

Khelo India Winter Games starting from Feb 23

Raises hopes of tourism revival in Gulmarg

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Khelo India Winter Games, starting from February 23 and to be held at Kashmir's Gulmarg, will witness participation from more than 700 athletes and officials, officials said.

"There has been good snowfall this winter, which is a boost for skiing and sledging activities. Khelo India Winter Games is being held here, and it will help us earn our livelihood," said Mohamud Rafeeq Chechi, a ski assistant.

The first leg of the Khelo India Winter Games for ice events was held in Ladakh's Leh, from January 20 to 26 this year, while the second leg of the games, for snow events, will be held at Gulmarg from February 23 to 26.

"Gulmarg Tayyar hai, Aapka intezaar hai (Gulmarg is ready, We are waiting for you)," Chechi said in a video



released by the Department of Youth Services and Sports. Gulmarg will feature four medal disciplines, namely Ski Mountaineering, Alpine Skiing, Nordic Skiing (Cross-Country), and Snowboarding, with around 400 athletes expected to compete, and Alpine Skiing drawing the highest participation, they said.

Aijaz Ahmad Wani, a tourist guide from the nearby Tangmarg area, said a large section of youngsters in and around Gulmarg earn their living from tourism-related

activities. "The more the tourists, the better our income. The tourist arrivals had dropped significantly after the Pahalgam terror attack last year. However, the tourists have started coming again, and we hope the winter games will kickstart a good year for tourism in Kashmir," Wani said.

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya announced the dates for the Gulmarg leg of the Khelo India Winter Games 2026 last week.

"The Gulmarg leg is coming at the back of the Winter Olympics, and this is the perfect time to host the Khelo India Winter Games," Mandaviya had said.

The event will be the sixth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games, and all six have been held in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

After a successful first phase in Leh, a similar excitement would be witnessed in Jammu & Kashmir, he added. At the conclusion of the KIWG 2025 season, the Indian Army topped the team standings with 18 medals, while Himachal Pradesh finished second, followed by Ladakh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu.

At the end of the KIWG 2026 Ladakh leg, Haryana led the medal tally with four gold medals, all won by its figure and ice skaters, followed by Ladakh, Maharashtra, and Telangana.

inspires the next generation.

Director General of Youth Services and Sports J&K, Anuradha Gupta, felicitated Pawandee today in the presence of Joint Director (Jammu), Vinakshi Koul. Describing her as an invaluable asset to the department, Gupta stated, "Such dedicated officials are a great boost for any organization. On behalf of the Department, I extend my best wishes for her future endeavours."

"This accomplishment not only bolsters J&K's standing in international athletics but also highlights the department's focus on capacity-building for its coaches and officials.

Pawandee achieves World Athletics Race Walking Judge Bronze Level certification



Director General of Youth Services and Sports J&K, Anuradha Gupta, felicitating Pawandee.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a remarkable milestone for Jammu and Kashmir's sports ecosystem, Pawandee, a highly skilled Physical Education Teacher (PET) with the Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS) J&K currently deputised as Senior Athletics

Coach to the J&K Sports Council has qualified as a World Athletics Race Walking Judge at the prestigious Bronze Level.

This certification, awarded following a rigorous evaluation conducted by World Athletics, underscores her exceptional expertise in the

technical nuances of race walking, a discipline demanding precision, endurance, and unwavering adherence to international standards.

As per the reports over 70 candidates appeared in the examination, out of which 11 have successfully qualified the same.

A National Institute of Sports (NIS) diploma holder in athletics, Pawandee's achievement now positions her to officiate at elite global events, including World Championships, Asian Championships, and other prestigious international competitions. Her journey reflects not just personal excellence but a profound commitment to elevating athletics in the Union Territory.

