

Football, Cricket Super Leagues set for launch in Jammu

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Jammu, the City of Temples is gearing up for a high-octane sporting season as the Department of Youth Services and Sports (YSS), in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council (JKSC), prepares to roll out two marquee events - the YSS-JKSC Football Premier League and the YSS-JKSC Cricket League - promising double the thrill, double the crowds and a renewed buzz around grassroots sport in the winter capital.

Set across two iconic venues, the leagues will bring together the roar of football fans at the Synthetic Turf Football Ground, Parade and the unmistakable sound of the willow at the M A Stadium, as Jammu readies itself for weeks of competitive action.

"The YSS-JKSC Cricket and Football Premier League Tournaments 2025-26 are a much-needed initiative to significantly contribute towards the revival

of Jammu's professional cricket and football tournaments," a spokesperson of the J&K Sports Council said.

The YSS-JKSC Football Premier League, slated for the Synthetic Turf at Parade, marks the return of the beautiful game to the heart of the city.

With the turf primed and floodlights waiting, the league is expected to showcase sharp tackles, long-range screamers and an atmosphere that only football in Jammu can generate.

According to the JKSC spokesperson, organising committees and additional sub-committees comprising former national and international players, referees, umpires, coaches, club owners and JKSC officials have been constituted to ensure that the matches are conducted professionally.

Running parallel will be the YSS-JKSC Cricket League at the historic M A Stadium, signalling the comeback of big-league

cricket at one of Jammu's most cherished sporting venues.

As the pitch is curated and teams begin their preparations, anticipation is building over who will lift the cup when the league gets underway.

"The competition will consist of a total of 41 matches in football and 39 matches in cricket, with the final format and match composition to be framed after the finalisation of the participating teams," the spokesperson said, adding that every match would be played strictly in accordance with FIFA and AIFF rules in football and ICC and BCCI regulations in cricket.

Emphasising the focus on local talent, the spokesperson said that, after scrutiny by the Technical and Registration Committees, only permanent resident players from the Jammu Division would be permitted to participate in the tournaments.

"However, in cricket, there

will be a cap of five out-stationed players per team. The objective is to give players from the Jammu Division ample opportunities to participate in a competitive competition," he said.

The spokesperson said that the Mini Stadium Parade had been made available for football matches, while the M A Stadium would host the cricket league. "To give the event more significance, grand opening and closing ceremonies will be arranged. Matches will also be conducted under floodlights to attract maximum sports enthusiasts and these matches will be telecast live on social media platforms," he said.

To ensure high professional standards, AIFF-accredited referees and BCCI-certified umpires would officiate the matches, the spokesperson said, adding that the JKSC would provide match-day refreshments through its approved EMAs and would also arrange trophies, mementoes, medallions,

branding, stationery and medical facilities on the closing day of the tournaments.

"It is anticipated that large audiences will return to the stands of the Mini Stadium Synthetic Turf Parade and the M A Stadium Jammu to witness these high-profile matches," the spokesperson said. "This platform will provide aspiring sports persons in Jammu with the opportunity to exhibit their talent and achieve podium finishes at the national and international levels."

With two venues, two formats and one city buzzing with expectation, the twin leagues are being seen as a significant boost for athletes and fans alike, signalling a renewed push to bring competitive sport back into Jammu's public spaces.

Vipul wins Bronze in Judo National

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Vipul Yasuvaradhan of Jammu and Kashmir won bronze medal in the just held Junior National Judo Championship at Kolkata in West Bengal.

The J&K team participated in the Junior National under the banner of Judo Association Jammu and Kashmir. Danish Sharma of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board accompanied the team as coach.

Meanwhile, Judo Association of J&K congratulated Vipul for winning medal in the Olympic discipline and the competitive event of Judo.



Senior men Kabaddi trials from Feb 4

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Amateur Kabaddi Association shall hold selection trials to name the UT team for the 72nd Senior National Kabaddi (men) Championship going to be held at Indoor Complex, Vadodara in Gujarat from February 24 to February 27.

The three-day trials shall be held from February four at Subash Stadium, Udhampur from 1 pm onwards, informed general secretary of the Association, Dr Kuldeep Kumar Gupta.

The eligibility criteria for the trials shall be 85kg and below body weight with no restrictions with regard to age. The Association has advised all the affiliated district units and departments to send those eligible senior players for the selection process.

