar; youth hostels at Nagrota, Wazir Bagh and Government College of Physical Education, Ganderbal; multi-purpose indoor halls; mini stadiums; sports academies; and playfield development works across districts.

The review also covered major projects being executed by the J&K Sports Council, including synthetic football and hockey turfs at Bandhura, Jagti, Gassu Hazratbal, Azad Gunj Baramulla and Draggad Shopian; Olympic-standard

swimming infrastructure and toddler swimming facilities at Gindun Rajbagh; athletic tracks at Khour, Mendhar and Tulibal; sports stadiums at Sogam, Birpur, Panthan Thathri, Rehal Bishnah, Budgam and Bhalwal; water sports facilities at Manasbal; Sports Complex at Nilandrus; Cricket Academies at Srinagar, Jammu, Udhampur and Anantnag; Gymnastics, Archery and Shooting Centres; High Performance Taekwondo Centres; and Centre of Cricket Excellence projects presently under execution.

The meeting noted significant progress under the Playfield Development Programme, under which 108 playfields are being developed across Jammu & Kashmir this year at an estimated cost of over ₹39 crore, besides implementation of 118 additional sports infrastructure projects, including indoor stadiums, multipurpose halls, youth hostels, volleyball courts, badminton courts, pickleball courts, cricket practice facilities, sports office buildings and allied infrastructure aimed at strengthening grassroots participation and community engagement in sports.

Reviewing implementation under the Khelo India Mission, the Commissioner Secretary also assessed progress relating to Khelo India Centres, procurement of sports equipment, strengthening of centres of excellence, cricket academies and athlete support infrastructure, directing that these initiatives should complement the rapidly expanding physical infrastructure to create a complete sporting ecosystem across the Union Territory.

BJP Chess Championship concludes, reinforces commitment to promoting youth sports in J&K

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J&K BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Sat Sharma along with party General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul today led the concluding ceremony of the Chess Championship organized by the BJP Sports Cell at the party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

J&K BJP Vice-Presidents Priya Sethi, Rajiv Charak, and Rekha Mahajan, General Secretary Sanjita Dogra, and other senior party leaders were present on the occasion.



The championship was organized by the BJP Sports Cell under the leadership of its Convenor Kuldeep Gupta with the active support of the All J&K Chess Association (JKCA). The tournament witnessed enthusiastic participation from 32

players who competed in a disciplined and competitive environment under the supervision of Chief Arbiter Arvind Sharma.

Sat Sharma, addressing the players, said that sports play a vital role in shaping the personality, discipline,

confidence, and leadership qualities of young people. He said that under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sports have emerged as a national movement, with unprecedented investments in sporting infrastructure, talent identification, and opportunities for youth across the country.

Sat Sharma added that the BJP will continue organizing similar sporting events to motivate young talent and strengthen the sporting culture across Jammu & Kashmir in line with the Prime Minister's vision of 'Khelega India, Badhaga India'.

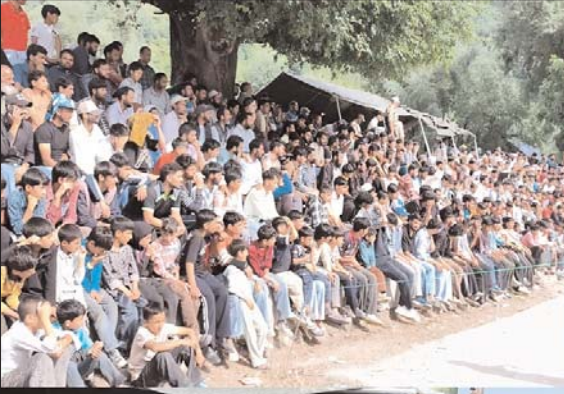
Development of sports infrastructure, youth engagement our priority: DC

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Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan today reaffirmed the district administration's commitment to development of sports infrastructure and youth engagement under the Nasha Mukh Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, while addressing the valedictory function of the Open Volleyball Tournament organised by the Khah Writers Association Jammu and Kashmir at Government High School, Prehinder Neel, Tehsil Ramsoo.