Pawandee has earned widespread acclaim for her pivotal role in nurturing national-level talent from Jammu and Kashmir. Under her guidance, several promising athletes from the region have risen to compete at the highest levels, producing a legacy of "national stuff" that

8th J&K UT Kalarippayattu Championship 2025-26 begins



STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The two-day 8th J&K UT Kalarippayattu Championship 2025-26 commenced at JKSC Hall, Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu, amid enthusiasm and vibrant sporting spirit. Around 200 athletes from 12 districts of Jammu & Kashmir are partici-

pating in this prestigious event, showcasing exceptional skill, discipline, and dedication to the ancient Indian martial art of Kalarippayattu.

The championship is being organized by the Kalarippayattu Association of Jammu & Kashmir, affiliated with the Indian Kalarippayattu Federation. The event serves as an important platform for young martial artists to demonstrate their talent and competitive spirit.

Outstanding performers from the championship will earn the opportunity to represent Jammu & Kashmir at the upcoming National Kalarippayattu Championship 2025-26, scheduled to be held in Kerala in March 2026.

The competition is being conducted under the supervision of Danish Sharma, General Secretary of the Association, ensuring smooth management and high technical standards. Special appreciation was extended to Manjeet Singh, Chairman of Sikhs 4 All Foundation & Kalarippayattu J&K, for his generous support, which has significantly boosted athlete morale and strengthened the event's organization.

GDC Thannamandi holds volleyball tourney



Participating teams posing with faculty member.

STATE TIMES NEWS

THANNAMANDI: A thrilling final match of the Mega Sports Mela was held today at Government Degree College Thannamandi, where Thunder Spikers faced Sky Smashers in an exciting volleyball contest.

The match, organized as

part of the Mega Sports Mela inaugurated earlier, witnessed enthusiastic participation and a large gathering of students.

The final match was inaugurated by the College Principal, Dr. Shamim Ahmed Azad, who encouraged both teams and

appreciated the spirit of sportsmanship displayed by the players. In a closely fought encounter, Sky Smashers defeated Thunder Spikers by 2-1 sets to clinch the championship title.

The event was coordinated by Dr. Ather Aziz

Raina, I/C Director of Sports and Physical Education, whose dedicated efforts ensured the smooth conduct of the match.

Among those present on the occasion were Dr. Nazakat Hussain, Dr. Naseem Ahmed Malik, Dr. Nazir ul Islam, Prof. Altaf Ahmed, and Dr. Atiq Ul Rahman, who appreciated the enthusiasm and sportsmanship displayed by the participating teams.

The Principal interacted with both teams, congratulated the winning team Sky Smashers, appreciated the runner-up Thunder Spikers for reaching the final, and also lauded Dr. Raina for his dedication and enthusiasm in promoting sports activities in the college.

Students expressed great excitement and happiness, making the final match a memorable conclusion to the volleyball competition of the Mega Sports Mela.

Hardeep emerges champion at J&K Open Tennis Championship

Sports inculcates discipline, leadership qualities among youth: DIG Shiv Sharma

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The J&K Open Men & Women Tennis Championship 2025-26 concluded on a high note with thrilling performances and an impressive display of sporting excellence, as emerging tennis champion Hardeep Singh clinched the men's singles title in a commanding fashion, here at MA Stadium on Monday.

The championship, which witnessed enthusiastic participation from talented players across the region, culminated in an electrifying final match in the men's singles category. Hardeep Singh delivered a stellar performance to defeat Gurleen Singh 6-3, 6-3, showcasing superior technique, consistency, and composure under pressure. From the outset, Hardeep controlled the tempo of the match with powerful baseline rallies and precise serves, leaving little room for his opponent to stage a comeback.

Gurleen Singh fought valiantly and produced several impressive rallies, but Hardeep maintained his dominance throughout both sets to secure the title



Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG JSK Range presenting trophy to tennis champion Hardeep Singh while President J&KLTA Captain Murti Gupta felicitating him at MA Stadium on Monday.

in straight sets. With this victory, Hardeep Singh further established himself as one of the most promising tennis players in the region.

The valedictory function was graced by Shiv Kumar Sharma, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Jammu-Samba-Kathua (JSK) Range, who attended as the Chief Guest. He distributed trophies and certificates to the winners and runners-up amid applause from spectators, officials, and participants.

