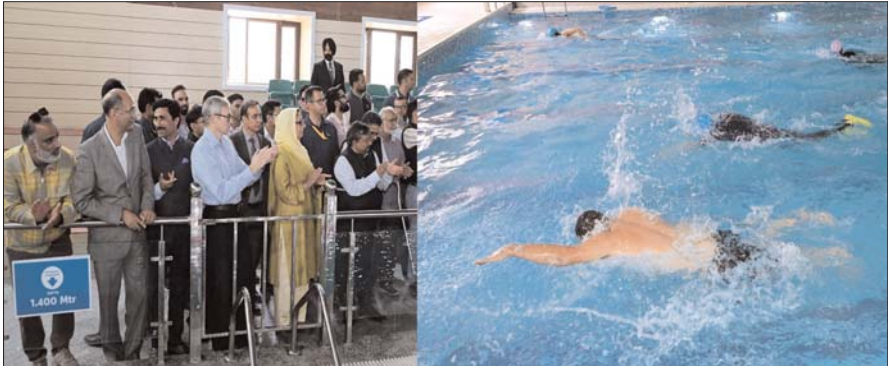




CM Omar inaugurates Rs 30.35 cr sports facility at Gindun Rajbagh



HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, OCT 07

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inaugurated a ₹30.35-crore package of sports infrastructure at the Sher-i-Kashmir Multi Sports Activity Centre (SKMSAC) at Gindun Rajbagh, marking a significant expansion of facilities for swimming and gymnastics in Jammu & Kashmir.

The newly inaugurated facilities include a 50-metre × 25-metre, 10-lane Olympic-sized swimming pool, an all-weather heated training and toddler swimming pool, and a modern indoor gymnastics hall equipped with state-of-the-art equipment.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said the new facilities would provide young people with opportunities to take up sports beyond traditional disciplines and enable them to train throughout the year.

“Through this facility, we are trying to provide students with new sports mi-

lieu. For example, there is an Olympic-sized swimming pool in Kashmir for the first time. Now, there is an arrangement for heating, which will be done through solar energy so that children can practice and train here for 12 months a year,” he said.

The main swimming pool, constructed at a cost of ₹19.96 crore, is equipped with 10 competition lanes, diving platforms at 1, 3 and 5 metres, modern filtration, circulation and disinfection systems, changing rooms, washrooms, storage lockers and spectator seating for 300 people. The facility has been developed to support competitive swimming, diving and other aquatic sports.

The ₹5.35-crore training and toddler swimming pool facility has been designed for year-round use, with a heating system, indoor lap pool, child-friendly toddler pool, anti-skid pool decking, modern filtration and disinfection systems, and supporting changing and shower facilities. The facility

is intended to cater to athletes, students and the wider community, including winter training.

The ₹5.04-crore gymnastics hall, spread over 36 metres × 21 metres with a 10-metre height, has been equipped with modern gymnastics equipment. The facility is expected to provide a dedicated platform for gymnastics training and coaching in Kashmir, where the Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council has been conducting coaching camps and working towards developing a dedicated Gymnastics Academy.

Referring to the new gymnastics’ facility, the Chief Minister said there was considerable interest among children in Kashmir in taking up the sport, but the lack of dedicated infrastructure had limited opportunities.

“Generally, when we talk about gymnastics in Jammu and Kashmir, we only talk about Jammu. However, our children are interested in it and want to do it in Kashmir. But due to the lack

of infrastructure, they could not do it,” he said.

“A magnificent indoor gymnastics hall was inaugurated today. In the same way, we will keep adding more sports so that we can give our children options and alternatives. And they can also develop an interest in new sports,” the Chief Minister added.

During the inauguration, the Chief Minister witnessed live swimming and gymnastics demonstrations by sports persons and trainees at the newly developed facilities.

The new infrastructure is aimed at strengthening grassroots participation, widening access to professional coaching and creating better pathways for young athletes to progress to national and international competitions. The all-weather aquatic facilities will also enable sustained training during the winter months.

Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Lal Chowk Sheikh Ahsan Ahmed, MLA Hazratbal Salman Sagar, MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Secretary J&K Sports Council Tazayun Mukhtar Ka-woosa, besides students, sportspersons and other concerned officers, were present on the occasion.

Annual Dangal Held at Baba Dharam Chand Devsthan in Nad, Akhnoor

Shera Gujjar Wins Rs 2.5 Lakh Bout; Wrestlers from Across the Country Participate

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, OCT 07

The annual Dangal organized by the Dangal Committee Nad was held at the historic Baba Dharam Chand Ji Devsthan in Nad area of Akhnoor, witnessing an enthusiastic participation of wrestlers and wrestling lovers from across the country. Around 100 bouts were held during the event, attracting a large gathering of spectators.