The tournament witnessed participation from volleyball teams representing different regions. Out Law Kashmir Sangaldan emerged champions after defeating their rivals in the final. The event attracted a large gathering of sports enthusiasts, local residents and dignitaries.

The Deputy Commissioner lauded the Khah Writers Association for organising the event in a remote area, saying such initiatives provide a platform for youth, promote discipline, encourage healthy competition and strengthen social harmony. He announced that a playfield would be developed in the



Neel area, to expand sports infrastructure in rural areas.

The DC urged youth to join the District Administration in making the 100-day Nasha Mukh Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, launched by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, a people's movement. He said the campaign aims to eradicate drug abuse and channelise the energy of young people towards constructive activities, and that increased participation in sports, cultural

activities and community initiatives would help keep youth away from drugs. He appealed to educational institutions, Panchayati Raj Institutions, NGOs, civil society members, sports clubs and local communities to work collectively for a drug-free society.

On the occasion, the Association submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner highlighting demands including promotion and recognition of the

Khah language, establishment of a Khah Heritage Centre and inclusion of Vanshala Fort and Chamalwas Fort in the region's tourism circuit.

Among those present were SDM Ramsoo Sayed Mazahir Hussain Shah, Major (12 Rashtriya Rifles) Neel Top, officers from the police department, officers from various government departments, social activists and a large number of spectators.

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Kathua Blasters and Kathua Admin XI registered impressive victories in their respective group stage matches of the ongoing Kathua Cricket League played at the Sports Ground, Government Degree College (Boys), Kathua. The tournament is being organised by the District Administration Kathua under the theme "Youth for Sports, Youth Against Drugs."

In the morning fixture, Kathua Blasters outclassed Saab Ji XI by 87 runs after posting a commanding total of 200/5 in the allotted 20 overs. Nikhil Sharma led the batting with a brilliant 70 off 42 balls, while Karan scored 44 off 27 balls and Nishank Mahajan added 37. Ram (14), Aditya Rajput (10*), Shivam Singh (10*) and Anubhav Andotra (6*) made valuable contributions towards the end.

For Saab Ji XI, Munish Sharma claimed two wickets, while Sanjay Saab, Abhi Sharma and Neeraj Bhai picked up one wicket each.

Chasing the target, Saab Ji XI were restricted to 113/7 in their 20 overs despite an unbeaten 35 by Kamal Kumar. Anuj Singh and Munish Sharma contributed 16 runs each, but the side failed to build meaningful partnerships.

Kathua Blasters' bowlers delivered a disciplined per-



formance, with Anubhav Andotra returning exceptional figures of 4/11, including a maiden over. Karan claimed 2/16, while Sahil took one wicket to help his team secure a comprehensive victory.

In the evening group stage encounter, Kathua Admin XI defeated Gurha Mundian Giants by four wickets in a closely contested match.

Batting first, Gurha Mundian Giants were bowled out for 107 runs in 17.2 overs. Deepak Dogra top-scored with 27 runs,

while Arun Sharma made 15 and Vikas Sharma remained unbeaten on 14. For Kathua Admin XI, Sunil starred with the ball, claiming 3 wickets for 10 runs in 4 overs, while Sourav Sharma bagged two wickets.

Sunil Singh, Vishal Khajuria and Akash claimed one wicket each.

In reply, Kathua Admin XI chased down the target, scoring 108/6 in 16.5 overs. Prince Jasrotia top-scored with 29 runs, Ajay Dev contributed 25, while Mustaq remained unbeaten on 15.

Simranjit Singh struck the winning runs, remaining unbeaten on 6.

For Gurha Mundian Giants, Deepak Dogra and Robin Singh took two wickets each, while Sahil Sharma claimed one.

With these victories, Kathua Blasters and Kathua Admin XI strengthened their positions in the league, as the Kathua Cricket League continues to promote sportsmanship, fitness and a drug-free lifestyle among the youth of the district.