Addressing the gathering, Shiv Kumar Sharma empha-

sized the vital role of sports in shaping the character and future of young people. He stated, "Sports play a transformative role in building discipline, confidence, and leadership qualities among youth. Participation in sporting activities not only promotes physical fitness but also instills values such as teamwork, perseverance, and respect. Such championships provide a healthy platform for young talent to shine and contribute positively to society."

He further encouraged young players to remain com-

mitted to their training and pursue sports with dedication, noting that opportunities in the sporting arena are expanding and can open doors to rewarding careers at both national and international levels.

President J&K Lawn Tennis Association Captain Murti Gupta reiterated his commitment to promoting tennis in Jammu and Kashmir and providing more competitive platforms for budding athletes. Earlier on Saturday, Arushi Kumari clinched the UT Open Women's Singles title with a commanding straight-sets victory over Palak Sahu, winning 6-4, 6-3, while the duo of Hardeep Singh and SSP Sajjad Bhat lifted the UT Open Men's Doubles trophy after defeating Gurleen Singh and Shourya Pratap Singh 6-1, 6-4 in a dominant performance.

The J&K Open Men & Women Tennis Championship 2025 concluded with a renewed spirit of sportsmanship and inspiration, leaving players and spectators alike motivated for future tournaments.

Jammu Lochan T20 Championship set to light up Jammu

JKMGA to organise 15-day league-cum-knockout championship at MA Stadium from April 1

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu is all set to witness an exciting cricketing spectacle as the 1st Jammu Lochan T20 Open (Men) Cricket Championship will be held from April 1 to 15, 2026, at the historic MA Stadium, Jammu. The league-cum-knockout tournament is being organised by the J&K Master Games Association and is expected to draw strong participation from teams across the region.

The championship will feature sixteen teams, selected on a first-come, first-served basis. Each team will play three league matches before the tournament progresses to the knockout stage, ensuring competitive exposure for all partici-

pating sides. The entry fee has been fixed at Rs 30,000 per team.

Attractive cash prizes have been announced for the winners. The championship team will receive Rs 1 lakh along with a trophy, while the runner-up will be awarded Rs 50,000 and a trophy. Individual performances will also be recognised, with Rs 5,000 and a trophy for the Man of the Series, and Rs 3,000 each along with trophies for the Best Batsman and Best Bowler. Man of the Match awards will be presented in every game.

Organisers have assured professional arrangements, including provision of cricket balls and refreshments during all

matches. The decision of the umpires will be final. Players currently participating in the Ranji Trophy and other JKCA or BCCI-recognised tournaments will not be eligible to take part in the event.

The tournament aims to promote grassroots cricket and provide a competitive platform for emerging talent in Jammu and Kashmir. For entries and further information, teams can contact Ranjit Singh Chib at 9419149666, Neete Kour at 7889616668, or Romesh Sharma at 9419148533.

With preparations underway, cricket enthusiasts can look forward to two weeks of thrilling T20 action at MA Stadium.

Bengal's magic fizzles in Kalyani as J&K roars back with fierce resilience

Auqib takes fifer; Samad, Paras slam splendid fifties



Shahbaz (42), and Sumanta Gupta (39) were the other major contributors.

J&K's bowlers, led by a tireless pace trio, battled fiercely to the final ball, extracting every ounce of challenge from the surface.

Auqib Nabi once again

shone with the ball, capturing 5 wickets by conceding 87 runs in his 26 overs, while Sunil Kumar took 3 wickets by giving away 41 runs in his 20 overs. Yudhvir Singh and Abid Mushtaq claimed one wicket each.

In reply, J&K after early

hiccups rode on 143-run partnership between Abdul Samad and Paras Dogra and ended the day at 198/5, with Abid Mushtaq (26) and Kanhaiya Wadhawan (10) at the crease. Samad showed stellar grit and tenacity and scored power-packed 82 off 85 balls studded with 12 delectable boundaries, while Paras contributed 58 off 112 balls with 7 crisp boundaries. Shubham Khajuris (1), Yawer Hassan (2) and Shubham Singh Pundir (8) were sent back to the pavilion early in the innings as J&K was struggling at 13/3 before Samad and Paras duo salvaged the sinking ship.