Further, players need to bring along two passport size photograph, Aadhar Card, NOC from parents, Domicile Certificate, Permission from the parent Department, Fitness Certificate and Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India registration Card.

Players may contact district president Udhampur (7006491536) and chairman, Ashok Kumar (9018170451) with regard to the selection trials.



J&K Karate team excels in President Cup

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The eight-member Jammu and Kashmir team brought laurels to the Union Territory (UT) winning overall second place in the recently held 3rd President Cup National Karate Championship at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi.

The event was organised by the All India Karate Federation (AIKF) involving around 20 teams from different States/UTs and belt forces of the country.

The J&K team was accompanied by chief instructor (India) and founder member of Amature Karate Do



Coaches along with winner students.

Association of J&K, Sanjeev Dewan.

As per the reports reaching here, Maqsood Hussain of J&K Police

declared best player in Male Kumite event for winning gold in Kata and Kumite in plus 85 kg category in senior group.

"In total, J&K won 11 medals across different age groups of boys and girls. The medal tally included gold and two silver. On their return, the team was felicitated at karate trainee facility of Usman Dwar, Army Cantonment in Nagrota," informed Sanjeev.

The medal winners: Kartik Verma (bronze in Kata and Kumite); Shireesh Kirn Nirmal (bronze in Kata); Kata Team (Sejal, Yavanika, Shiresha Kim Nirmal (silver); Maqsood Hussain (gold in Kata and Kumite); Mayank Resutra (silver in Kata and Kumite); Toshan Dhiman (bronze in Kumite).

J&K Republic Day Tableau secures second position at National Level

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Republic Day Tableau has secured an impressive Second Position at the national level at the Republic Day Parade 2026, marking a significant milestone and a proud moment for the Union Territory.

The recognition underscores Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural heritage, artistic excellence, and its vibrant traditions showcased on one of the country's most prestigious platforms.

The Jammu and Kashmir tableau, themed as a "living canvas", presented a visually compelling and culturally immersive narrative, celebrating the region's centuries-old arts, handicrafts, and folk traditions. The tableau offered a seamless fusion of craftsmanship, performance, and storytelling, reflecting the timeless creative spirit of the Union

Territory.

The tableau prominently showcased iconic handicrafts synonymous with Jammu and Kashmir's cultural identity, including Pashmina weaving, walnut wood carving, carpet weaving, papier-mâché, copperware, and Basohli miniature paintings—each representing generations of refined skill and artistic mastery.

The visual narrative opened with a grand engraved Samovar, symbolising Kashmiri hospitality and warmth, flowing through imagery of traditional wooden architecture and houseboats, evoking the unique cultural landscape of the region. At the heart of the tableau, a Dogra Chhajja performance staged on a traditional village Thadda highlighted community life, social harmony, and cultural continuity.

Adding rhythm, colour, and

movement were vibrant folk dance performances, including Rouf, Kud, Jagarna, Pahari, Gojri, and Dumhal, which together reflected the diverse ethnic and cultural fabric of Jammu and Kashmir. The tableau concluded with a striking display of colourful papier-mâché artefacts arranged in a willow basket, symbolically presenting Jammu and Kashmir as a dynamic, living canvas of art, tradition, and creativity.

This acclaimed appearance marks a major comeback of the Jammu and Kashmir tableau at the Republic Day Parade, reaffirming the Union Territory's renewed cultural presence on the national stage and its commitment to preserving and promoting its rich intangible heritage.

The idea, design, and conceptualisation of the tableau were led by renowned artist

Shri Balwant Thakur, a distinguished recipient of the Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. Shri Thakur has also served as the Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages for eight years and brings with him vast experience in cultural leadership. He has further represented India internationally as Regional Director of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and headed Indian Cultural Centres in South Africa and Mauritius.

The national recognition of the Jammu and Kashmir tableau stands as a testament to the Union Territory's artistic vibrancy, cultural resilience, and its enduring legacy of creativity that continues to inspire audiences across the country and beyond.

Western Railway extends trips of special train between Bandra terminus, Jaipur

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: For the convenience of passengers and to clear extra rush of passengers, Western Railway has extended the trips of special train between Bandra Terminus and Jaipur.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Vineet Abhishhek, the trains include Train No. 09706/09705 Bandra Terminus - Jaipur Weekly Special and Train No. 09706 Bandra Terminus - Jaipur Special

has been extended up to 30th March, 2026. Similarly, Train No. 09705 Jaipur - Bandra Terminus Special has been extended up to 29th March, 2026.