MLA Akhnoor Mohan Lal Bhagat attended the event as the Chief Guest. Master Rashpal Singh Chib and Bachan Singh Chib were present as Guests of Honour, while Daljeet Singh Chib and Mandeep Singh Chib, President, Yuva Rajput Sabha, attended as Special Guests.

The main attraction of the Dangal was the prestigious bout between Shera Gujjar and Sahil Kohli. The bout witnessed an intense contest, but after Sahil Kohli sustained an injury, Shera Gujjar was declared the winner. He was awarded a cash prize of Rs 2.5 lakh.



The second major bout was held between Bina Mandothi and Chinu Raiwal, with Chinu Raiwal emerging victorious. In the third major bout, Billa Hoshiarpuria faced Nadeem of Doda, with Nadeem winning the contest.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat said that Dangal is an integral part of the region’s traditional sporting and cultural heritage. He said such events provide a platform to talented wrestlers while inspiring the younger generation to remain connected with traditional sports and values. He appreciated the Dangal Committee for keep-

ing the age-old wrestling tradition alive and congratulated all the participating wrestlers.

Dangal Committee President Darshan Singh thanked all the guests, wrestlers, spectators, supporters and members of the local community for making the event a success. He said the committee would continue its efforts to promote traditional wrestling and provide greater opportunities to young wrestlers.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police also made a significant contribution towards ensuring the smooth and peaceful conduct of the event. The security arrange-

ments were effectively managed by the police team under the leadership of Station House Officer Sushil Choudhary.

Prominent members of the All India Chib Biradari, including Joginder Singh Chib, Prem Singh Chib, Suman Chib, Balwinder Singh, Ammu Singh and Ajay Singh, besides other office-bearers, were prominently present on the occasion.

The event concluded with the felicitation of the winning wrestlers and appreciation of all those who contributed to the successful organization of the traditional Dangal.

Messi caps Argentina farewell with a penalty and 2 assists in a 3-0 win over Benin

BUENOS AIRES, OCT 07: Lionel Messi turned his official farewell to Argentina into a gala performance, contributing a penalty and two assists in a 3-0 win over Benin at the Monumental Stadium in Buenos Aires, where the crowd offered a deafening final ovation to the genius who defined the footballing pulse of a nation for two decades.

Messi caps Argentina farewell with a penalty and 2 assists in a 3-0 win over Benin

In front of 85,000 fans, the superstar capped off an international career spanning 21 years, 126 goals, a 2022 World Cup victory, and two Copa America titles

“It was a source of great pride to wear this jersey for over 20 years,” Messi told the crowd, speaking into a microphone from the center of the pitch. “I never stopped fighting, never stopped giving my all. I would love to keep coming back forever, because playing for the Argentine national team is the most beautiful thing that can happen to you.”

His teammates - many of them overcome with emo-



tion - along with the coaching staff led by Lionel Scaloni and the fans, gave him a standing ovation.

“I’m going to miss you all. Now I’ll be on your side, supporting the national team and the guys who come next,” Messi promised. “When we’re united, we’re stronger than anyone and can overcome anything.

Tough times lie ahead, because what this group achieved won’t be easy to repeat.”

Following a corner kick taken by Messi, defender Nicolas Otamendi connected with a header to open the scoring in the 48th minute. Messi then provided an assist to young talent Nicolas Paz, who paid

tribute to the star with an exquisite left-foot finish in the 61st.

Ten minutes later, Messi buried a left-foot penalty into the top corner, adding to his tally as the Albiceleste’s all-time leading scorer.

“Ole, ole, Messi,” the crowd chanted in his honour.

Ravindra Jadeja posts cryptic comment on BCCI selector vacancy post after Agarkar's exit

MUMBAI (MAHARASHTRA) [INDIA], OCTOBER 7 : Indian veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja posted a cryptic comment hours after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed Ajit Agarkar’s exit from the chief selection.

Agarkar’s tenure as chairman of the BCCI’s senior men’s selection committee officially ended on October 4. He had taken charge in July 2023 and did not seek an extension. During his tenure, India won three ICC trophies -- the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup in 2024, the ICC Champions Trophy in 2025 and the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup in 2026.

As the BCCI announced a vacancy in the selection committee on Tuesday, Jadeja commented cheekily on Wednesday, “What’s the procedure” with a laughing emoji.