For Bengal, Mohammed

Shami took 3 wickets by giving away 60 runs in his 13 overs, while Mukesh Kumar bagged 2 wickets by conceding 40 runs in his 13 overs.

"Heartiest congratulations to Paras Dogra, the Captain of J&K Ranji Team, for achieving the individual milestone of only the 2nd player to cross the 10,000 run mark in the history of the Ranji Trophy. Hopefully under your leadership the team will also make history," said Brig Anil Gupta Member-Administration JKCA.

He also congratulated Auqib Nabi for yet another 5-wicket haul, 6th of the season.

IIT Jammu launches series of five advanced E-SDP Programmes under MSME

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Technology Jammu today inaugurated "Programme 1: Bio-Entrepreneurship - Cultivating India's Future", the first in a series of five Advanced Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programmes (E-SDPs)

being conducted with the support of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India. The five-programme series will run over 1.5 months, from February 16 to March 27, 2026, covering diverse sectors critical to India's technological and industrial growth.

The inaugural session was graced by distinguished academic leaders of IIT Jammu, including Prof. Meenakshi Rajiv, Dean (Continuing Education); Prof. Sartaj-ul-Hasan, Dean (Administration); Prof. Satya S. Bhogilla, Head, Department of Mechanical Engineering; and Dr. Mithu

Baidya, Head, Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering.

The Chief Guest for the event was Prof. (Dr.) Sanjay Kumar Bhasin from Government Medical College, Jammu. Their presence underscored IIT Jammu's strong institutional commitment to interdisciplinary innovation and entrepreneurship-driven education.

The five-day programme on Bio-Entrepreneurship has been meticulously conceptualized and coordinated by Dr. Vijay Kumar Pal and Dr. Nitesh Kumar of IIT Jammu.

The academic sessions feature eminent experts from premier institutions across the country. Prof. (Dr.) Sanjay Kumar Bhasin delivered a lecture on innovations in surgical interventions for critical healthcare, highlighting pressing clinical challenges and emerging opportunities for technological solutions.

Prof. Sarbjit Singh from the Indian Institute of Management Jammu addressed India's evolving economic landscape and emerging entrepreneurial opportunities, providing insights into policy frameworks, market dynamics, and the youth startup ecosystem.

Dr. Rahul Gorka from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Jammu, discussed innovative solutions in burn

and cosmetic surgery, emphasizing the importance of translational research and affordable medical technologies. The programme further includes sessions by Dr. Nitesh Kumar on biomaterials for bone and skin tissue engineering, along with demonstrations of biomaterial processing techniques for wound healing applications.

A dedicated academic visit has been organized to expose participants to real-time clinical environments and to provide first-hand understanding of the translational pathway from laboratory research to product development and delivery. Advanced topics such as GPCR signalling pathways by Dr. Mithu Baidya; sensor manufacturing and IoT integration for biotechnology by Dr. Vijay Kumar Pal; nanotechnology in medical devices by Dr. Vinay Sharma; molecular diagnostics by Dr. Swakar Sharma (Central University of Jammu); computational biotechnology by Dr. Ajeet Sharma; low-cost vascular stents and bio-incubation by Prof. Dhiraj Mahajan (IIT Ropar); microfluidic biosensing devices by Dr. Ravi Arun; and additive manufacturing in biomedical applications by Prof. Pulak M. Pandey (IIT Delhi) collectively provide participants with comprehensive exposure across the entire biomedical innovation spectrum.

Satvik of JKPS Panjtirthi wins gold in Inter-District Kudo Championship



STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Satvik Gupta of Class 8th of JK Public School (JKPS), Panjtirthi, won a gold medal in the Inter-District Kudo Championship organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Kudo Association.

He displayed outstanding skill, confidence, and determination during the competition. The Principal of JKPS Panjtirthi, Suman Banbah congratulated Satvik on his remarkable achievement and wished him success for future endeavours.