The booking for extended trips of Train No. 09706 will open from 29.01.2026 at all PRS counters & on IRCTC website. For detailed information regarding timings of halts and composition, passengers may please visit www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in.

Sixth batch of students flagged off for Bharat Darshan Tour

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: With the objective of promoting national integration, cultural exposure, and the holistic development of youth, Zonal Police Headquarters (ZPHQ) Jammu, under the Civic Action Programme of Jammu and Kashmir Police, on Wednesday flagged off the sixth batch of the Bharat Darshan Tour for students from District Kishtwar. Similar tours will be organised in the coming days for students from the remaining four districts.

The initiative, organised by ZPHQ Jammu, saw a group of 90 participants including students and caretakers depart from Saraswati Dham,



Staff Officer to IGP Jammu, Shamsheer Hussain along with students posing for photograph.

Rail Head Complex, Jammu, for a tour covering major destinations such as Delhi and Kolkata, offering them an opportunity to experience India's rich heritage and cultural diversity.

The flag-off ceremony was conducted by Shamsheer Hussain, Staff Officer to IGP Jammu, along with members of the Bharat Darshan team of ZPHQ Jammu. Prior to departure,

the students were briefed by the Staff Officer to IGP Jammu on the objectives of the programme, safety guidelines, and the broader vision of the Jammu and Kashmir Police in empowering youth

through educational exposure. Narinder Singh, ADO ZPHQ Jammu, along with other staff members of ZPHQ Jammu, were also present on the occasion.

The Civic Action Programme plays a vital role in strengthening the relationship between the police and the community. Through initiatives like Bharat Darshan Tours, the Jammu and Kashmir Police remain committed to nurturing young talent and guiding youth towards a brighter and more informed future.

Addressing the gathering, Shamsheer Hussain emphasised that Bharat Darshan Tours go beyond sightseeing

and serve as a bridge connecting young minds with India's history, institutions, and diverse cultures. He highlighted that such initiatives help build confidence, broaden perspectives, and strengthen the spirit of unity and national integration.

He further reminded the students that they would act as cultural ambassadors of Jammu and Kashmir during the journey and should spread the message of peace, harmony, and brotherhood. He encouraged them to imbibe positive values and meaningful lessons from their experiences and strive to become responsible citizens contributing to the nation's progress.

RBI organises Town Hall Meeting for MSME entrepreneurs

STATE TIMES NEWS
SAMBA: The Reserve Bank of India organized a Town Hall Meeting on January 28, 2026, for MSME Entrepreneurs of Industrial Growth Centre, Samba at Vijaypur. The event was graced by Ms. Ayushi Sudan, Deputy Commissioner, District Samba, UT J&K, as the Special Guest, in the presence of Shri Chandrashekhar Azad, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India, Jammu. The event had an enthusiastic presence of around 150 MSME entrepreneurs.

The event was also attended, among others, by Sh. Rajesh Kumar, State Director, KVIC; Smt. Anudeep Kour, Financial Advisor, Department of Industries & Commerce, UT



of J&K; officials from MSME-Development & Facilitation Office, Jammu; GM, J&K Bank Ltd; GM, J&K Gramen Bank; AGM, SBI; AGM, Canara Bank; senior officials from HDFC Bank, Axis Bank and ICICI Bank; and representatives from Industry Associations viz., Bari Brahmana Industries Association and Association of Industries - Industrial Growth Centre, Samba.

In his inaugural address,

Regional Director, while welcoming the participants, stated that the objective behind conduct of Town Hall meetings in MSME clusters is to create awareness of banking facilities amongst the entrepreneurs in these clusters, link the unbanked entrepreneurs to the formal banking system and create a platform for a two-way communication amongst the stakeholders. He shared that this forum also serves as a medium for facili-

tating credit linkage and disseminating the guidelines issued by RBI pertaining to MSME sector. He also highlighted the significance of Udyam Registration for MSMEs and urged MSMEs to actively utilize the TReDS platforms. DC, Samba, in her address, highlighted the role of MSMEs in nation building and underscored the importance of MSME sector in providing employment opportunities in the region. She shared

that District Samba has achieved the targets set under Annual Credit Plans in the past, indicating robust credit demand and sufficient credit flow in the region. She further encouraged MSME entrepreneurs to get enrolled under prevalent government initiatives for MSMEs such as PMEGP and Mission Yuva etc. The event had thematic sessions covering key aspects of MSME development and financing including sessions on MSME Health Clinic, Government schemes, awareness regarding reasons for rejection of applications under Employment Generation Schemes and checklist thereof, CGTMSE, TReDS, and Credit Scoring & Rating Models for MSME lending etc.