This comes just after Jadeja made a return to the



ODI side during the three ODIs against West Indies, after missing the Afghanistan ODIs at home and England ODIs in the UK earlier this year. During two matches, Jadeja managed bowling figures of 2/75 and 0/54 in 10 overs.

Since last 15 ODIs starting from 2025, Jadeja has scored 149 runs in 10 innings at an average of 29.80, with best score of 32 and a strike rate of over 95. His bowling performances have

witnessed a slight dip, having taken just 14 wickets in 15 matches at an average of 47.93, with best figures of 3/26. This year, he has taken just two wickets across five matches and scored 43 runs across three innings, with a best score of 27.

Jadeja, meanwhile, stays a vital cog of India’s Test side, even with young spinners like Manav Suthar emerging. During the two Tests against Sri Lanka, he scored 65 runs across three

innings, with a best score of 43 and took eight wickets at an average of 33.57, with best figures of 3/57.

Jadeja’s status for the five NZ ODIs away from home, starting from November 22 onwards, and two Tests following that remains uncertain, with the squads not announced yet.

Ahead of the first West Indies ODI, batting coach Sitanshu Kotak had backed Jadeja for the 2027 ODI World Cup, noting his all-round abilities and experience.

“I think he is obviously in the mix,” Kotak told reporters ahead of the first ODI against West Indies, as quoted by ICC.

“I am not part of the selection committee, so I do not know what their thinking is. I just think whoever is coming and playing for India, they are obviously part of the 20-25 players who possibly can be in the team for the Cricket World Cup.”

Rishabh Pant fits perfectly in Delhi Capital's middle order: New head coach Ganguly

NEW DELHI, OCT 07: Newly-appointed Delhi Capitals head coach Sourav Ganguly is confident that embattled wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant will “fit perfectly” in the team’s middle order, bringing the best out of him in the next IPL season.

Pant played 111 matches for the Capitals and scored 3,284 runs besides captaining the unit before moving to Lucknow Super Giants in 2025. After a not-so-successful stint with LSG, he has been reinstated into his former team after being traded for Kuldeep Yadav.

“We needed a middle-order batter and Pant fits it perfectly. He was with us and he played well for us. Next year, when he turns up again, I think he’ll use the time and space and the matches to become a better player,” Ganguly said in a video posted by DC on their official Youtube channel.

“You know he enjoys batting at the Feroz Shah Kotla (Arun Jaitley Stadium) in Delhi and hopefully we’ll see the best of Pant in the years to come for the Delhi shirt,” added the former India captain who is also heading the Cricket Association of Bengal.

Pant has been enduring a slump in form and also battling nagging injuries since recovering from a life-threatening car accident in 2022.

It is a homecoming of sorts for Ganguly too. His association with Delhi Capitals began in 2019 when he joined the franchise as an Advisor. Over the years, the 54-year-old has held multiple leadership positions across the Capitals ecosystem, including Director of Cricket for both the men’s and women’s teams.

“Well I am very, very excited. I have been there with them for two seasons, one season as director of cricket. My first season was 2019,



we lost in the semis and then I went away as BCCI president. So I am really excited for the season ahead,” he said.

“Delhi is a very good side and I will be giving my best to make the

side successful,” he added.

Ganguly, whose maiden coaching stint was with DC’s South Africa outfit Pretoria Capitals, also shared some insights on his approach to the high-pressure job.

“...it’s not the same as a player. It’s a bit different, you need to understand things, you need to be relaxed. You still need to find a way to get the best out of players and work with the players because players are different.

“It’s not you batting or you bowling anymore. It’s about somebody else batting or bowling or winning cricket matches. So it’s important that you sync with them and understand what they want and how they can get better,” he explained.

DC finished sixth last season and Ganguly said his priority is to take the team into playoffs. Delhi have reached the IPL finals only in the 2020 season.

“It’s a good team with KL Rahul, Axar Patel, Rishabh Pant, Mitchell Starc, Lungi Ngidi, David Miller, Tristan Stubbs, it’s a pretty strong team and I hope we play to our potential and I hope everyone un-

derstands how good they are and goes and expresses themselves,” he said.

“Motivation is to take Delhi to the top. In 2019 and 2020, Delhi was a very good team. I was involved in making the team but then I left and became BCCI president. So from that point of view that motivation will always remain to take that squad to a different level.

“I think that’s what I will be looking out for from the players because there’s enormous talent in the dressing room,” he said.

Ganguly acknowledged that DC have not had much success in recent years, which he will try to change during his tenure.

“I think it’s time that the Delhi boys give them (the owners) that opportunity to rejoice with the squad where they have put in so much time and energy for the years to come,” he said.