J&K districts excel in financial inclusion, social security initiatives

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The districts of Jammu, Pulwama and Baramulla have emerged as top performers in various financial inclusion and social security schemes being implemented by the Jammu and Kashmir government, showcasing significant progress in expanding the financial access and social security coverage.

The Chief Minister has commended the efforts of district administrations for notable improvement in coverage and year-on-year progress under these schemes during the financial year 2025-26.

The PM Jandhan Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana are implemented through banks, promoting financial inclusion and providing accidental and life insurance cover, as well as pension benefits, to people from weaker and deprived sections of the society.

Under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), zero balance accounts of financially excluded poor people are opened in banks with facilities of RuPay debit card and overdraft limit of Rs 10,000. In the first three quarters of 2025-26,

1,26,803 new PMJDY accounts were opened, increasing total PMJDY accounts in Jammu & Kashmir from 23,66,953 on March 31, 2025, to 24,93,756 on December 31, 2025. Jammu, Samba and Reasi are the top performing districts.

The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) offers accidental insurance cover of up to Rs 2 lakh at an annual premium of just Rs20. In 2025-26, approximately 5,42,675 additional individuals were covered, boosting total subscribers from 23,56,858 (March 31, 2025) to 29,12,830 (December 31, 2025). Pulwama district led the initiative, followed by Samba and Jammu.

The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) provides life insurance cover up to Rs 2 lakh on annual premium of Rs 436. There were 2,20,660 additional subscribers in 2025-26 as the total subscription rose from 9,66,887 in March 31, 2025, to 11,87,547 in December 31, 2025. Baramulla has achieved the best results, followed by Jammu and Ganderbal.

The Atal Pension Yojana (APY) offers a fixed monthly pension after the age of 60 years to people aged 18-40 years not covered under

any other pension scheme on annual subscription ranging from Rs 42 to Rs 200 based on their age. Nearly, 40,582 new subscribers were enrolled under the scheme, increasing the total subscribers from 2,48,020 in March 31, 2025, to 2,88,602 in December 31, 2025. Jammu registered the highest subscription, followed by Samba and Pulwama.

The Digital Life Certificate (Jeevan Praman) campaign, aimed at encouraging the pensioners to submit life certificates digitally, saw significant success. Digital certifications surged from 4,000 to 1,11,511 in 2025-26. Of 2.49 lakh pensioners, 2.37 lakh have completed life certification, with 1.16 lakh (49%) opting for digital submission. Rajouri district led the campaign, followed by Kulgam and Udhampur.

The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts put in by the Deputy Commissioners, banking institutions/correspondents, whose field-level coordination and outreach have played a key role in ensuring that social security benefits reach people in a seamless and transparent manner. Top three performing districts under each scheme have been awarded with a certificate of appreciation by the Chief Minister.

Javed Rana visits border villages of Mendhar; reviews development works

STATE TIMES NEWS
MENDHAR: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today undertook an extensive tour of various border villages of Mendhar Sub Division and Mankote area, where he interacted with the local residents and reviewed the status of development works being executed under different sectors.

During the visit, the Minister held on-the-spot interactions with the public. He listened to their grievances, particularly regarding



drinking water supply, power supply, road connectivity and the functioning of health and educational institutions in the border and far-flung areas.

He assured the people that

all their genuine issues would be addressed on priority to ensure improved basic amenities and quality public services.

The Minister also took stock of ongoing developmental

works under various schemes. He stressed the need for timely completion of these vital projects with due focus on quality, transparency and accountability, keeping in view the strategic importance of the border belt.

Senior officers of the Sub Divisional Administration including SDM Mendhar, Tehsildar Mankote and BDO Mankote besides officers from Jal Shakti (PHE), Public Works Department (PWD), Health, Education and other concerned departments, accompanied the Minister.

They briefed him on sector-wise progress and issues on the ground. The areas visited during the tour included Upper Mankote, Bansi, Sakrote, Choi, Tain, Changri, Dharana, and Gohlad besides other locations in Mendhar and Mankote. Reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive development, the Minister directed the concerned departments to remain proactive and responsive so that the benefits of development reach people living in border and remote areas in a time-bound manner.